

**Saving Space for Place: municipal cultural planning as a  
tool for resisting the making of placeless space in cities**

by

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## **Abstract**

This thesis examines the emerging practice of municipal cultural planning (MCP) in Ontario, and considers whether it is an effective tool for resisting the making of 'placeless space' in the province's largest metropolitan region. The thesis lays out a framework for understanding how placeless space is made through placeless businesses, buildings, and infrastructure, and a lack of opportunities for community engagement and cultural expression. MCP in Toronto and its largest suburb, Mississauga, is then examined in terms of its ability to address these causes of placeless space. It is concluded that MCP can address each of the causes of placeless space, but cultural planners are often constrained by narrow understandings of culture, space, and place. Also, there is often still a reluctance to resist the making of placeless space if it will prevent capital accumulation.

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# 1 Chapter: Introduction

It was once thought that the primary roles for municipalities were so called “hard infrastructure” (i.e. roads, bridges, and sewers) and a few basic services like garbage collection. Economic development has also been a traditional role of municipalities, but local economic development strategies in the past also tended to be narrowly-defined and focused largely on building hard infrastructure (i.e. industrial parks) and providing a few basic services (i.e. courting potential investors).<sup>1</sup> In recent years, however, the role of municipalities in Ontario (and elsewhere) seems to have changed. Increasingly, there has been pressure on municipalities to consider other factors that affect quality of life beyond just hard infrastructure and narrowly-defined economic wealth. Community culture, creativity, and place-making are among these issues that many municipalities now seek to address.

Cultural policy in Canada is certainly not new. However, the nature of cultural policy in Canada has been changing. An interesting trend that has emerged in recent years is the growing recognition of the importance of cultural policy at the local level. This is especially true in Ontario, where cultural issues are often addressed through an emerging practice known as “municipal cultural planning” (MCP). The purpose of this thesis is to examine the effectiveness of MCP in Ontario’s largest urban centre – the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Specifically, the thesis will ask whether MCP can be an effective tool for protecting and enhancing the unique aspects of a community that give it an identity. In other words, the things that make a space a true ‘place’ unlike any other.

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<sup>1</sup> To some extent the 'hard infrastructure' approach to local economic development still persists. For example, Invest Ottawa's new business accelerator centre: <http://acceleration.investottawa.ca/resident-accelerator-companies/>.

Municipal cultural planning (MCP) is a new approach to municipal planning that sees the role of planners as more than simply administrators of land-use regulations.<sup>2</sup> Municipal cultural planners come from a wide range of academic backgrounds (many were not formally trained as conventional city planners), and they can be found in many different municipal departments, not just planning departments. For example, I worked as a 'municipal cultural planner' for the City of Peterborough from 2009 to 2011, and now hold a similar position with the City of Ottawa. I hold a degree in economics and cultural management – not planning. In Peterborough I worked out of the City's Arts, Culture & Heritage Division, which was part of the Community Services Department; in Ottawa I am part of the Cultural Development & Initiatives Unit in the Parks, Recreation & Culture Department. In these positions I have worked closely with the Planning Departments of the two municipalities, but have been able to offer a different perspective from the staff who were trained as conventional city planners. A province-wide review of municipal cultural planning in Ontario led by Greg Baeker and Kat Runnalls in 2008 found 24 Ontario municipalities that had created or were planning to create a municipal cultural plan. Dozens of other municipalities had incorporated elements of cultural plans into other municipal plans. In some cases this even included Official Plans.<sup>3</sup> Many more Ontario municipalities, including the Cities of Peterborough and Ottawa where I worked, have completed municipal cultural plans since the Baeker and Runnalls study was

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<sup>2</sup> City of Toronto, Creative City Planning Framework, Prepared for the City of Toronto by AuthentiCity, February 2008, p. 22

<sup>3</sup> Baeker, Greg and Kat Runnalls, "2008-2009 Municipal Cultural Planning Survey Project: The State of Municipal Cultural Planning in Ontario" (Ontario: Ministry of Culture, 2009) p. 19-21

completed.<sup>4</sup> There are a number of possible reasons for the growth of municipal cultural planning in Ontario, though none of them appears to offer a complete explanation.

The changes in municipal governance in Ontario, including the rise of municipal cultural planning, have been part of a bigger trend of changing scalar arrangements that have occurred in recent decades. During the neoliberal era responsibility for many of Ontario's public services was downloaded to municipalities. This created substantial challenges for municipal governments who often do not have sufficient resources to provide all of the services for which they are now responsible. However, re-scaling has also created opportunities to improve the coordination of public services at the local level through the creation of new partnerships between local governments and 'third sector' organizations. Arguably, one of the biggest weaknesses of the Keynesian welfare state approach to public service delivery was that administration of public services at the national level can be challenging, even unmanageable, in large countries like Canada. Jane Jenson has used the term "social investment" to describe the new perspective that seems to be emerging in what she considers to be a post-neoliberal world. In the social investment perspective, unlike in neoliberalism, there is a realization that private for-profit enterprises do not always deliver the best results. Emphasis is placed on partnership building between the state and civil society.<sup>5</sup> "Social enterprises" – broadly defined to include any organization that is not owned by the government, but whose primary objective is not profit – are seen as key to public service delivery.<sup>6</sup> In this approach

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<sup>4</sup> Personal communication with Alida Stevenson, Policy Advisor, Ontario: Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport, September 28, 2012

<sup>5</sup> Jenson, Jane, "Diffusing Ideas for After Neoliberalism: The Social Investment Perspective in Europe and Latin American," *Global Social Policy*, Vol. 10, 2010

<sup>6</sup> For a discussion of the role of social enterprise in public service delivery, see Marguerite Mendell,

governments play the role of coordinator. Municipal governments are often best suited for this role, especially in a very large country like Canada where public service coordination at the national or even provincial level can be challenging.

The growth of municipal cultural planning in Ontario has also coincided with a shift in thinking around economic development in this province. During long, painful periods of economic restructuring new economic theories become popular as policy-makers search in vein for an economist who has a new model, theory, indicator, or index that will cure all that ails the economy. The 1970's (especially the mid to late 70's) were characterized by both rising inflation and rising unemployment. It was hoped that new theories from monetarist economists, most notably Milton Friedman, could solve these problems. The new approach to monetary policy that emerged during the neoliberal era brought inflation under control. Unemployment, however, has proven to be a much greater challenge. Meanwhile, underemployment and “the working poor” have also become greater concerns in Ontario in recent years, as the number and quality of jobs in the province’s manufacturing sector has declined. Increasing capital mobility (one of the hallmarks of neoliberalism) means that large manufacturing firms can wander the earth in search of cheaper labour. This results in a transfer of jobs from places with higher labour costs to places with lower labour costs (most notably China, whose growing influence in the global economy cannot be denied). It also puts downward pressure on wages and weakens union power. The decline of Ontario’s manufacturing sector may have been intensified by the 2008-2009 recession, but it is clear that it began years earlier. From 2000 to 2007 Canada's manufacturing sector lost 278,000 jobs (about a 17% decline), and

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“Improving Social Inclusion at the Local Level Through the Social Economy: Designing an Enabling Framework,” Paper prepared for OECD, 2010.

this loss was concentrated in Central Canada (Ontario and Quebec).<sup>7</sup> The loss of good-paying, unionized jobs creates a number of socioeconomic problems. It means less job security, and consequently less economic stability; fewer workers with health and other benefits from their employer, which puts greater pressure on government social programs; and greater income inequality, as the “middle class” is eroded.

Many policy-makers in Ontario have responded to the province's economic challenges with a form of economic development that is centred on the creative economy. As with Jenson's social investment perspective, this new approach to economic development combines certain aspects of both Keynesian and neoliberal thinking. The changes in economic thinking that occurred following the economic challenges of the 1930's and 1970's each had their own 'rock star economist' with which each paradigm shift is most associated: J.M. Keynes and Milton Friedman respectively. Likewise, the popularization of the creative cities theory is due, in large part, to the work of a new rock star economist: Richard Florida.<sup>8</sup> Florida identified a group he refers to as the “creative class.” Though most of these people work in service industries, there are also some creative jobs in manufacturing and other industries. The difference is that these people are “compensated monetarily for their creative output.” In other words, they are 'paid to think.' Florida's research has shown that this group's influence in the economy is growing, and that the cities and regions with the strongest economies tend to be those that are able

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<sup>7</sup> Statistics Canada, viewed January 25, 2013 <<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-402-x/2011000/chap/man-fab/man-fab-eng.htm>>

<sup>8</sup> The use of the term 'rock star economist' is not meant to suggest that these economists (Keynes, Friedman, and Florida) are the only economists responsible for major changes in economics, nor is it meant to suggest that these are necessarily the most important economists in recent history. It simply refers to the fact that these are the economists most associated with changes in economics that coincided with changing scalar arrangements.

to attract and retain creative class workers.<sup>9</sup> It is easy to see the appeal of this theory for local policy-makers. For Ontario cities that have seen their traditional manufacturing industries decline, hearing that they could breathe new life into their economy by growing the creative class within their workforce is certainly tempting.

Changing scalar arrangements, economic restructuring, and the popularity of Florida's creative class theory seem to be insufficient to explain the emergence of municipal cultural planning, and the growing importance of municipal cultural policy-making more generally, in Ontario. Downloading of responsibilities to municipalities in Ontario has meant that they have needed to do more than what they did in the past, but it has not necessarily meant that municipalities have needed to take on a larger role with respect to culture. Cultural planning is something that Ontario municipalities have taken upon themselves to get involved in. In Ontario, there is no provincial legislation that requires municipalities to create municipal cultural plans or even gives them a mandate to do so. Downloading has created budgetary pressure, so one might have expected municipalities to retreat from anything they are not obligated to do. In 2009 the Government of Ontario announced that they would begin providing a small amount of financial support (only \$9 million over four years for the entire province) for municipalities that are engaged in cultural planning related activities, but this was after dozens of municipalities had already undertaken such initiatives.<sup>10</sup> In fact, some Ontario municipalities were creating cultural plans and policies even before any of Richard Florida's works on the creative class were published. This includes the former

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<sup>9</sup> See Richard Florida, *Cities and the Creative Class* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2002). Definition of creative class is taken from page 4.

<sup>10</sup> As noted in the 2008 study by Baeker and Runnalls.

Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, where municipal cultural policy-making began decades before there was any provincial support for the practice or any hype regarding creative class focused economic development.<sup>11</sup> This is in spite of the fact that, as the largest city in the province, Toronto has a more diversified economy, so the decline of Ontario's manufacturing sector did not require as much economic restructuring in Toronto as in many of Ontario's midsize cities (Peterborough, Cambridge, London, Windsor, Oshawa, Hamilton, etc.). Also, municipal cultural plans in Ontario typically include far more than just the arts and 'creative class' professionals. Cultural and natural heritage, architecture and the urban landscape, cultural diversity and social inclusion, festivals and events, and even environmental sustainability often form a significant part of municipal cultural plans in Ontario.<sup>12</sup> The fact that municipal cultural plans are typically much broader than traditional federal and provincial arts policies also suggests that this is not merely something that was transferred to municipalities from senior levels of government, but is instead a distinct creation of the municipalities themselves.

Since changing scalar arrangements, economic restructuring, and the popularity of Florida's work are insufficient to explain the growth of the practice of municipal cultural planning in Ontario, it is worth considering what other concerns Ontario municipalities may be trying to address through cultural planning. One such concern is loss of community identity. For example, the City of Toronto's first municipal cultural plan after amalgamation, though it contains a heavy focus on enhancing Toronto's status as a world class "creative city," was created to address concerns that the former cities that were

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<sup>11</sup> City of Toronto, Cultural Planning Timeline, viewed February 16, 2012  
<<http://www.toronto.ca/culture/cultureplan.htm>>

<sup>12</sup> Kovacs, Jason F., "Cultural planning in Ontario, Canada: arts policy or more?" *International Journal of Cultural Policy*, Vol. 17, No. 3, June 2011, p. 336

amalgamated into Toronto (North York, East York, York, Scarborough, and Etobicoke)<sup>13</sup> would lose their identity.<sup>14</sup> In this case, the concern about a loss of identity was because the city had recently gone through an amalgamation, but cities and towns can be at risk of losing their identity even without being amalgamated. As this thesis will discuss, there are a number of different factors that can cause a community to lose its identity. This includes, for example, non-distinct development. Cities and towns now face development pressure from developers who build the same stores, restaurants, gas stations, housing developments, etc. in every place they do business. This trend may have been heightened by the freedom offered to businesses by neoliberal governments, but it actually began long before the neoliberal era.<sup>15</sup> In fact, some of the most non-distinct, uninteresting developments in North American cities were part of so-called “urban renewal” projects during the Keynesian welfare state era.<sup>16</sup> The problem with this trend toward non-distinct cities is that when every place looks the same we begin to lose our concept of place.<sup>17</sup> It seems as though many cities and towns are being made into 'placeless' spaces.

Concern about a loss of community identity is probably also insufficient, by itself, to explain the growth of municipal cultural planning in Ontario. In fact, pinpointing one specific reason for the rise of MCP in Ontario is likely not possible. In reality, most municipalities that engage in municipal cultural planning likely have multiple reasons for doing so, and these reasons are probably not the same across all municipalities in the province. Identifying all of these reasons and addressing each of them in this thesis is

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<sup>13</sup> These cities were amalgamated into the City of Toronto in 1998.

<sup>14</sup> Personal communication with a Senior Policy Advisory for the City of Toronto, February 16, 2012

<sup>15</sup> For a history of the trend towards placeless cities in North America, see Kunstler 1993.

<sup>16</sup> Garreau, Joel, *Edge City: Life on the New Frontier* (New York, NY: Random House, 1991)

<sup>17</sup> Kunstler 1993

impractical, if not impossible. This is why the focus of this thesis will be limited to the effectiveness of MCP in addressing issues of community identity and placeless space in cities, even though there are often other issues involved.

The research questions that this thesis will answer are:

- Can municipal cultural planning be an effective mechanism for resisting the making of ‘placeless space’ (space without an identity) in cities?
- How has this practice been used (or not used) to address placelessness in urban and suburban municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area?
- Does municipal cultural planning help or hinder community-based efforts to resist the making of placeless space?

The phrase “*making* of placeless space” is used because this thesis will not assume that placeless space is something that emerges passively as the result of an absence of place-making. Instead the thesis identifies conscious decisions that lead to placeless space being made in cities. It then aims to identify the reasons why these decisions are made before considering whether municipal cultural planning can address placeless space making.

Although this thesis examines a municipal planning tool, community-based efforts to resist the making of placeless space must also be considered because of the growing importance municipal-third sector partnerships in the new “social investment” era. Also, as will be discussed further in later chapters, culture is not something that is ‘made’ by governments, nor is it something that governments can (or should) support unilaterally. However, recognizing the need to partner with the community (as most municipalities do) is one thing; actually building effective partnerships is another. As

well, there are many community-based place-making (and placeless space making resistance) initiatives that are started without direct municipal involvement, but municipal policy inevitably comes into play (i.e. the municipality owns/manages many of the public spaces in the community).

Since this research is looking at municipal cultural planning in terms of its effect on place, land-use planning (a more conventional form of municipal planning) inevitably plays a significant role in this thesis. Land-use planning, which is usually managed by the actual *Planning* Department in most municipalities, includes creating, updating, and enforcing Official Plans (OPs), secondary plans, zoning bylaws, building codes (often there is a Building Division/Unit/Section within the Planning Department), and other matters dealing with the use of space within the municipality. Sometimes the Planning Department also leads other strategic planning processes – and in some municipalities this includes cultural planning – but these are usually seen as separate from traditional land-use planning. However, the connection between the use of space within a city and the community's culture is very strong. As will be explained further in Chapter Four, so much of what makes a *space* a true *place* unlike any other is how that space is planned for and what uses for that space are (or are not) permitted.

This analysis of municipal cultural planning's effectiveness at resisting the making of placeless space in cities – although it is not meant to be another analysis of Florida's creative class theory – is closely linked to Florida's theory. Florida argues that members of the creative class are very mobile and able to live and work in many places. These people, according to Florida, are attracted to communities with a vibrant culture – places that are authentic and have lots of things to do. The theory suggests that cities that

are able to attract members of the creative class are likely to have the strongest economies.<sup>18</sup> If Florida's theory is correct, then creating and maintaining great places is crucial to the economic health of cities. Even if Florida is wrong, creating and maintaining great places can still be intrinsically good. The point here is not to debate the accuracy of the creative class theory – just to note that the theory does not conflict with this thesis.

### **1.1 Need for this project**

As mentioned previously, municipal cultural planning is a growing practice in Ontario and elsewhere. The study by Baeker and Runnalls, which is the most comprehensive study of municipal cultural planning in Ontario to date, was not meant to be a critical analysis of the practice. It was simply meant to collect data on the number of municipalities with municipal cultural plans, the objectives of these plans, trends in municipal cultural planning, and so on. More recently, a more critical analysis of municipal cultural planning in Ontario was conducted by Jason Kovacs, but it was limited to ten midsize cities that had completed a municipal cultural plan. It did not look at smaller cities or towns or large urban centres, nor did the study include municipalities that had incomplete municipal cultural plans or elements of cultural plans incorporated into other municipal plans.<sup>19</sup> Despite having very limited research into municipal cultural planning in Ontario, the number of Ontario municipalities engaged in cultural planning continues to grow. Also, though the \$9 million Creative Communities' Prosperity Fund is not by any means a substantial share of the provincial budget, its creation is a sign that

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<sup>18</sup> Florida 2002

<sup>19</sup> See Kovacs 2010; Kovacs 2011

the Government of Ontario is prepared to support municipal cultural planning.<sup>20</sup> This is despite the fact that an official from the Ministry of Tourism, Culture, and Sport that was interviewed as part of this project conceded that more research is still needed into the effectiveness of municipal cultural planning.

In addition to the lack of research into municipal cultural planning, there is also a lack of literature (academic and otherwise) that specifically addresses the making of placeless space. There is a growing body of literature that discusses place-making, and this includes some of the literature that deals specifically with municipal cultural planning. However, it is rare that placeless space is viewed, as it is in this thesis, as something that arises *actively* through the conscious decisions of certain actors.

## **1.2 Outline of thesis chapters**

Chapter Two provides an overview of the research methods used. This chapter also includes some background information on the researcher. The purpose is to position the researcher in relation to the research, and allow the reader to consider how the researcher's experiences may have influenced his evaluation of the data. The chapter concludes by explaining how the research methods were designed to account for possible biases.

Chapter Three provides a literature review. There is only a very small body of literature that deals specifically with municipal cultural planning in Ontario (or even in Canada), but there is some literature from the USA, UK, Australia, and elsewhere. There is also a substantial body of literature relating to Richard Florida's creative class theory, and creative city building more generally. Theoretical literature that discusses the

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<sup>20</sup> Ontario: Ministry of Tourism and Culture 2009

concepts of space and place is also reviewed. These key terms, along with placeless space, place-making, and placeless space making, are defined. The chapter also discusses the very controversial term 'culture.' A distinction is made between cultural planning and traditional cultural policy.

Chapter Four serves as a bridge between the theory and the case studies. The chapter discusses the major factors that lead to the making of placeless space in cities. This fills a hole in the literature. While there is lots of discussion of place-making, what seems to be missing is a discussion of how placeless space is consciously made. The chapter concludes by identifying the driving force behind all of the factors discussed.

Chapters Five and Six discuss the two case study cities, Mississauga and Toronto respectively. These chapters ask whether the cultural plans that have been developed in these municipalities are addressing the factors discussed in Chapter Four. It is concluded that, in conjunction with various community initiatives, MCP *can* be an effective mechanism for resisting the making of placeless space when it is integrated with other municipal planning and policy-making processes. However, much of its potential has not yet been realized in Canada's largest urban centre. The Cities of Toronto and Mississauga have both managed to incorporate 'culture' (in some form) into municipal planning and policy; and to some extent they have both made the link between culture, space, and place. However, both municipalities still seem to find it easier to deal with fairly narrow definitions of these terms. The City of Toronto is among Canada's most experienced municipalities with municipal cultural planning, and can boast a number of achievements in this area. The City's understanding of 'culture' has expanded since its first cultural policies, but its most recent municipal cultural planning documents are heavily focused

on a fairly narrow set of economic issues. Meanwhile, the largest suburban municipality in this region – the City of Mississauga – has made some progress with municipal cultural planning in a relatively short period of time. The challenge for Mississauga will be to insure that their MCPs are focused on distinct aspects of its community, as opposed to becoming 'cookie-cutter' versions of the City of Toronto's MCPs.

## 2 Chapter: Research Methods

This research involved a case study analysis. A key theme that emerged from interviews with municipal cultural planners as part of the preliminary research for this project was that each municipality is unique and has its own special set of circumstances.<sup>21</sup> This suggests that there is value in using case study analysis with only a small number of cases, so that each case can be investigated on a deeper level as opposed to looking more broadly at municipal cultural planning across the entire province.

Bent Flyvbjerg has identified several different ways to select cases. While researchers in the natural sciences may favour a random sample, Flyvbjerg argues that random sampling may not be appropriate for a lot of research in the social sciences. “This is because the typical or average case is often not the richest in information. Atypical or extreme cases often reveal more information because they activate more actors and more basic mechanisms in the situation studied.”<sup>22</sup> From this perspective one of the limitations of Kovacs' study of municipal cultural planning in Ontario is that he focused on average (midsize) municipalities.<sup>23</sup> A study of a more extreme case – a larger urban region with more development pressure and more actors involved in place-making and the making of (and resisting the making of) placeless space – has the potential to provide more information. Therefore, municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area, Ontario's largest urban centre, were used as case studies in this project.

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<sup>21</sup> Personal communication with a Senior Policy Advisory for the City of Toronto, February 16, 2012; personal communication with Erik Hanson, Heritage Resources Coordinator, City of Peterborough, February 21, 2012

<sup>22</sup> Flyvbjerg, Bent, *Making Social Science Matter: Why social inquiry fails and how it can succeed again* (Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press, 2001) p. 78

<sup>23</sup> Kovacs 2010; Kovacs 2011

Specifically, the cities of Toronto and Mississauga were selected. Toronto is the largest city in Canada, and has been engaged in cultural policy-making longer than any other municipality in Ontario. It is also interesting because prior to 1998 the current City of Toronto was six separate cities: Toronto, Scarborough, Etobicoke, York, East York, and North York. Toronto's many distinct areas and urban/suburban mix provide an opportunity to see the effects of municipal cultural planning in different settings.

Suburbs are interesting places for studying the effects of placeless space making and efforts to resist it. Suburbs of very large cities often face tremendous development pressure, and in many cases this development pressure arrives suddenly and unexpectedly. Mississauga is an extreme case of a suburban municipality. It is Toronto's largest suburb. In fact, it is the largest suburban municipality in Canada. Mississauga has grown so large that it recently overtook Cleveland and Milwaukee to become the fourth largest city on the Great Lakes.<sup>24</sup> Mississauga's rapid growth has created a lot of opportunities for the city, but it has also created a lot of challenges. The municipality is a relative newcomer to cultural planning. Its first foray into municipal cultural planning followed the creation of a strategic plan. During the public consultations for the strategic plan Mississauga residents expressed a desire for their city to be more than just a bedroom community for Toronto, identifying 18 “drivers for change.”<sup>25</sup> This makes Mississauga a very interesting municipality to study, even though it has produced only one municipal cultural plan.

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<sup>24</sup> City of Mississauga, About Mississauga, viewed October 26, 2012  
<<http://www.mississauga.ca/portal/discover/aboutmississauga>>

<sup>25</sup> City of Mississauga, *Our Future Mississauga*, 2008, p. 23-7

Toronto and Mississauga are not only extreme cases because of their size. They are also extreme cases in terms of their demographics. Immigration has been a substantial part of the growth of these cities in recent decades. According to the 2011 census about half of Toronto and Mississauga residents identify a language other than English as their first language. In the GTA, unlike in many other major cities, ethnocultural diversity is not limited to the urban core. Both the inner and outer suburbs of this region are quite diverse as well. As Kristin Good's research into municipalities and multiculturalism showed, the big demographic changes that are occurring in Canada affect so much of what municipalities do.<sup>26</sup> Any new approach to municipal governance, especially one that deals specifically with culture, must be relevant in an era in which Canadian cities have very multicultural demographics. Toronto and Mississauga are two of the best cities in the country for studying the effectiveness of MCP in communities with multicultural demographics.

In addition to reviewing all relevant documents from each of the case study municipalities, this research also benefited greatly from interviews with municipal staff that have been involved in cultural policy, cultural planning, and other related activities (i.e. land use planning) in these municipalities. Official documents never tell the whole story. Lots of institutional knowledge is buried in the minds of the people who actually created the documents, crafted the policies, and carried out the studies and planning processes. These interviews focused on why certain decisions were made (or not made), the impact that cultural plans and policies have had on the day-to-day work of various city staff (i.e. planners), and practical issues or challenges that have arisen.

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<sup>26</sup> Good, Kristin, *Municipalities and Multiculturalism: The Politics of Immigration in Toronto and Vancouver* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 2009)

Interviews were also conducted with other people who have been involved in efforts to resist the making of placeless space in the GTA. These people included some of the stakeholders that provided input into the creation of the municipal cultural plans or related documents, as well as other people who have contributed to efforts to resist the making of placeless space in their community. These interviewees were identified by scanning local media sources for stories related to place-making or resisting the making of placeless space, as well as by reviewing City Council and Ontario Municipal Board proceedings to identify groups that have challenged placeless developments. Scanning these sources was also helpful in assessing the general level of resistance to placeless space by community groups in the case study cities. The interviewees were not meant to be a representative sample of placeless space making resisters (getting such a sample is probably not possible), and the data was treated accordingly. The focus of these interviews was on identifying the efforts being made in Toronto and Mississauga outside of City Hall to resist the making of placeless space in those cities, and to enquire as to whether these stakeholders feel that the municipalities' cultural planning endeavours have helped or hindered their efforts. The questions were tailored to the interviewees and the place-making/placelessness resistance activities that they have been involved in. Common themes included: the interviewee's understanding of what it means to make a space a place; their place-making initiatives; opportunities (or missed opportunities) that they had for collaboration with the municipality; and municipal policies or activities that they feel may have helped or hindered their efforts.

## 2.1 The researcher

No researcher can truly be unbiased. Every researcher has been impacted in some way by their prior experiences, and their preconceived opinions may cloud their judgement of what they observe during the research project. The author of this thesis is no exception. It is not possible to provide a full autobiography here, but I feel it is important to explain how certain events in my life have led me to become interested in municipal cultural planning and its role (or potential role) in resisting the making of placeless space in cities. Readers are then free to speculate as to how these experiences may have impacted on conclusions I have drawn from my research.

There are few things that I remember from the seventh grade. However, one thing that I do remember clearly was when our geography teacher asked the class to go to the computer lab and look at the new website that had been created for our municipality, the City of Cambridge, Ontario. This was in the days when the internet was an exciting new thing. I only remember one page from this website. This page provided reasons to move (or move your business) to Cambridge. The discussion focused on the city's convenient location on Canada's busiest highway (HWY 401) less than 100 km from Toronto. In other words, my city was being sold as '*Cambridge: At least we're close to something that matters.*' Looking back, I can see why I grew up without much affection for my hometown.

As an undergraduate student I studied economics and cultural management. As part of the cultural management program I did three internships with not-for-profit arts organizations. Coincidentally, all three of these were in opera – one of the so-called “high arts.” I became interested in the role that the arts could play in community and

economic development, and this became the focus of my Senior Honours Essay for the economics component of my degree.

After graduating I had the opportunity to work for the City of Peterborough where I coordinated the development of the City's first municipal cultural plan. There is no opera company in Peterborough; nor is there a ballet company. The symphony is composed of local semi-professional musicians, and the local theatre companies are staffed mostly by volunteers. The city is not a bastion for the high arts, and one might expect it to be a lot like Cambridge. After all, both Cambridge and Peterborough are midsize Ontario cities located along major highways within 100 miles of Toronto. They were both built on rivers and were once major manufacturing hubs. But Peterborough does have a rich local culture. Remembering my experience in my grade seven geography class, I was struck by the desire of almost everyone I met in Peterborough to maintain a unique identity for their community. Yet Peterborough still must deal with many of the same challenges as other Ontario cities like Cambridge. During a time of economic uncertainty it faces increasing pressure from developers to conform to their wishes – which, of course, have much more to do with the bottom line than with maintaining any semblance of a local identity. Municipal cultural planning seemed to hold the key to protecting what was so special about this city. We had a working group comprised of staff from almost every department, division, and agency in the municipal corporation, making this one of the most collaborative undertakings in the history of the municipality. The result was a plan with initiatives aimed at everything from supporting local artists and festivals to enhancing trail systems and waterways. But will this plan, or

any municipal cultural plan, actually be able to hold up against the forces that are creating placeless space?

Following my experience in Peterborough I was convinced that more research into municipal cultural planning was needed. In particular, I felt it was time for MCP research to address the question of whether this new approach to city planning could address the making of placeless space in cities, as opposed to simply conducting more research into the “creative economy,” which has become a very popular research topic in recent years. It is for this reason that I decided to undertake this project.

Being aware of how my experiences may bias my interpretation of data has affected my choice of research methods. As described earlier in this chapter, I chose to consult a variety of municipal, academic, and other sources, and to interview people both within and outside of the municipal bureaucracy. Also, I chose research partners, Professors Chris Stoney and Ted Jackson, who are able to offer a different perspective. Both professors have considerable experience in community-based projects, but neither of them has ever been directly involved in the development of a municipal cultural plan. I hope that this more balanced approach to research has minimized the impact of my past experiences.

### **3 Chapter: Understanding Municipal Cultural Planning and Related Concepts**

#### **3.1 Municipal cultural planning**

The primary “umbrella” group for municipal cultural planning in Ontario is the Municipal Cultural Planning Partnership, now officially known as Municipal Cultural Planning Incorporated (MCPI) since being incorporated in 2009. MCPI has defined municipal cultural planning as “the strategic and integrated planning and use of cultural resources for economic and community development.”<sup>27</sup> The MCPI definition is not universally accepted, and there is some variation in how cultural planning is practised in different municipalities. However, it is probably the most commonly-used definition of MCP in Ontario, and there are some important things to note from this definition. First, MCP involves strategic planning, which implies that a strategic plan is created, but that this is an active process. The fact that MCP, according to this definition, involves the “*use of cultural resources*” also implies that this is an active process. The second thing to note is that “cultural resources” are being used for “economic and community development.” These are all controversial terms. The concept of cultural resources will be discussed later in this chapter, while Chapter Four explains that not all economic development is necessarily supportive of culture. Therefore, economic development involving cultural resources implies a certain type of development – not the ‘anything goes’ approach that is still the dominant philosophy in some economic development agencies. Finally, “integrated” is a key word in this definition. Ideally, a municipality that

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<sup>27</sup> Municipal Cultural Planning Incorporated, “What is MCP?”, viewed August 15, 2012  
<<http://www.ontariomcp.ca/what-is-mcp/>>

believes in cultural planning should consider cultural issues in everything the municipality does – from garbage collection to public pools. In reality, no municipality manages to integrate cultural planning into all municipal operations, but municipal cultural plans in Ontario have tended to be quite broad. I will build on this definition later in this chapter by contrasting municipal cultural planning with traditional cultural policy.

Most of the literature on municipal cultural planning is from the United Kingdom or Australia. However, there is now a small body of literature on this practice in Ontario. The most extensive critical analysis of municipal cultural planning in Ontario was a study by Jason Kovacs that looked at MCPs in ten midsize Ontario cities. He identified several things that tend to be covered by municipal cultural plans in Ontario. Municipalities in this province usually devote a sizable, but not overwhelming, portion of their municipal cultural plan to the arts. What they include as “art” is usually quite broad. Commonly included in this area are:

- visual arts;
- performing arts;
- literary arts;
- media arts;
- and often multidisciplinary arts.

A number of plans also make specific reference to new media and emerging artists and art forms. Creative industries are part of most MCPs. The plans usually identify these industries as including:

- film and video production;
- broadcasting, publishing, printing, and recording;

- and sometimes advertising, marketing, architecture, and design industries.

Some will also include recommendations to support industries that support the production of cultural products, even if they are not involved in the production directly (i.e. copyright lawyers). Almost all MCPs include recommendations related to heritage preservation. Often a lot of these recommendations will focus on built heritage – since municipalities have a mandate to protect built heritage under the Ontario Heritage Act – but often also includes:

- archaeology;
- museums;
- heritage landscapes;
- artifacts;
- monuments;
- archives;
- and even natural heritage.<sup>28</sup>

In larger cities, like Toronto, there is often a greater emphasis on creative industries.<sup>29</sup> This likely has to do with the fact that many of these industries, such as film production and broadcasting, tend to concentrate in large urban centres. Small, rural communities, like Prince Edward County, will often focus more on their community's authentic rural culture and quality of life.<sup>30</sup>

Something Kovacs found surprising was many of these municipalities had not completed a cultural mapping exercise prior to beginning work on their cultural plan.

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<sup>28</sup> Kovacs 2011, p. 329-330

<sup>29</sup> For example, see City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City*, 2003

<sup>30</sup> For example, see Prince Edward County, *Leveraging Growth and Managing Change: Strategic Cultural Plan for Prince Edward County*, 2005

Cultural mapping involves an identification of a community's cultural resources. The idea is to first identify what it is that is important to a community's culture before planning for how best to preserve and leverage these resources. Cultural planning guidebooks that have been prepared by Mercer, Baeker, and others talk about the importance of 'mapping before you plan.' Yet Kovacs found that in Ontario this is often not the case. Many cities either completed a cultural mapping project at the same time as they were developing their MCP, or they skip the mapping step entirely.<sup>31</sup> This may be due to the fact that cultural mapping can be a tough sell, as its benefits are not always clear to senior bureaucrats, city councillors, and the public at-large. A cultural plan has the potential to produce tangible results, while a cultural map is merely a means to that end. As will be discussed further in Chapter Five, the City of Mississauga may have found a solution to this problem. The City's cultural mapping project produced a very tangible, useful product that can serve as a marketing tool for cultural producers and event organizers and help residents and visitors connect to the community's cultural resources. This online tool can be found here:

<http://www.cultureonthemap.ca/mapcms/com/index.html>.

Another study that looked at municipal cultural planning in Ontario was Baeker and Runnalls' 2008-2009 study. This was not a critical analysis of the practice, but it has been the most comprehensive study of municipal cultural planning in Ontario to date. This study produced some interesting findings. It was an update of an earlier study by Baeker, and showed that there has been tremendous growth in the number of Ontario municipalities that are engaging in cultural planning (though not all are creating a

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<sup>31</sup> Personal communication with Jason Kovacs on October 2, 2012.

municipal cultural plan per se).<sup>32</sup> Many of the municipalities surveyed had not developed any sort of process for evaluating the impacts and outcomes of municipal cultural planning.<sup>33</sup> This is interesting because economic development was the most common reason that these municipalities cited for creating a municipal cultural plan,<sup>34</sup> and there are numerous tools available (including some freely available online) for determining the economic impact of government policies. Kovacs' research may have uncovered the reason why this occurs. Though economic development is often the *stated* objective of a municipal cultural plan (it is an easy objective to sell to senior bureaucrats and politicians), the municipal cultural planners Kovacs interviewed identified a wide range of other benefits that they sought through cultural planning – including everything from social inclusion to making aesthetic improvements in the city.<sup>35</sup> Unlike economic development, these benefits are often very difficult (or impossible) to measure.

### **3.2 Culture and ‘cultural resources’**

There can be little doubt about what is the most controversial word in the phrase “municipal cultural planning.” When I would tell someone that I worked as a “municipal cultural planner,” one of the most frequent questions I would receive is, “*What exactly do you mean by 'culture'?*” Culture has been described as “one of the most complicated words in the English language.”<sup>36</sup> However, one cannot really understand ‘municipal cultural planning’ without first understanding the adjective that supposedly describes the sort of planning that municipalities are supposedly doing. Having a very narrow

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<sup>32</sup> Baeker and Runnalls 2009, p. 19-21

<sup>33</sup> Baeker and Runnalls 2009, p. 4

<sup>34</sup> Baeker and Runnalls 2009, p. 4

<sup>35</sup> Kovacs 2011, p. 336

<sup>36</sup> Williams, Raymond, *Keywords: a vocabulary of culture and society* (London, UK: Fontana, 1976) p. 76

definition of culture can lead to cultural plans that result in the further marginalization of already marginalized groups; while having a very broad definition of culture can be “unmanageable” in policy terms.

The definition of culture has evolved over time, yet it continues to be debated. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson explained how anthropologists' understanding of culture has changed. The concept of “culture” led to a concept of “cultures” – the idea that the world is made up of separate societies each with its own distinct culture. As the world has become increasingly mobile and connected, and the lines between societies have been blurred, anthropologists have begun to move beyond the idea of cultures as eternally bounded entities. The “boundaries” of cultures are always being contested and redefined.<sup>37</sup>

Culture is often associated with art. In fact, sometimes the words arts and culture are used almost interchangeably. However, this narrow understanding of culture can be problematic. Robyn Dowling explained that the way culture has been conceptualized by local governments has tended to favour the 'high arts' (opera, symphony, etc.), which has led to the further marginalization of already marginalized forms of culture.<sup>38</sup> Kovacs agrees that the 'culture as art' concept is not a very strong base for municipal cultural planning.<sup>39</sup> However, it has been argued that cultural plans in the UK, Australia, and elsewhere often end up looking like fairly traditional arts policies – just with a different

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<sup>37</sup> Gupta, Akhil and James Ferguson, “Beyond 'Culture': Space, Identity, and the Politics of Difference,” *Culture, Power, and Place*, ed. Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1997) p. 1-3

<sup>38</sup> Dowling, Robyn, “Planning for culture in urban Australia,” *Australian geographical studies*, Vol. 35, No. 1, 1997, 23–31

<sup>39</sup> Kovacs 2011, p. 323

name.<sup>40</sup> The privileged position that the high arts often play in cultural plans may be the result of the privileged position that the supporters of this form of culture often have within society. It is interesting to note, however, that Kovacs' analysis of municipal cultural plans in Ontario's midsize cities found that the 'arts policies with a different name' criticism of cultural plans generally did not apply. Although the arts, including the high arts, were a substantial part of all of the municipal cultural plans Kovacs examined, each of these plans also addressed a much broader understanding of what counts as culture.<sup>41</sup> Nevertheless, the issue of '*whose culture counts?*' and '*whose voices are being heard?*' must always be considered.

Raymond Williams, considered the 'father of British cultural studies,' offered a much more inclusive definition of culture. He saw culture fitting into three broad categories: art, cultivation of the mind, and way of life.<sup>42</sup> The third category is particularly broad. It could include almost anything a person does in their day-to-day life<sup>43</sup> – from eating at a restaurant to watching a hockey game. Williams' understanding of culture fits closely with how I would define culture when I worked as a municipal cultural planner. I also found it helpful to conceptualize culture in three broad categories: art (broadly defined to include all forms of creative expression), heritage (broadly defined to include stories, traditions, landmarks, natural heritage, celebrations or commemorations of historic events or people, or any other way a community remembers and celebrates its past), and anything else that is unique or special about a community.

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<sup>40</sup> For example, Stevenson, D., "Cultural planning in Australia: text and contexts," *Journal of arts Management, Law, and Society*, Vol. 35, No. 1, 2005, 36–48

<sup>41</sup> Kovacs 2011

<sup>42</sup> Williams 1976

<sup>43</sup> Mercer, Colin, "Making culture, diversity and development walk and talk together: cultural mapping and cultural planning," Report presented at the seminar *Diversity and Coexistence: The Role of Cultural Policy for Global Development*, 15 May, Stockholm

As with Williams' definition the third category in my definition is very broad and could include almost anything, so long as the people doing it feel that it is part of their culture. In other words, cultural activities are identified as such by the people doing them. In this understanding of culture there is no grand list of cultural activities. As Colin Mercer put it, "Culture is what counts as culture for those participating in it."<sup>44</sup>

Williams has been criticized for being too broad. Franco Bianchini felt that it would be difficult for governments to make sense of this broad definition in policy terms.<sup>45</sup> This criticism is consistent with my own experience. The definition I used as a cultural planner would make sense to most people I spoke with outside of the government bureaucracy, but many bureaucrats had trouble understanding what it meant in terms of municipal policy. As will be explained in later chapters, this also seems to be a problem in the case study municipalities. Municipal cultural plans in Toronto and Mississauga tend to devote a large amount of space to the arts, heritage, and other aspects of culture that are relatively easy to understand.

There may be reasons for using a narrow definition of culture beyond the fact that it is easier. Having a broader definition of culture can lead to cultural plans that are more inclusive and able to adapt to new and emerging forms of culture. In a world in which cultures are constantly evolving and the lines between cultures are blurred, a flexible definition of culture would seem to be a must. However, an inclusive and adaptable definition of culture can be concerning to those who are privileged by a narrow and static

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<sup>44</sup> Mercer, Colin, "By accident or design: can culture be planned?" *The art of regeneration: Nottingham 1996 – conference papers*. Edited by: Matarasso, F. and Halls, S. (Stroud, UK: Comedia, 1996) p. 61

<sup>45</sup> Bianchini, F., "Cultural planning: an innovative approach to urban development," *Managing urban change*, Edited by: Verwijnen, J. and Lehtovuori (Helsinki, Finland: University of Art and Design Helsinki, 1996) p. 22

'high arts' definition of culture. As Williams explained, culture can be a control mechanism, as it can make things seem 'normal' or 'natural'.<sup>46</sup>

Many municipalities in Ontario have tried to strike a balance between being inclusive and having a definition of culture that is 'workable' through a categorization of 'cultural resources'.<sup>47</sup> This idea of trying to fit culture into cultural resource categories needs to be considered as part of this thesis since it is how culture has been understood by municipal cultural planners.

Bianchini identified 8 categories of cultural resources: arts, media, and heritage; youth, ethnic minorities, and occupational cultures; cultures of different communities of interest; traditions, including archaeology, gastronomy, local dialects, accents, and local rituals; local and external perceptions of place, as expressed in myths, tourist guides, media coverage, conventional wisdom, jokes, songs, and literature; the natural and built environment, including public and open spaces; diversity and quality of retailing, leisure, cultural, eating, drinking, and entertainment facilities and activities; and the repertoire of local products and skills in crafts, manufacturing, and services.<sup>48</sup> On the surface it appears that art only plays a very small role in this framework for understanding cultural resources, as it is just one of three things in the first of eight categories.<sup>49</sup> However, a broader definition of 'art' could overlap with many of the other categories, as could a broader definition of heritage.

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<sup>46</sup> Williams, Raymond, *Marxism and Literature*, (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 1977) p. 110

<sup>47</sup> Kovacs 2011, p. 324

<sup>48</sup> Bianchini, F., "Themes for a new century: rethinking the relationship between culture and urban planning," *The art of regeneration: Nottingham 1996 – conference papers*. Edited by: Matarasso, F. and Halls, S. (Stroud, UK: Comedia, 1996) p. 8-13

<sup>49</sup> Kovacs 2011, p. 325

There are several issues that I have with Bianchini's categorization of cultural resources. First, I am not entirely sure how the second and third categories differ. Also, the fourth category could be seen as part of the first category, since traditions are part of heritage. Finally, I am not sure that the things in the seventh category are necessarily cultural resources – at least not local culture. Are box stores and fast food chain restaurants really part of local culture? One could certainly make the case that monopoly capitalism has created a national or even global culture around box stores and fast food chains, but by their very nature they are not local to anywhere. Perhaps the seventh and eighth categories could be combined to get around this problem.

In Ontario the most widely used cultural resource framework has been one developed by Greg Baeker. This framework has been included in *Cultural Resource Mapping: A Guide for Municipalities*,<sup>50</sup> which was developed by a provincial umbrella organization for municipal cultural planning in Ontario.<sup>51</sup> Baeker's framework also has eight categories: creative cultural industries; creative cultural occupations; community cultural organizations; spaces and facilities; intangible assets; cultural heritage; natural heritage; and festivals and events.<sup>52</sup> I find Baeker's understanding of cultural resources to be very practical from a policy perspective because the categories are very easy to understand, so it is not surprising that a lot of municipalities are using this framework. Most of the categories in Baeker's framework could be defined broadly and vary between municipalities (i.e. what constitutes a cultural space or facility in one city may be

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<sup>50</sup> I was part of the committee that advised the Canadian Urban Institute and MCPI while they created this guide.

<sup>51</sup> *Cultural Resource Mapping: A Guide for Municipalities*, p. 17-19

<sup>52</sup> An explanation of Baeker's Cultural Resource Framework is available on his firm's website: <http://mappingauthenticity.com/work/resources/concepts/cultural-mapping/>

different from what constitutes a cultural space or facility in another city). However, one criticism I have of Baeker is that it is not clear how some things that might be considered part of a local culture would fit in this framework (i.e. sports, food, agriculture, religion, language or dialect, etc.). It is also interesting to note that art is not its own category in Baeker's framework, though it could be part of most of the categories.

### 3.3 Cultural policy

One of the best known and simplest definitions of public policy is that it is simply “anything a government chooses to do or not to do.”<sup>53</sup> This definition has been criticized for not making a distinction between trivial (i.e. which paper clips to buy) and important (i.e. the level of funding for education) government decisions, but it is still widely accepted as a starting point for defining public policy. The main point is that public policy is something that governments choose to do or not to do.<sup>54</sup> In this sense, *cultural* policy could be thought of simply as anything that a government decides to do or not to do with regards to culture. But “culture” in what sense? And why limit our understanding of what constitutes cultural policy to the actions of governments? This simple definition of cultural policy may be both too broad in one sense and too narrow in another. If using Williams' very broad definition of culture, then cultural policy could include almost any policy, since almost anything could have some effect on a community's ‘way of life’ (Williams' third category). At the same time, it may be too narrow to think of cultural policy (or any area of public policy) as being solely in the hands of government. Private and third sector organizations could presumably have just as much, if not more, effect on culture as governments. For example, decisions by Hollywood producers regarding the

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<sup>53</sup> Thomas Dye quoted in Howlett et al 1995, p. 4

<sup>54</sup> Howlett et al 1995, p. 4-6

sorts of films they will produce can have significant cultural impacts, but these are not government decisions (though governments may try to influence these decisions – i.e. through film tax credits).

The inclusion of private enterprises into the cultural policy discussion raises concern that there may be a tendency to overemphasize economic benefits of culture. At a forum hosted by Princeton University's Centre for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies in 1999, that tried to develop a definition for cultural policy, many delegates were concerned that talking about cultural policy in only rational, economic terms would leave little room for questions of values and norms.<sup>55</sup> In other words, the essence of what culture is can be lost when policies that supposedly deal with culture view culture as merely an instrument for achieving other objectives (i.e. economic objectives). The fact that Florida's creative class theory and the potential economic benefits of “creative cities” has garnered so much attention in recent years now makes the over-reliance on economic reasoning in cultural policy more of a concern than ever.

In Canada, since the Massey Report, the tendency has been to think of cultural policy in terms of *deliberate* actions by *governments* (most often the federal government) aimed at having a *direct* impact on Canadian culture. This usually meant providing some form of support for, or protection of, *cultural production* (i.e. films, music, books, etc.) in Canada. The need for cultural policy in Canada seemed to come from a desire for Canada to be unique. More specifically, in the post-WWII era for Canadians being “unique” has usually meant being 'not American.' The most notable work on the political economy of

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<sup>55</sup> Princeton University Centre for Arts and Cultural Policy Studies, “What is Cultural Policy? A Dialogue for an Emerging Field”, 1999, viewed October 26, 2012  
<<https://www.princeton.edu/~artspol/dialogue.html>>

the Americanization of Canada (and the need to resist it) is Ian Lumsden's *Close the 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* published in 1970. Lumsden and the other authors argue that American monopoly capitalism is driving the Americanization of Canada.<sup>56</sup> It is becoming increasingly difficult for Canada to have its own unique identity, distinct from the United States, when American influence in the Canadian economy is so strong. American media has considerable influence in Canada. Many Canadians depend on American businesses for employment. American ideologies have taken over Canadian universities and governments. When Canadians begin to believe, as some of the authors claimed they already had, that the American approach must be the right approach, then Americanization becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy.<sup>57</sup> Canadian artists, writers, journalists, and academics must conform to these standards because so much of the money they depend on is controlled either by Americans or by Canadians who have bought into American ideologies.<sup>58</sup>

Two things about Lumsden's book really stand out. The first is how relevant the concerns it addresses remain more than 40 years after the book was published. A shift has occurred in Canadian cultural policy since the 1970's. During the neoliberal era Canadian governments became more interested in promoting Canadian interests and identity abroad rather than insuring that the country was able to maintain an identity at home. It has been argued that this was the federal government's reason for supporting the

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<sup>56</sup> Lumsden, Ian, *Close the 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1970)

<sup>57</sup> For example, Wood, Ellen and Neal, "Canada and the American science of politics," in *Close the 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* ed. Ian Lumsden (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1970) 179-196

<sup>58</sup> For example, Dexter, Gail, "Yes, cultural imperialism too!" in *Close the 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* ed. Ian Lumsden (Toronto, ON: University of Toronto Press, 1970) 157-168

so called “Cultural Renaissance”<sup>59</sup> projects in Toronto. They were hoping these projects would help Toronto gain an international reputation as a “creative city,” which in turn would help Canada's image abroad.<sup>60</sup> Nevertheless, though the government's focus may have shifted, the threat to Canada's identity posed by the United States remains. Many Canadians *still* depend on American businesses for employment; American ideologies are *still* present in Canadian universities and governments; and Canadian artists, writers, journalists, and academics *still* must conform to American standards because so much of the money they depend on is controlled either by Americans or by Canadians who have embraced American ideologies.

The second thing to note about *Close the 49<sup>th</sup> Parallel* is that it is easy to see how many of the ideas discussed in this book can now be applied at the local level as well. This is especially true in suburban communities that live in the shadow of a big city. When many members of a city or town rely on another (usually larger) city for their employment, entertainment/recreation, shopping, etc., then the lines between these two places begin to blur. The same can be true within the core city where individual neighbourhoods can find it difficult to establish their own identity within the city when they are very dependent upon other parts of the city. This problem can also extend beyond major metropolitan regions. As will be discussed further in Chapter Four, just as monopoly capitalism has led to the Americanization of Canada, it has also resulted in the same sorts of businesses, buildings, infrastructure, and ultimately way of life being

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<sup>59</sup> The expression “Cultural Renaissance” has been used to refer to a series of major capital campaigns by Toronto's largest cultural organizations, including the Royal Ontario Museum, the Art Gallery of Ontario, the Canadian Opera Company, and others. These projects took place during the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century. They received support from all levels of government, along with private donors.

<sup>60</sup> Yu, Mary, “The Making of a Creative City: An Analysis of Toronto's Culture Plan and Cultural Planning in Toronto,” MA Thesis, Canadian Studies, Carleton University, 2009, p. 27-8

established in so many cities and towns. This is what urban critic James Howard Kunstler referred to as the “geography of nowhere”<sup>61</sup> – when every place looks the same we begin to lose our concept of place.

### **3.4 Differentiating municipal cultural planning from traditional cultural policy**

The purpose of this section is to build on MCPI’s definition of municipal cultural planning that was stated at the beginning of this chapter. The nature of municipal cultural planning becomes clearer when it is contrasted with traditional cultural policy. The point of this comparison is not to suggest that municipal cultural planning has replaced cultural policy or that cultural policy is no longer relevant. On the contrary, by recognizing that cultural *planning* and cultural *policy* are distinct, one can see that they may both be worthwhile endeavours for governments to pursue.

One of the most significant differences between municipal cultural planning and conventional cultural policy is the municipal focus. Traditionally, cultural policy in Canada (and elsewhere) has been seen as a federal responsibility. To some extent culture has also been a provincial responsibility in Canada (especially in Quebec), but the role of municipalities in this area is a relatively new phenomenon. Municipal cultural planning is a recognition of the growing importance of municipal governments because of their ability to coordinate public policies and services at the local level.

Unlike many conventional cultural policies, especially traditional arts policies, municipal cultural plans are not limited to cultural production, nor are they meant to be focused on sector-specific strategies. MCPs should be much broader. One of the aims of this approach is to understand the interconnections between many different branches of

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<sup>61</sup> This was the title of Kunstler’s (1993) book that discussed the decline of American cities.

the government and different facets of the cultural sector. Municipal cultural planning is typically not located in one specific department of the government. Usually one department will need to take the lead in creating and updating municipal cultural plans (in many municipalities specific culture departments have been created for this purpose), but to truly be a municipal cultural plan there must be cooperation across the municipal corporation. Partnerships with external partners also tend to play a larger role in municipal cultural planning than in traditional cultural policies. As described earlier, this is part of a bigger trend in public administration that emphasizes the importance of public-private-third sector partnerships. It is also a realization that many private and third sector organizations have an effect on culture. Culture is not something that governments can or should support alone.

The partnership aspect of MCP makes it more philosophy than policy. As mentioned earlier, the ideal situation (though it can be difficult to achieve) is that all branches of the municipality, along with the private partners, buy into the philosophy and consider local cultural issues in everything that they do. Some governments have adopted a “gender lens” that is meant to help bureaucrats insure that gender issues are considered in everything that the government does. Similar tools have been created for issues of race, sexuality, etc.<sup>62</sup> A municipal cultural plan can be thought of as a 'culture lens.'

One final difference between municipal cultural planning and conventional cultural policy is that planning is an active term. This implies an ongoing process, which can be adapted to changing environments. This idea of a dynamic, adaptable process is in

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<sup>62</sup> For example, see City of Ottawa, *Equity and Inclusion Lens: A user's guide*, 2009. This guide is one of the most extensive “lenses” that has been created, as it includes 11 disadvantaged groups, such as women, visual minorities, people living in poverty, and others.

stark contrast to the protectionist practices that have traditionally been a major part of national cultural policies.

### **3.5 Richard Florida and “creative cities”**

No thesis on municipal cultural planning would be complete without at least some discussion of creative class and creative city theory. The hype surrounding Florida’s work over the past decade or so is undeniable. The term 'creative cities' has become synonymous with his creative class theory, but the term can be used much more broadly. Roberta Comunian identified three different ways that 'creative city' development has been used: urban regeneration (e.g. Evans and Shaw 2004; Miles 2005); economic development (e.g. Florida 2002; Scott 2000, 2004); and social inclusion (e.g. Belfiore 2002; Merli 2002)<sup>63</sup>. I would propose a fourth (though it can overlap to some extent with each of the other three): fostering and protecting unique aspects of a city or town to maintain a sense of place. This is what Kunstler and others<sup>64</sup> have argued is needed. However, if applied in the wrong way the Floridian approach to creative city development (with its heavy focus on a narrow group of people known as the 'creative class') can actually threaten the unique character of a city. For example, Joshua Long found that development efforts centred on the creative class in Austin, Texas – regarded by many as a culturally-vibrant community with a world-renown music scene – are leading to over-commercialization and threatening the sustainability of the city's creative

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<sup>63</sup> Comunian, Roberta, “Rethinking the Creative City: The Role of Complexity, Networks, and Interactions in the Urban Creative Economy,” *Urban Studies*, Vol. 48, No. 6, May 2011, p. 1157

<sup>64</sup> For example, Baeker, Greg and Glen Murray, “Combating the Geography of Nowhere,” *Municipal World*, September 2005, p. 9-11

industries.<sup>65</sup> As will be discussed in Chapter Five, similar arguments have been made about creative city development in many of Toronto's neighbourhoods.

Though I feel the creative city movement can go far beyond Florida's creative class theory, the growing body of literature on this theory needs to be acknowledged. Long notes that “the popularity of Richard Florida's work has led to the zealous implementation of his creative city thesis by many city officials, policy makers, and urban planners.”<sup>66</sup> I experienced this first-hand, as the pressure to justify policy decisions in Floridian terms was always present when I worked as a municipal cultural planner. However, while Florida's theory has appeal for many policy-makers, it has also drawn a lot of criticism. For example, Nathaniel Lewis and Betsy Donald have argued that there is a big city bias in Florida's work. Smaller cities and towns are made to appear as inevitable losers in the creative economy, though there may be other ways to understand creative capital that do not marginalize smaller communities. They used Kingston, Ontario as a case study to show how creative class theory could be adapted for smaller communities.<sup>67</sup> There were similar findings from Mcgranahan and Wojan (2007) in the USA<sup>68</sup> and Andersen et al (2010) in the Nordic countries.<sup>69</sup> The value of the creative economy can also be understated in somewhat larger cities, like New Orleans, where many creative workers are volunteers or are paid under the table. New Orleans scores poorly in Florida's indexes, as the share of its population that are considered to be

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<sup>65</sup> Long, Joshua, “Sustaining creativity in the creative archetype: the case of Austin, Texas,” *Cities*, Vol. 26, 2009, p. 210

<sup>66</sup> Long, p. 210

<sup>67</sup> Lewis, Nathaniel M. and Betsy Donald, “A New Rubric for 'Creative City' Potential in Canada's Smaller Cities,” *Urban Studies*, Urban Studies, Vol. 37, No. 4, 2000, p. 639–649

<sup>68</sup> Mcgranahan and Wojan 2007

<sup>69</sup> Andersen et al 2010

creative class 'professionals' is quite small.<sup>70</sup> However, anyone who has actually experienced New Orleans' vibrant culture has a very different view of the place than what Florida's statistics show.

Another common criticism of Florida's theory is that his approach can lead to gentrification, which can result in the further marginalization of already marginalized groups.<sup>71</sup> The creative class theory is a form of 'trickle-down' economics: let the creative class flourish and benefits will trickle down to everyone else. Florida's analysis tends to look at the aggregate benefits to a community of developing a strong creative class – as opposed to using class analysis to examine whether or not a stronger creative class actually benefits the other classes. The issue of gentrification caused by municipal cultural planning is certainly a concern in the GTA. It will be discussed further in the following chapters, especially Chapter Five.

### **3.6 Understanding space and place**

David Harvey has said that space ought to be included in Raymond Williams' list of the most complicated words in the English language.<sup>72</sup> Harvey conceptualizes space in three ways: absolute space, relative space, and relational space.<sup>73</sup> The simplest of these three concepts – absolute space – tends to be the easiest to understand in policy terms. Conventional land use planners and other municipal bureaucrats usually think of space in this way. Often when municipalities begin their first cultural planning project they map

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<sup>70</sup> A list of the top ten and bottom ten cities on Florida's Bohemian Index, along with an explanation of why New Orleans scores much poorer than one would expect can be found here: [http://www.creativeclass.com/\\_v3/creative\\_class/2010/06/05/bohemian-index/](http://www.creativeclass.com/_v3/creative_class/2010/06/05/bohemian-index/).

<sup>71</sup> For example, Zimmerman, Jeffrey, "From brew town to cool town: Neoliberalism and the creative city development strategy in Milwaukee," *Cities*, Vol. 25, 2008, 230-242

<sup>72</sup> Harvey, David, "Space as a Key Word," Paper for Marx and Philosophy Conference, 29 May 2004, Institute of Education, London, p. 1

<sup>73</sup> Harvey, David, *Social Justice and the City* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1973)

cultural resources by locating them in absolute space – a fixed location that can be literally 'pinned' on a map. Part of the municipal cultural planning project that I worked on for the City of Peterborough included the opportunity for 'cultural workers' to self-identify as such by placing a pin on a map of the city where they do their cultural work (whether it is in the arts, heritage, or some other cultural sector).

In some cases municipalities are able to move beyond viewing space simply as an absolute. As municipalities become more advanced in their cultural planning and cultural mapping endeavours they often begin to consider the relative location of cultural resources – where are these resources located relative to other cultural resources, to the city's downtown, to neighbourhoods, to transportation routes, etc. Using this approach the City of Toronto has identified a number of 'cultural corridors' that have been incorporated into its municipal cultural plans.<sup>74</sup>

An even more advanced form of cultural mapping is to consider the relationships between cultural resources, as well as relationships between cultural resources and the communities that use them. The concept of relational space implies that what exists at a particular point in space cannot be understood only by looking at that point. Instead, one must consider everything that is going on around it.<sup>75</sup> This is certainly the most difficult type of space to understand in policy terms because it is the most difficult to measure and express definitively. However, it is arguably the type of space that is the most relevant to cultural planning, since a community's sense of identity is derived from a complex set of relations; it cannot be neatly positioned on a map (in absolute space) nor can it be located relative to other things. As Harvey noted, “If I ask the question: what does Tiananmen

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<sup>74</sup> See City of Toronto Cultural Maps and *Culture Plan for the Creative City*, 2003

<sup>75</sup> Harvey 2004, p. 4

Square or “Ground Zero” mean, then the only way I can seek an answer is to think in relational terms.”<sup>76</sup>

Understanding the absolute and relative position of a space is useful for most traditional city planning functions. Subdivision planners, for example, work in absolute space when deciding what is permissible in new neighbourhoods; while transportation planners must consider where areas of the city are located relative to other areas when planning transit routes. Those concepts of space are fairly easy to incorporate into bylaws, strategic plans, and other municipal documents. Absolute space can be identified using latitude and longitude or other generally accepted boundaries for the space. Once boundaries are defined, then policy can be written. Relative space can be somewhat more difficult to define, since it must be defined relative to somewhere else. If the relative location of a space is being identified in terms of travel time (i.e. it is the area that is a 30 minute drive from downtown), then this could change over time as transportation changes. Nevertheless, it is still possible to identify boundaries and write policy – the boundaries may just have to be adjusted from time to time. Identifying a space in relational terms, however, requires far more flexibility and adaptability in terms of boundaries. As Gupta and Ferguson noted, cultures are constantly changing and their boundaries are blurred. Likewise, the way people relate to one another and to their surroundings and the way these relationships help shape our understanding of a space will be in constant flux. This makes it very difficult to incorporate into policy. Policy needs to be written in such a way as to remain relevant as a space and its boundaries change, and without forcing an understanding of the space onto the users of the space. As

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<sup>76</sup> Harvey 2004, p. 5

will be discussed further in the later chapters, this flexible, community-driven concept of space encounters challenges when it comes up against the rigid, top-down bureaucracy of government.

Moving from the concept of *space* to the concept of *place* (terms often used interchangeably, but the distinction between them needs to be understood), Gupta and Ferguson understand place as being “the way culture is spatialized.”<sup>77</sup> This seems to fit with the way that Kunstler was using the term. Following Kunstler's claim that we lose our concept of place once every place appears to be the same,<sup>78</sup> in order to truly become a 'place' a space must have distinguishing features that give it an identity. Conversely, a 'placeless' space is a space without anything that distinguishes it, and is therefore a space with no real identity. In other words, place requires identity and identity requires difference. Placeless spaces may still have things with which they are associated, but this does not give them an identity because they are the same things with which other spaces are associated. For example, people may speak of the 'Walmart in city X', but the association of Walmart with this city does not really give the city an identity (i.e. it does not really make it a true place) because it is likely the same as the Walmarts in hundreds of other cities.

Kunstler deals specifically with the built form (physical space), but all three types of space described by Harvey are helpful in understanding this concept of place. Just as a space can be distinguished by its physical attributes and absolute location, it can also be distinguished by its location relative to other places (i.e. suburban communities can be known for their location relative to the central city in their region) and by its

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<sup>77</sup> Gupta and Ferguson 1997, p. 3

<sup>78</sup> Kunstler 1993

relationships (both the internal interactions amongst the members of the community and the external connections that the place has to other places). In fact, even when a place is distinguished by its physical attributes it is really the relationships – the way that the members of the community interact and relate with these physical attributes – that truly make the place unique. In other words, it is one thing to build a building that looks different from any other building that has ever been built, but it is another thing for a community to see the building as a landmark and as something that identifies their place.

What is important to note about this concept of place is that it is something that a space *becomes* (or does not become), as opposed to something that a space has always been. As Michael Smith pointed out, this means that the way a place is understood is not eternal (the representations of the place were created at some point in the past), is not necessarily universally accepted (it can be contested), and is not static (it can evolve over time)<sup>79</sup> – much like the concept of relational space described above. This discussion of place raises the question: What does it mean for a space to have something that distinguishes it? Who or what gives a space its identity? Gupta and Ferguson identified four key questions that should be asked when considering how a space becomes a place:

- With meaning-making understood as a practice, how are spatial meanings established?
- Who has the power to make places of spaces?
- Who contests this?
- What is at stake?<sup>80</sup>

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<sup>79</sup> Smith, Michael Peter, *Transnational Urbanism: Locating Globalization* (Malden, Massachusetts: Blackwell Publishers, 2001) p. 101-122

<sup>80</sup> Gupta and Ferguson 1997, p. 33-51

They caution their readers against assuming that what they see in a space presently (or what they saw there in the past) is the 'natural order of things.' Space, place, culture, identity, and community are all social creations. We need to be aware of the historic constructions of a place – the social actors involved in the process through which spatial meanings were established and the power relations between them.<sup>81</sup>

Now that the concepts of place and place-making have been established, this paper turns to a discussion of when place-making goes awry. By considering the power relations involved in making places, we can also reflect on how placeless space is made. The same actors that can have the power to make places of spaces can also have the power to render spaces placeless when it is in their interest to do so. Gupta and Ferguson's questions can be tweaked to instead consider how a space becomes placeless. The placeless space-making version of Gupta and Ferguson's four questions would be:

- With placeless space-making understood as an active process, how are spaces *made* placeless?
- Who has the power to do this?
- Who challenges the making of placeless space?
- What will it mean for a community if their city/region/neighbourhood is made placeless?

The next chapter addresses several common causes of placeless space, while acknowledging the importance of capital accumulation as a driving force behind each of these causes.

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<sup>81</sup> Gupta and Ferguson 1997, p. 8-9

## **4 Chapter: Making Placeless Space in Cities**

As discussed in the previous chapter, there is a growing body of literature that addresses the concepts of place and place-making. Increasingly, this includes literature (both academic and otherwise) that deals with municipal cultural planning. Cultural planners, both those working in government and those working as consultants, often use the term 'place-making' when describing what they do and why it is important. However, what is rarely discussed is the opposite of place-making – the making of placeless space. Placelessness is often viewed – both by academics and cultural planners – as something that emerges passively through the absence of place-making. In other words, if you do not actively promote place-making, you end up with placeless spaces. This may be true to some extent, but it is too simplistic. As this chapter will discuss, placelessness is something that is “made.” It can be traced to conscious decisions that result from a complex set of social, economic, and political forces. It would be impossible to identify all of the factors that contribute to the making of placeless space, and this research did not attempt to do so. However, factors that emerged as significant throughout the research include: businesses, particularly those with little or no connection to the local community (i.e. box stores); buildings and infrastructure, both public and private, that are not suited to a community's way of life; a lack of opportunities for social interaction and community engagement; and a lack of opportunities for cultural expression. This is by no means an exhaustive list, and the division is somewhat arbitrary, as all of these factors are interrelated. This chapter will discuss each of these four broadly-defined factors, their role in the making of placeless space, the interrelations between these four factors, and the driving force behind all of them.

## 4.1 Placeless businesses

We are living in an age of placeless business. Over the past few decades major fast food chains and box stores have grown rapidly following a business model that aims to create businesses that can operate everywhere and anywhere. The problem is that when everywhere becomes anywhere, it also becomes nowhere. This is what Kunstler meant when he referred to the “geography of nowhere.”<sup>82</sup>

Consolidation of firms in many industries has furthered this trend towards placeless business. Though some industries remain very competitive, there is a trend towards monopolization in most industries in capitalist economies. This is not a new insight. There is a substantial body of literature on monopoly capitalism beginning with Karl Marx in the 19<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>83</sup> Marx agreed with the classical political economists that capitalism was competitive, meaning that there were many firms, each too small to affect the market price. In other words, there were market conditions that roughly approximated what economists refer to as 'perfect competition' (though truly *perfect* competition is impossible). Unlike the classical political economists, however, Marx felt that this system was unstable. This is because there is potential for greater profits with less competition, which leads to either monopolization or cartellization. In practice, monopolization has been much more common.<sup>84</sup> This may be the result of brand power. For capitalists, combining many firms into one firm not only reduces competition – it helps with building a recognized brand. This strengthens control of markets, as brand power makes it difficult for new firms to be established.

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<sup>82</sup> Kunstler 1993

<sup>83</sup> For example, Karl Marx, *Capital*, Vol. 3, Chapter 27

<sup>84</sup> Sweezy, Paul M., “Monopoly Capitalism” in *The New Palgrave Dictionary of Economics*, edited by John Eatwell, Murray Milgate, and Peter Newman, (Palgrave Macmillan, 1987)

Though monopolization and brand consolidation may be desirable for a small group of capitalists, it can be devastating to the urban landscape. The result is cities full of box stores, fast food chain restaurants, enormous parking lots, and uniform housing developments that look exactly the same in every location. Numerous researchers have shown that this creates a long list of economic, social, health, and environmental problems. For example, cities without unique places have difficulty attracting highly skilled workers.<sup>85</sup> Also, it has been shown that car-dependent cities – which tend to be the result of box stores, fast food restaurants, and subdivisions – are connected to a range of health, social, and environmental problems.<sup>86</sup> However, this also creates a cultural problem: cities full of businesses that are not connected to the space they inhabit and therefore do not help to distinguish the space from everywhere else.

Along with placeless businesses also comes placeless jobs and placeless products. In the heyday of Ontario's manufacturing sector, many of the province's cities were known for the things they produced and the type of work that was done there. Peterborough was “the electric city.” Hamilton was “steel town.” Windsor-Detroit was “the motor city.” As manufacturing jobs have declined, and service sector jobs have risen, more and more Ontarians have found themselves working in jobs that could be anywhere. Even many of the jobs in Richard Florida's creative class, such as lawyers and accountants, could be (and are) anywhere and everywhere. In other words, they are placeless jobs. Meanwhile, monopolization and brand consolidation have made it very difficult for local businesses to compete with the established brands. The result has been

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<sup>85</sup> Florida 2002

<sup>86</sup> Sallis, James F. et al, “An Ecological Approach to Creating Active Living Communities,” Annual Review of Public Health, Vol. 27, April 2006, p. 305-6

placeless products – the same products being bought and consumed everywhere. Without local businesses communities cannot develop their own unique products. There is lots of discussion of the economic impacts of consumers buying most of their goods from non-local businesses. For example, Jane Jacobs explained that regions that were not capable of “import substitution” (substituting what they buy from other regions with goods they produce at home that can be sold elsewhere) would always be dependent on other city regions for their economic survival.<sup>87</sup> However, the cultural impacts of not being able to create any unique local products must also be considered. Scholars of Canadian Studies are beginning to recognize the importance of Canadian brands (most notably Tim Horton's)<sup>88</sup> for Canadian identity in an era where the Americanization of Canada is hard to deny. If cities, towns, regions, and neighbourhoods want to establish their own identity, then the question must be ask, ‘What is the equivalent of Tim Horton’s locally?’ How many communities still have diners, coffee shops, movie theatres, or other businesses that the members of the community can identify with?

Consolidation in media industries has been particularly problematic for many communities. Many cities have lost their daily newspaper. In many of the cities that still have a daily newspaper (or any sort of newspaper) it is controlled by a large corporation that is based elsewhere. In Ontario this corporation is usually either Metroland, which owns more than 100 “local” newspapers,<sup>89</sup> or Sun Media, which owns more than 200

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<sup>87</sup> Jacobs, Jane, *Cities and the Wealth of Nations: Principles of Economic Life* (New York, NY: Viking, 1985)

<sup>88</sup> See Patricia Cormack. Tim Horton’s is an interesting case because it is actually an American corporation. However, as Cormack explains, they have done an amazing job of embedding themselves within Canadian identity.

<sup>89</sup> Metroland Media, viewed October 26, 2012 < <http://www.metroland.com/Communities>>

“local” newspapers.<sup>90</sup> As will be discussed further in Chapter Five, a lack of local media has posed a significant challenge to city planners, community organizers, and cultural producers in Mississauga. Despite being a city of more than 700,000 people, Mississauga has no daily newspaper, no local television, and only recently got its first local radio station.<sup>91</sup>

## **4.2 Placeless buildings and infrastructure**

Buildings and infrastructure are, of course, closely linked to businesses. It is businesses, after all, that build much of what we see in cities. However, buildings and infrastructure has been broken out into its own category of placeless space making because it is broader than just the built form of businesses. Public infrastructure (i.e. roads, bridges, etc.) is very important too. Also, while businesses may prefer that their buildings look a certain way (i.e. most box stores and fast food chains have a standard store/restaurant design that they follow), this does not have to be the case. Municipalities can require chain restaurants to design their buildings in a way that is suitable to the local surroundings. As well, although “convenience” is usually thought of as the primary objective of businesses such as fast food restaurants, the design of their facilities does not always have such a limited focus. For example, while Tim Horton’s coffee shops usually have a drive through, most also have a ‘sit-down’ area that can become a community gathering place.

Transportation infrastructure has a huge affect on the culture and character of a place. ‘Car culture’ is very prevalent in Canada for a variety of reasons. This country has

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<sup>90</sup> Sun Media, viewed October 26, 2012 < <http://www.sunmedia.ca/SunMedia/>>

<sup>91</sup> Personal communication with John Aryrio, Supervisor, Research and Projects, City of Mississauga Culture Division

more kilometres of road per person than any other country in the world, and 86% of Canadians drive to work.<sup>92</sup> But transportation infrastructure affects far more than just the way people get to work each day. Research by Nick Scott showed how the character of several Ottawa, Ontario neighbourhoods changed considerably when the transportation infrastructure changed. He also showed how the character of neighbourhoods that were initially designed as ‘streetcar suburbs’ is quite different from neighbourhoods that were created more recently as ‘car suburbs.’ Neighbourhoods that were designed in a way that maximizes convenience for drivers are generally not great places for community gatherings and public events. These neighbourhoods appear lifeless. Drivers race through, with their only intention being to get from point A to point B as quickly as possible.<sup>93</sup>

Joel Garreau explained how the buildings and infrastructure of cities began to change significantly after the introduction of the automobile. He noted that in the pre-automobile age “Because foot traffic was primary . . . and climate control had not yet been invented, the sidewalks were in the open air, next to the streets. Shops faced outward to display their wares to people passing as they walked, which made them visually interesting. Ownership of the land was usually highly fragmented, because nobody needed much space for their small-scale uses.”<sup>94</sup> The automobile has changed development patterns so significantly in part because they take up so much space. It takes about 400 square feet to park a car. That includes both the parking space and the car’s share of the driveway. This is substantially more space than the average worker requires

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<sup>92</sup> Scott, Nick, *Reassembling Urban Travel: Mobilities, Neighbourhoods, and Off-Car Possibilities*, PhD Thesis, Department of Sociology, Carleton University, 2012, p. 6-7

<sup>93</sup> Scott 2012

<sup>94</sup> Garreau, p. 113

in an office building, which is about 250 square feet. Therefore, developments in the age of the car tend to have very large parking lots (parking lots even bigger than the buildings they serve). Parking lots can be quite expensive to build, with parking structures being substantially more expensive than surface parking lots, and underground parking being substantially more expensive than parking structures. Therefore, large surface parking lots became the norm in cities built during the age of the car. There generally is not much variety with surface parking lots. This has meant that large areas have been cleared of whatever was there before to build something that looks almost exactly the same everywhere.<sup>95</sup> Developers in North America have, in recent decades, followed a rule that states that a person will not want to walk more than 600 feet. This puts strict limits on how large these surface parking lots can be. This means that there is also a limit to how big office or retail buildings can be if developers assume (as they often do) that there must be a parking space for each person using the building (in many cases this is even required by local planning rules). Hence, increasing density becomes unlikely in car-focussed cities.<sup>96</sup>

An interesting implication emerges from Scott's research. Building the same infrastructure as everywhere else can do more than just create a sense of sameness. It can actually force sameness. As Scott found, the way we can live our lives has a lot to do with the infrastructure around us.<sup>97</sup> For example, we cannot walk if there are no sidewalks, we cannot bike if there are no bike paths, and we cannot commute by train if

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<sup>95</sup> Garreau, p. 113

<sup>96</sup> Garreau, p. 117

<sup>97</sup> Scott 2012

there are no railways.<sup>98</sup> This problem is not limited to transportation, though that is what Scott was investigating. We cannot skate if there are no ice rinks, we cannot act if there are no theatres, and we cannot hold public forums if there are no meeting places.<sup>99</sup> Part of Williams' definition of culture is that it is a 'way of life.'<sup>100</sup> Since so much of what we do (or can do) is tied to what is built around us, the affect of the built environment on culture cannot be ignored.

### **4.3 Lack of opportunities for social interaction and community engagement**

If everyone stays home, what sort of place can be established? This is a big problem in bedroom communities where most time is spent either at work or at home. In many ways this is closely linked to infrastructure. Many bedroom communities lack spaces suitable for community gatherings and events. This can also be a problem in more urban, densely-populated settings if too much space is devoted to private uses (i.e. private homes) and little room is left for public uses.

There are likely other factors that contribute to limited social interaction and community engagement. This includes the growth of in-home entertainment options. As was discussed in the previous section, post-WWII communities (especially suburban communities) are often isolating communities because they were built around personal transportation – the automobile. However, these communities are also isolating because they were built around in-home entertainment – the television. Canadians now spend an average of 28.5 hours per week watching television, plus an additional 2.8 hours per

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<sup>98</sup> I recognize that there are some exceptions. For example, some daring cyclists will ride their bikes on busy streets without bike paths, and some determined pedestrians will walk on roads without sidewalks. For obvious reasons these are not safe things to do, so many people will feel that their car is their only option under these circumstances.

<sup>99</sup> Again, I recognize that there will be some exceptions in these cases too (i.e. street theatre), but the point is that infrastructure (or lack thereof) can limit options.

<sup>100</sup> Williams 1976

week watching TV shows online.<sup>101</sup> Some sports fans now say that the picture quality of big screen televisions is actually better than watching the game from the stadium. One has to wonder what this means for community engagement. Interestingly, the internet – although it creates even more in-home entertainment options – may be helping to decrease this isolation. The early days of the internet (sometimes referred to as “Internet 1.0”) were characterized by static websites. These websites provided one-way communication from the website's creator/owner to the website's viewer – not unlike television channels and radio stations. More recently, however, “Internet 2.0” has been an age of dynamic websites in which the internet users can have some control over the content and interact with other users. In a sense, social networking can become a form of 'virtual place-making' in which the users of Facebook, Twitter, and other social networking sites create online communities, which help shape and reshape the virtual spaces in which they inhabit. If virtual communities are able to create a unique identity for virtual spaces, then arguably these could be called virtual places. Presumably, there could be forces that can render a virtual space placeless, just as there are forces – like those discussed in this chapter – that can create placeless space in the physical world. The making of, and resistance to, placelessness in the virtual world and the use of online communities as a form of resistance to placelessness in the physical world are outside the scope of this research. I only mention this here to stress the importance of considering the impact of ever-changing technology when addressing the factors that contribute to the making of placeless space in cities.

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<sup>101</sup> Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission, quoted in a CBC.ca news article, September 4, 2012 <<http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/story/2012/09/04/crtc-telecom-usage-report.html>>

Many public services are also crucial for social interaction and community engagement. These include parks, community centres, libraries, schools, and others. These places can provide space for many community activities in addition to the services they provide directly. This aspect of these public services is sometimes overlooked. In 2011 the Mayor of Toronto, Rob Ford, proposed centralizing library services, but quickly backed away from this idea.<sup>102</sup> Closing library branches may save some money, but it could leave many neighbourhoods without space for community functions. In the past, churches often served as community hubs. To a certain extent, this is still the case in many places. However, in a society that is becoming increasingly secular and increasingly religiously diverse, there is a need for secular places (i.e. libraries, parks, etc.) to fulfil this role.

Creating opportunities for community engagement should be an objective of all municipalities, but especially in municipalities – like Toronto and Mississauga – that welcome many new immigrants each year. If everyone stays home, how can newcomers be made to feel as though they are apart of the community?

#### **4.4 Lack of opportunities for cultural expression and participation in cultural activities**

Can culture exist if it is never expressed? If culture is understood as a *shared* identity, then it cannot be something that a person holds internally. As discussed in the previous section, culture requires relationships and interactions between members of a community. Insuring the members of a community have opportunities for cultural

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<sup>102</sup> For a discussion of the budget challenges facing the Toronto Public Library and the proposed solutions, see Michelle Lee's article in *Library Journal* on December 9, 2011, which can be found here: [http://www.libraryjournal.com/lj/home/893004-264/toronto\\_public\\_library\\_struggling\\_to.html.csp](http://www.libraryjournal.com/lj/home/893004-264/toronto_public_library_struggling_to.html.csp).

expression is the area of place-making most closely associated with traditional cultural (arts) policy. However, opportunities for cultural expression can be affected by many things outside of traditional cultural policy. For example, culture can be expressed through the design of buildings or other infrastructure, but this is not something that normally falls within the mandate of the Culture Department at any level of government.

Creating opportunities for cultural expression is probably the easiest aspect of place-making to address in the sense that it can, at least to some extent, to be addressed through the provision of government services. This includes operating facilities such as art galleries and theatres, as well as having grant programs for arts organizations. Simply providing these programs is not enough. It is also crucial that everyone be included. This has become a major issue in cities that have seen significant changes in their populations in recent years, but the established arts organizations still tend to cater to long-time residents. Barriers to participation in cultural activities can also result (inadvertently) from municipal policies. For example, Muslims in the Greater Toronto Area have had difficulty building mosques in part because of local planning rules and processes.<sup>103</sup> This is much more difficult to address because it requires moving beyond traditional cultural policy and coordinating with many different parts of the municipal corporation.

#### **4.5 Capital and the city**

*“The modern alliance of the city with capitalism . . . raises the question of whether there is any place for making a place in cities . . .”<sup>104</sup>*

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<sup>103</sup> Isin, Engin F. and Myer Siemiatycki. “Making Space for Mosques: Struggles for Urban Citizenship in Diasporic Toronto.” *Race, Space, and the Law*. Ed. Razack, Shrene. Toronto, ON: Between the Lines Press, 2002

<sup>104</sup> Bonner, Kieran, “Understanding Placemaking: Economics, Politics, and Everyday Life in the Culture of Cities,” *Canadian Journal of Urban Research*, Vol. 11, No. 1, 2002, p. 2-3

As Kieran Bonner's quote suggests, the impact of capital should not be overlooked in any discussion of place-making (or placeless space making) in cities. We now digress from our discussion of placeless space making to consider the relationship between capital and the city.

For better or worse, capitalism creates and recreates cities. This is not a new insight. The strong connection between capital accumulation and urban space has been understood since the 19<sup>th</sup> century. In the 1840's Marx and Engels were already noting the deplorable conditions in many European cities, and they called for a more even distribution of the populace in the Communist Manifesto.<sup>105</sup> More recently, David Harvey has explained that "urban" has a specific meaning in regards to capitalism. Both the accumulation of capital and class struggle (two things that Harvey claims are essential to capitalism and cannot really be separated) occur in urban spaces.<sup>106</sup>

Most of the economic growth in the world today occurs in cities. Even in Canada, traditionally a "staples" economy, many scholars have noted the importance of cities to future economic growth.<sup>107</sup> Jane Jacobs provided a lot of insight into why this is the case. She was critical of macroeconomists for using nations as their primary unit of analysis. For Jacobs, it is cities where markets, jobs, technology, and capital are created. The places with strong, stable, and flexible economies are places that are either in cities or part of what Jacobs refers to as "city regions" – areas that are in close proximity to a city that are brought into the city region when they gain access to city markets, jobs and

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<sup>105</sup> Marx, Karl and Engles, Friedrich, *Manifesto of the Communist Party* (London: Penguin Books 1967) p. 104

<sup>106</sup> Harvey, David, *The Urbanization of Capital* (Baltimore, MD: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1985) p. 1

<sup>107</sup> For example, see Meric Gertler, "Urban Economy and Society in Canada: Flows of People, Capital, and Ideas" *Isuma* (Autumn 2001).

people from the city move to the outlying community, technological advances improve connections, and capital from the city (sometimes with help from government) begins to flow into the community. In areas outside of city regions a small number of people may be able to survive off subsistence farming and small crafts, or the area may be populated by retirees or others living off accumulated wealth from a city region. However, these areas are not likely to be able to replace many of their imports (from other communities, not just other countries) with local goods, so their economy will always lack stability and flexibility. This is true even in areas that have an abundance of natural resources. Having 'stuff in the ground' does not, by itself, guarantee economic success. It is in cities where the means to transform raw materials into valuable commodities can exist. It is also cities that create markets for these commodities. Thus, as Jacobs pointed out, for areas that are endowed with natural resources their economic success depends in large part on their connection to a city (or cities). Since almost every nation on earth contains a mix of both prosperous regions and areas of economic disadvantage, Jacobs believed that most macroeconomic policies were misguided because they glossed over these regional differences and overlooked the importance of cities and city regions to economic success.<sup>108</sup>

Like Jacobs, Richard Florida certainly understands the central role of the city in economic success. He also stresses the importance of city regions, while noting that "mega regions" (large city regions linked together, often stretching across national borders) have become increasingly important for economic growth as well. In fact, Florida's research has shown that most economic growth throughout the world in recent

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<sup>108</sup> Jacobs 1985

years has occurred in a few large mega regions. The Greater Toronto Area is part of a mega region that Florida calls “Tor-Buff-Chester” – one that also includes Buffalo and Rochester.<sup>109</sup> Florida stresses the importance of transportation and communication links between communities within city regions and between city regions within mega regions.<sup>110</sup> Where Florida differs from Jacobs is with his identification of a specific “class” of workers who are crucial to the economic engine of cities. Though Jacobs did note the importance of creativity to enable “import substitution,” she did not focus her analysis on a specific segment of the workforce that is paid to be creative.<sup>111</sup> Nevertheless, both Florida and Jacobs (along with other urban theorists) shed light on the importance of cities as places where creative people can meet and exchange ideas, as well as being places that can provide essential infrastructure. Even in a staples economy it is in the classrooms, laboratories, and even coffee shops of cities where ideas about how to get the most out of the 'stuff in the ground' are developed.

#### **4.6 Making the connection**

What should not be overlooked is that the relationship between cities and capital is not one way. While cities provide space for capital accumulation, the drive to accumulate capital also shapes (and reshapes) cities. This is the common link between the different types of placeless space making discussed in this chapter. None of the four factors discussed is simply a result of an absence of place-making. There are conscious decisions being made in each case, with capital providing the motivation.

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<sup>109</sup> A map of the mega regions in North America can be found here:

[http://www.creativeclass.com/\\_v3/whos\\_your\\_city/maps/#Mega-Regions\\_of\\_North\\_America](http://www.creativeclass.com/_v3/whos_your_city/maps/#Mega-Regions_of_North_America).

<sup>110</sup> In this Wall Street Journal article, <http://online.wsj.com/article/SB120796112300309601.html> (“The Rise of the Mega Region, April 12, 2008), Florida explains why he believes the focus of economic analysis ought to shift from nations to mega regions.

<sup>111</sup> Jacobs 1985

Retail and food services businesses have decided to become placeless because it enables them to operate at a scale that would not be possible if they were place-based businesses. Some of these companies, such as Walmart and McDonalds, have grown to become some of the largest corporations in the world. The car-centric design of cities has also been a conscious decision that has made some people very wealthy. Many of the placeless buildings and infrastructure in cities are the result of developers looking to minimize their costs through uniform development. The desire of developers to minimize their costs and maximize the amount of space in their developments that can generate revenue (i.e. a house and not a park) results in a conscious decision to build neighbourhoods without space for community gatherings and cultural expression.

Economists might refer to the above-mentioned scenarios as “market failures” – situations in which individuals and businesses, looking to maximize their own personal well-being, do not take into account the “externalities” (impacts of economic transactions, both positive and negative, that affect the society or community as a whole) that are associated with their decisions. Conventional economic wisdom is that government intervention in the economy can correct the “inefficiencies” created by externalities through taxes, subsidies, regulation, etc. Of course, governments are also imperfect. As mentioned earlier in this paper, some of the most placeless developments have been state-led, and in many cases governments have also been complicit in placeless private developments. The purpose of this thesis is not to simply evaluate whether or not municipal cultural planning *could* address placeless space making in some hypothetical scenario, but to examine whether this tool, as used in Toronto and Mississauga, actually *has* addressed the making of placeless space in those cities. The

next two chapters, therefore, will review each of these case studies in regards to the factors contributing to placelessness and the forces that cause them described in this chapter.

## 5 Chapter: Toronto

### 5.1 Description and history of the city

Indigenous Peoples have lived in what is now the City of Toronto for almost 11,000 years, and the first Europeans arrived in the 17th century. The French built small trading posts in the area during the 18<sup>th</sup> century, but a permanent town was not really established until the British arrived. After the area was purchased from the Mississaugas, John Graves Simcoe, who was lieutenant-governor of Upper Canada in the late 18<sup>th</sup> century, established a military post to improve the colony's defences at a time when they were concerned about the possibility of an American invasion. A civilian town began to spring up around the post. The settlement became known as York, and it soon replaced the vulnerable border village of Niagara as Upper Canada's capital.<sup>112</sup>

York grew quite quickly after the War of 1812, as many banks, schools, and other important institutions were established. The Toronto Islands (then a peninsula) made York one of the safest natural harbours in the world. The town became a 'gateway' to Upper Canada and a hub for economic activity in the region. The town was incorporated as the City of Toronto in 1834. It was hoped that incorporation would help serve the needs of a growing, increasingly urban community (though there were still less than 10,000 residents at that time).<sup>113</sup>

Toronto began to industrialize rapidly after train service was introduced in the 1850's. Confederation in 1867 also contributed to the city's economic growth. By 1901, Toronto was a major industrial, commercial, financial, and institutional hub that had a

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<sup>112</sup> City of Toronto, "The History of Toronto: An 11,000-Year Journey," viewed January 21, 2012 <<http://www.toronto.ca/culture/history/history-shortversion.htm>>

<sup>113</sup> City of Toronto, "The History of Toronto: An 11,000-Year Journey," viewed January 21, 2012 <<http://www.toronto.ca/culture/history/history-shortversion.htm>>

population of more than 200,000. By the Second World War this population had more than tripled, and Toronto was beginning to compete with Montreal to be Canada's metropolis.<sup>114</sup> However, Toronto still had a ways to go to become a major urban centre. When the Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto was created as an upper-tier municipality in 1953 some people felt that "Metropolitan Toronto" was an oxymoron.<sup>115</sup> At that time, Montreal was still Canada's largest city. Major cultural institutions were established in Toronto in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, including the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM) and the Toronto Symphony, but its population was not very culturally diverse.<sup>116</sup> In fact, in the 1960's Toronto was still being referred to as a "British protestant bastion."<sup>117</sup> Nevertheless, major demographic change was already underway. After World War Two many new groups of immigrants began to arrive in Toronto. By the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century the former "British protestant bastion" had become one of the world's most multicultural cities.<sup>118</sup> According to the 2001 census, Toronto's residents spoke more than 150 different languages and dialects, and more than half of them were born outside of Canada.

The former regional municipality known as Metropolitan Toronto (Metro for short) included the lower-tier municipalities of the old City of Toronto and the former Cities of Etobicoke, Scarborough, East York, North York, and York. The core city was already highly urbanized when this municipality was created, but the suburbs were not

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<sup>114</sup> City of Toronto, "The History of Toronto: An 11,000-Year Journey," viewed January 21, 2012 <<http://www.toronto.ca/culture/history/history-shortversion.htm>>

<sup>115</sup> Silcox, David, presentation at Mavor Moor Cultural Policy Symposium, Oct. 24, 2008

<sup>116</sup> City of Toronto, "The History of Toronto: An 11,000-Year Journey," viewed January 21, 2012 <<http://www.toronto.ca/culture/history/history-shortversion.htm>>

<sup>117</sup> Toronto Star article quoted in Kristen Good, *Municipalities and Multiculturalism*, p. 92

<sup>118</sup> City of Toronto, "The History of Toronto: An 11,000-Year Journey," viewed January 21, 2012 <<http://www.toronto.ca/culture/history/history-shortversion.htm>>

well connected. Tensions between the urban and suburban areas of the municipality were always present. As the urban core grew, and improvements in transportation networks (most notably the creation of a subway system) were made, Metro became increasingly connected, but urban/suburban tensions remained.<sup>119</sup> On January 1, 1998 a new City of Toronto was created as a result of a forced amalgamation of all the municipalities in Metropolitan Toronto. Toronto residents voted overwhelmingly against this merger in a referendum, but the provincial government forced the amalgamation to go ahead anyway.<sup>120</sup>

## **5.2 Early cultural policy in Metropolitan Toronto: the Silcox and Hendry Reports**

Appendix A provides a timeline of cultural policy, planning, and related activities in the former Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto (including its lower-tier municipalities) and the new City of Toronto. In Metro, cultural policy development began, at least to some extent, very soon after the municipality was created. This was at a time when the Massey Report had drawn attention to the need for governments in Canada to play an active role in supporting cultural production. Canada's centennial also increased interest in promoting Canadian culture.<sup>121</sup> Metro Toronto, however, was one of the few places in Canada where the municipal government recognized that it could play a role in this area. In 1957 Metro began making grants to arts and culture organizations. From the late 1950's to the early 1970's Metro's role in culture was limited to funding a small group of organizations. However, in 1973-74 the municipality began to envision a

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<sup>119</sup> Silcox, David, presentation at Mavor Moor Cultural Policy Symposium, Oct. 24, 2008

<sup>120</sup> Personal communication with a Senior Policy Advisor for the City of Toronto, February 16, 2012

<sup>121</sup> Silcox, David, presentation at Mavor Moor Cultural Policy Symposium, October 24, 2008

larger role in culture by commissioning David Silcox, someone who had worked at every level of government, to prepare a report on the state of the arts and culture in Toronto.<sup>122</sup>

Silcox's report, which was presented to Metro Council in 1974, was titled *Metro Toronto's Support of the Arts: A Study of the Problem with Recommendations for Future Policies and Procedures*. The name of the study implies that it was initiated under the assumption that there was a problem to be solved. There were many new cultural organizations created in Toronto in the early 1970's, and Metro Council believed it was time to start investing in this sector. The report led to the establishment of the first Metro Toronto Culture Department – something that very few municipalities had at that time. Silcox was essentially using the 'culture as art' definition, though some of the recommendations branched out into other aspects of culture such as heritage.<sup>123</sup>

In all, the Silcox Report contained 29 recommendations. Many of these dealt with funding for the arts, usually through grants to organizations.<sup>124</sup> The arts were generally seen as something that needed to be subsidized, and the Silcox Report introduced a \$1 per capita funding model.<sup>125</sup> However, these recommendations were not just about the amount of money being distributed. There was also discussion of simplifying the application forms, insuring that the timing of the grants was appropriate, and improving accountability.<sup>126</sup> There were urban/suburban tensions regarding the distribution of funds.

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<sup>122</sup> Silcox, David, presentation at Mavor Moor Cultural Policy Symposium, October 24, 2008

<sup>123</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Support for the Arts: A Study of the Problem with Recommendations for Future Policies and Procedures*, prepared by David Silcox, 1974

<sup>124</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Support for the Arts: A Study of the Problem with Recommendations for Future Policies and Procedures*, prepared by David Silcox, 1974, p. 8-10

<sup>125</sup> Silcox, David, presentation at Mavor Moor Cultural Policy Symposium, October 24, 2008

<sup>126</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Support for the Arts: A Study of the Problem with Recommendations for Future Policies and Procedures*, prepared by David Silcox, 1974, p. 8-10

For example, a councillor from Etobicoke demanded that funding be provided to the Etobicoke Symphony or he would vote against the entire report.<sup>127</sup>

There were some aspects of the Silcox Report that suggested that there was a need to move towards an approach to cultural policy that is more like cultural planning. There was some discussion of cross-departmental and cross-municipal collaboration. To help facilitate this collaboration, Silcox recommended the appointment of a municipal arts administrator and a municipal arts board,<sup>128</sup> and both of these recommendations were eventually implemented (though Metro Council did not initially accept the recommendation to create an arts board).<sup>129</sup> There was also some mention of the role of the arts and artists in policy-making (i.e. through public art, bringing artists into underused spaces, etc.).<sup>130</sup>

The Silcox Report was prepared in the early days of Official Multiculturalism in Canada. Participation in the arts organizations that Metro was funding at that time was still dominated by long-standing residents. Silcox seems to have been at least somewhat conscious of the fact that Toronto was transitioning away from being a “British protestant bastion.” He mentioned the need for “some assistance to ethnic forms of expression.” He also included recommendations for dealing with multiculturalism and diverse ethnic groups.<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>127</sup> Silcox, David, presentation at Mavor Moor Cultural Policy Symposium, October 24, 2008

<sup>128</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Support for the Arts: A Study of the Problem with Recommendations for Future Policies and Procedures*, prepared by David Silcox, 1974, p. 8-10

<sup>129</sup> Silcox, David, presentation at Mavor Moor Cultural Policy Symposium, October 24, 2008

<sup>130</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Support for the Arts: A Study of the Problem with Recommendations for Future Policies and Procedures*, prepared by David Silcox, 1974, p. 8-10

<sup>131</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Support for the Arts: A Study of the Problem with Recommendations for Future Policies and Procedures*, prepared by David Silcox, 1974, p. 8-10

By the 1980's, pressure on the (old) City of Toronto to broaden its support for the arts and culture was growing. This led to the first major cultural policy document commissioned by a lower-tier municipality within Metro Toronto. It was prepared by Tom Hendry and titled *Cultural Capital: The Care and Feeding of Toronto's Artistic Assets*. As with Silcox's report, the title of Hendry's report is quite telling. "Care and feeding" certainly implies that there was still a sense that the arts needed government subsidy. However, it also included a study of the financial impact of the arts and culture in Toronto, which suggests that the municipality's impression of this sector was beginning to change. Also, like the Silcox Report, the Hendry Report was still largely focused on the arts. Perhaps the most significant thing to come out of this report was the creation of Artscape, which has been part of many unique place-making initiatives in the city.<sup>132</sup>

### **5.3 Reading the Silcox and Hendry Reports in terms of the Framework for Understanding Placeless Space**

Since Metro cultural policy before the Silcox Report was limited to providing funding to a small number of organizations, it addressed the making of placeless space mostly just by creating opportunities for cultural expression. That said, this was before the 'age of placeless business' really began, so that aspect of placelessness was, justifiably, less of a concern than it should be today. Also, the activities being funded likely created some opportunities for community engagement and social interaction, and the spaces used by the funded organizations may have offered at least some resistance

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<sup>132</sup> City of Toronto, "Culture Plan: Developing the Creative City," viewed January 21, 2013  
<<http://www.toronto.ca/culture/cultureplan.htm>>

against placeless buildings. Nevertheless, the ability of these early cultural policies to stop the making of placeless space in Toronto was quite limited.

For the most part, both the Silcox and Hendry Reports proposed a continuation of the same basic approach to cultural policy – an approach in which funding is the primary mechanism used to support culture – except that they looked for ways to improve on the funding process. Like the previous policies, the Silcox and Hendry policies were best at addressing the need for opportunities for cultural expression and participation in cultural activities. The fact that Toronto's cultural sector has grown so substantially since that time suggests that these policies may have been effective (though a correlation does not necessarily imply causation). There were also some early steps taken towards addressing the other causes of placeless space. For example, improving coordination between municipal departments could help to address placeless infrastructure, though this depends a lot on which departments were included and the extent of the participation. If the municipality's role with respect to culture is seen as being primarily about providing funding and delivering some programs, then the partnerships formed with other departments will likely be limited to this role. In her presentation at the Mavor Moor Cultural Policy Symposium, Kathleen Sharpe conceded that even into the 1990's it was still difficult to get the Planning Department to remember to discuss plans with the Culture Division. It is more recently that this has begun to change.<sup>133</sup>

#### **5.4 Cultural planning in Metropolitan Toronto**

In 1994, Metro Council approved a document titled *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*. This was the first cultural policy document to come out of the former

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<sup>133</sup> Sharpe, Kathleen, presentation at Mavor Moor Cultural Policy Symposium, October 24, 2008

Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto that could be considered a municipal cultural plan. The decision to create the plan was made, in part, because the demographics of Metro Toronto had changed considerably since the Silcox Report. Also, the Culture Division had recently been re-organized and new positions had been created.<sup>134</sup>

It was noted that “the emphasis is on the coordination and integration of Metro's cultural policies and programs.”<sup>135</sup> In other words, this document was meant to be more of a *plan* than a stand-alone policy. One of the priorities was to insure that the “nurturing” of culture is integrated into all Metro policies, plans, and programs.<sup>136</sup> Metro's cultural plan was meant to complement the municipality's Official Plan (OP), Economic Development Strategy, Ethno-Racial and Aboriginal Access to Metropolitan Services Policy, Social Development Strategy, and Tourism Strategy<sup>137</sup> (though the plan states that “tourism is not the rationale for supporting culture, but a welcome reward”).<sup>138</sup> To help coordinate the implementation of the cultural plan across 17 different departments, agencies, boards, and commissions, Metro Council had established a Culture Advisory Committee earlier that year.<sup>139</sup>

The difference between this plan and traditional cultural policy is laid out in the opening section, the last sentence of which says, “Government does not create culture, and this report does not presume to do so.”<sup>140</sup> For this reason, public-private partnerships were seen as a must.<sup>141</sup> A problem with this approach, however, was that corporate

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<sup>134</sup> Sharpe, Kathleen, presentation at Mavor Moor Cultural Policy Symposium, October 24, 2008

<sup>135</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 22

<sup>136</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 23

<sup>137</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 24

<sup>138</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 11

<sup>139</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 27

<sup>140</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 3

<sup>141</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 15

support for culture in Toronto was shifting from donations to sponsorship (marketing).<sup>142</sup> This could present a major challenge for more marginalized forms of culture, so the municipality needed to be very careful about the extent to which it relied on private partners.

The plan recognized that no government can act alone. This is especially true in multi-tier municipalities, like Toronto was at the time. The fact that there was no legislative framework to guide municipal cultural policy development in Ontario at the time (or now) was a challenge in this regard, but since Metro owned many major cultural facilities, such as the O'Keefe Centre, it was expected that the upper-tier municipality play at least some role in regards to culture.<sup>143</sup> Another challenge was that, as can be seen in the timeline in Appendix A, local government involvement in culture varied greatly amongst Metro municipalities.<sup>144</sup> It was acknowledged that there was a lack of cultural facilities and programs outside of the core.<sup>145</sup> This continues to be a concern for the City of Toronto today.<sup>146</sup> For this reason, Metro saw a role for itself in addressing regional imbalances in addition to supporting major regional cultural institutions like the O'Keefe Centre.<sup>147</sup> However, there is a fine line between addressing regional imbalance and eliminating regional differences. Also, it is possible that Metro may have been overlooking some cultural activities that occur in the suburbs because they are somewhat different from culture in the core. This was the conclusion of Michael Noble, whose research found examples of cultural organizations that had found North York or

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<sup>142</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 16

<sup>143</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 13

<sup>144</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 15

<sup>145</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 11

<sup>146</sup> Personal communication with Sally Han, Senior Cultural Affairs Officer, City of Toronto, September 27, 2012

<sup>147</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 16

Scarborough to be more suitable for their activities than Downtown Toronto. As well, some of the cultural activities in the core, such as performances at the major venues, tend to attract a regional (or even national or international) audience, so the fact that these activities do not take place in the suburbs does not necessarily mean that Toronto's suburbanites are being excluded.

The plan understands “culture” as including arts, heritage, libraries, and cultural industries. Within this definition, “cultural industries” are being understood as including a lot of creative activities – such as film and video production, book and magazine publishing, sound recording, radio and television broadcasting, and architecture and design – though it is not quite as broad as Richard Florida's creative class.<sup>148</sup> This is at least a somewhat more inclusive definition of culture than what Silcox and Hendry seemed to be using, though there still seems to be a fairly heavy arts focus in the plan. Kathleen Sharpe, who was head of the Culture Division at the time the MCP was created, acknowledged that the definition of culture was a sticking point. They ultimately decided on what they considered to be the safest approach, which was to use the established provincial definition.<sup>149</sup>

The plan is premised on the notion that “a vibrant cultural life is an urban phenomenon.”<sup>150</sup> This is yet another reason to be concerned about the risk of overlooking unique suburban culture. It is noted that Toronto has a lot 'going on,' as one would expect in a large urban area. At that time Toronto had the second largest number of theatre

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<sup>148</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 5

<sup>149</sup> Sharpe, Kathleen, presentation at Mavor Moor Cultural Policy Symposium, October 24, 2008

<sup>150</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 6

productions in North America and the third largest number of film productions.<sup>151</sup> The city continues to be a leader in those sectors today. But does a high volume of cultural activities necessarily mean that Toronto has a unique, vibrant culture? Metro's cultural plan brags a lot about Toronto's cultural sector<sup>152</sup> and its economic impact. For example, the report shows that more than 60,000 jobs in Metro Toronto were in the cultural sector (as defined by this report), and the sector added \$5.8 billion to the GDP.<sup>153</sup> These are not insignificant numbers, but there is a lot more discussion about quantity than quality. Also, there is not much discussion of the role of the arts, heritage, and other cultural sectors in creating unique places. It is acknowledged that the cultural life of Metro Toronto is enhanced by great public spaces,<sup>154</sup> and the benefits of culture to Metro Toronto that are mentioned in this plan cover a number of different areas, such as social equity, quality of life, and downtown and neighbourhood vibrancy and revitalization.<sup>155</sup> However, the plan did not propose any means of evaluating any benefits of culture other than economic benefits (i.e. employment, GDP, etc.).

To be fair, part of the reason for overemphasizing economic benefits in this plan may have been because cultural industries were not included in Metro's Economic Development Plan, 1988.<sup>156</sup> The exclusion of these industries, even though they were becoming such a significant part of the local economy, seems odd. The cultural planners likely realized that they really needed to push the economic benefits of what they were proposing, since the value of Toronto's cultural sector seemed to be off the radar of

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<sup>151</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 6

<sup>152</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 7

<sup>153</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 9

<sup>154</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 8

<sup>155</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 10

<sup>156</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 31

economic development staff. There seems to have been at least somewhat of a change in mindset from seeing culture (particularly the arts) as something that needed to be subsidized (Silcox and Hendry Reports) to seeing culture as a driver of economic activity. At the same time, the old mindset still appears in some parts of the plan. In 1993, Metro supported nearly 300 cultural organizations through grants. It is noted that, “left to its own devices, the market will fail to provide the diversity, range, and innovation that is the mark of a mature culture.”<sup>157</sup>

It was recommended that Metro pursue high design standards with its own buildings and enforce higher standards for privately-owned developments.<sup>158</sup> This connects to the MCP's heritage plan. Although the plan acknowledges that upper-tier municipalities had (and still have) few powers under the Ontario Heritage Act, Metro did own a number of heritage properties. Insuring high design standards for any renovations to these buildings would at least be a good start. Also, upper-tier municipalities did have some heritage-related powers under the Planning Act.<sup>159</sup> It is unfortunate that the heritage strategy seemed to be limited to architectural heritage. This is a very limited view of heritage. However, this is probably (partially) a result of the limited powers offered to upper-tier municipalities in this area.

## **5.5 Reading Metro cultural planning in terms of the Framework for Understanding Placeless Space**

Metro's municipal cultural plan created opportunities to address more aspects of placeless space than did previous Toronto/Metro Toronto cultural policies through

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<sup>157</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 40

<sup>158</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 32

<sup>159</sup> Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto, *Redefining Our Cultural Framework*, 1994, p. 35

improved coordination and integration of culture, which was the main focus of the plan. Particularly encouraging was the coordination with land-use planning policies and building regulations. For example, the recommendation to pursue high design standards for all municipal buildings and to require private builders to meet high standards as well certainly had the potential to address placeless buildings and infrastructure. Also, this recommendation, if followed, could have limited opportunities for placeless businesses, since many of these businesses require a very specific placeless design for their buildings. Design standards can also be used to protect community gathering places around developments. More significantly, creating a cultural plan that was coordinated with the OP was a major step towards resisting a placeless community. No document holds more weight with the OMB than the OP. As will be discussed further later in this chapter, OMB challenges involving three condo developments in the West Queen West neighbourhood highlighted the difficulty in trying to enforce cultural policies that are not incorporated into the OP.<sup>160</sup>

The coordination with the Economic Development Strategy could have encouraged the development of unique, place-based businesses. All of the industries included in the plan's definition of "creative industries" could help make Toronto a unique place. However, it excluded other businesses (such as cafes, bars/nightclubs, unique clothing stores, etc.) that could also add to the character of the community. As well, it is concerning that there is no mechanism proposed for evaluating the cultural aspects of cultural businesses – just their contribution to the GDP.

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<sup>160</sup> Personal communication with Lori Martin, Senior Cultural Affairs Officer, City of Toronto, September 27, 2012

## 5.6 Cultural planning the 'new' City of Toronto

Metro's MCP became irrelevant very soon after it was adopted by Council. Just one year later Ontario replaced its social democratic provincial government with a neoliberal/neoconservative government that immediately began looking for ways to save money. One of the cost-cutting measures they employed (though it is debatable whether or not it actually saved any money) was to significantly reduce the number of municipalities in the province. In a span of only eight years the number of municipalities in Ontario was nearly cut in half.<sup>161</sup> The government's decision to abolish Metro Toronto as a regional municipality, and amalgamate Metro's lower-tier municipalities into one city, was announced in 1997. When the 'new' City of Toronto came into existence on January 1<sup>st</sup>, 1998 cultural planning was already underway. The Arts, Culture & Heritage Work Group was formed as part of the transition team that was created in 1997. Amalgamation was very unpopular in Toronto, and Rita Davies, who was head of the City's Culture Division at the time, admitted that it was hard to plan for a municipality that most people did not want to exist.<sup>162</sup> However, amalgamation was also seen as an opportunity because it created a city large enough to be called a "global city."<sup>163</sup> Also, it created a critical mass of people and knowledge in the new municipal bureaucracy, including in the new Culture Division.<sup>164</sup> As well, creating a plan in a newly-formed municipality can offer the planners more flexibility, since so many new plans are being created at the same time.

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<sup>161</sup> Association of Municipalities of Ontario, "Municipalities in Ontario," viewed January 28, 2013  
<<http://www.yourlocalgovernment.com/ylg/muniont.html>>

<sup>162</sup> Davies, Rita, presentation at Mavor Moor Cultural Policy Symposium, October 24, 2008

<sup>163</sup> City of Toronto, *The Creative City: A Work Print*, 2001, p. 2

<sup>164</sup> Davies, Rita, presentation at Mavor Moor Cultural Policy Symposium, October 24, 2008

The Culture Division was directed by Council to create a cultural plan for the new city in February 2000.<sup>165</sup> As a preliminary step towards this municipal cultural plan, *The Creative City: A Work Print* was created in 2001. Although this document touches on a number of different factors affecting quality of life (it notes that 8 of 11 quality of life indicators identified during OP review public consultations deal specifically with the Culture Division's mandate),<sup>166</sup> economic issues are front and centre in this document. The “document was developed with a growing understanding that in addition to being fundamental to our quality of life, art, culture, and heritage are the vital centre of Toronto's expanding economy.”<sup>167</sup> The work print proposed the creation of a municipal cultural plan for the newly amalgamated city, the goal of which would be to position Toronto as a “leading international cultural capital that keeps its brightest and best at home while putting out a siren to the world.”<sup>168</sup> However, economic issues are linked with identity issues, as the document states that “in a world of global sameness competition now occurs on the field of meaning.”<sup>169</sup> This is somewhat different from the usual interpretation of how Floridian style creative city development occurs. Instead of competing with other cities for creative workers simply by offering more or better amenities, Toronto's cultural planners were, according to the work print, attempting to make Toronto more competitive by insuring its distinctiveness. At a time when so-called “hyperglobalists” were still insisting that global sameness was inevitable (even desirable), this was a bold statement.

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<sup>165</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City*, 2003, p. 7

<sup>166</sup> City of Toronto, *The Creative City: A Work Print*, 2001, p. 3

<sup>167</sup> City of Toronto, *The Creative City: A Work Print*, 2001, p. 2

<sup>168</sup> City of Toronto, *The Creative City: A Work Print*, 2001, p. 2

<sup>169</sup> City of Toronto, *The Creative City: A Work Print*, 2001, p. 3

Issues of community identity were very important to the Culture Division following amalgamation. Davies noted that a lot of the anger surrounding the forced amalgamation was directed at her division.<sup>170</sup> None of the former cities (especially the suburbs) wanted to lose its identity, and the Culture Division was seen as being the branch of the municipal corporation that should accept responsibility for insuring that the communities could maintain their uniqueness.

One of the major issues that the City of Toronto realized it needed to address was that many of Toronto's cultural organizations were “asset rich but cash poor.”<sup>171</sup> This was a recognition that Toronto already had many great cultural facilities, but these facilities do not maintain themselves. The maintenance and upgrade costs for many of Toronto's cultural assets had been put off due to budget constraints. Interestingly, at the same time as the newly-amalgamated City of Toronto was preparing to create its first municipal cultural plan, it was also supporting the so-called “*Cultural Renaissance*” projects. These projects included the creation of new cultural facilities, such as the Four Seasons Centre, which added to the “asset rich but cash poor problem.” It is not surprising that Toronto cultural planners still feel that this is a problem today.<sup>172</sup>

The first municipal cultural plan in post-amalgamation Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City*, was adopted by Council in 2003. The plan was based on four key principles:

- ▲ City Council recognizes that culture plays an essential role in building and sustaining a diverse urban community that is socially and economically healthy;

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<sup>170</sup> Davies, Rita, presentation at Mavor Moor Cultural Policy Symposium, October 24, 2008

<sup>171</sup> City of Toronto, *The Creative City: A Work Print*, 2001, p. 5

<sup>172</sup> Personal communication with a Senior Policy Advisory for the City of Toronto, September 27, 2012

- ▲ The City’s cultural programs will promote inclusivity and celebrate cultural diversity;
- ▲ Toronto residents and visitors should have affordable and convenient opportunities to participate in the cultural life of the city;
- ▲ City Council will play a leadership role to ensure that Toronto has a vibrant, active and strong cultural life.

These principles speak to a wide range of issues, including social inclusion and diversity, equity and affordability of cultural activities, and other social and economic objectives.<sup>173</sup>

These are similar to the principles on which most MCPs in Ontario claimed to be based.<sup>174</sup> City Council's goals for the plan were somewhat narrower and focused more on economic issues:

- ▲ To position Toronto as an international cultural capital;
- ▲ To define culture's role at the centre of the economic and social development of the city.<sup>175</sup>

Similarly, the first group of recommendations in the MCP (Recommendations 1 – 9) deals primarily with economic issues, such as creative enterprise building, tourism, and elite cultural facilities. However, these recommendations also address the issue of youth involvement through initiatives such as a “youth passport” to provide young people with free access to cultural activities.<sup>176</sup>

The second group of recommendations (Recommendations 10 – 14) are more along the lines of true cultural planning. These recommendations are focused on

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<sup>173</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City*, 2003, p. 5

<sup>174</sup> Personal communication with Jason Kovacs, October 2, 2012

<sup>175</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City*, 2003, p. 7

<sup>176</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City*, 2003, p. 15

partnership building – both within the municipal corporation and between City Hall and the community. Place-making is also part of these recommendations through public art, “cultural corridors,” and preserving heritage sites.<sup>177</sup> The third group of recommendations (Recommendations 15 – 22) deal with similar issues. The concepts of public art and cultural corridors are brought together to create a proposal for an “Avenue of the Arts” along Toronto's University Avenue.<sup>178</sup>

The fourth group of recommendations (Recommendations 23 – 29) deals mostly with telling Toronto's stories and promoting its museums (which are seen as key to telling the stories). It is acknowledged that there is a need to insure that the stories of First Nations communities and the diverse communities who have come to Toronto in recent decades are also told.<sup>179</sup> Since this was also alluded to in the Silcox Report almost 30 years earlier, one has to wonder when it will finally be addressed. The sixth group of recommendations (Recommendations 36 – 40) also addresses issues of inclusion of Aboriginals and other minorities. However, the tendency is to address barriers that are relatively straight forward/easy to address, such as financial barriers.<sup>180</sup> Addressing more fundamental issues (i.e. racism) is much more difficult.

The plan recognizes that there is a need to bring these stories together in a 'Museum of Toronto,'<sup>181</sup> but a decade later the City has still yet to provide funding (or even decide on a location) for such a museum. The sixth group of recommendations (Recommendations 30 – 35) brings together history and place-making. This part of the

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<sup>177</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City*, 2003, p. 19

<sup>178</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City*, 2003, p. 20-21

<sup>179</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City*, 2003, p. 25-26

<sup>180</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City*, 2003, p. 32-33

<sup>181</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City*, 2003, p. 25-26

plan talks about the need to preserve heritage by protecting unique places in the city. It includes a bold recommendation to conduct at least one heritage conservation district study every year.<sup>182</sup>

The seventh group of recommendations (Recommendations 41 – 48) is closer to traditional cultural policy. These recommendations deal primarily with funding for cultural organizations.<sup>183</sup> The eighth group (Recommendations 49 – 58) is a little more interesting. These recommendations involve alternative funding models. They also address place-making through the use of Section 37 of the Planning Act, Community Improvement Plans (CIPs), and the creation of “cultural zones” with tax incentives.<sup>184</sup> Recommendation 59 sets a target for this funding (\$25 per resident) based on comparisons with “competitor” cities, such as Montreal.<sup>185</sup> Considering that the Silcox Report only recommended spending \$1 per resident, this is quite an increase (even when adjusted for inflation).

The final recommendation of *Culture Plan for the Creative City*, Recommendation 60, is a list of things that the Culture Division is to report on regularly through progress reports to City Council.<sup>186</sup> Though it took two years to complete the plan, the first progress report was released just two years after the plan was adopted. It seems unlikely that researchers could have had sufficient time to evaluate the success of the plan in that time, but the cultural planners were already boasting of a number of achievements. It was claimed that increased investment in the cultural sector had led to:

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<sup>182</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City*, 2003, p. 29

<sup>183</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City*, 2003, p. 34-35

<sup>184</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City*, 2003, p. 42

<sup>185</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City*, 2003, p. 44

<sup>186</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City*, 2003, p. 44

- ▲ More events;
- ▲ More jobs;
- ▲ Growing attendance;
- ▲ Growing GDP.<sup>187</sup>

The plan's achievements at that point also included the launch of the “Live With Culture” campaign to create a new brand for the city;<sup>188</sup> significant funding increases to the major cultural institutions (AGO, COC, NBC, National Ballet School, TSO, Gardiner Museum, Pride Toronto, Caribana), as well as a more modest funding increase for the Toronto Arts Council;<sup>189</sup> and the use of Section 37 to finance the Wychwood Barns project.<sup>190</sup> Progress had been made on a number of the 11 “cultural indicators” that the City tracks. However, there are some indicators for which updated data were not yet available (i.e. Florida's index) and some indicators, which were already showing improvement before the plan was adopted in 2003 (i.e. jobs in the cultural sector were already on the rise). Also, there are some areas in which the improvements shown may not be the result (or at least not solely the result) of municipal policy. For example, gains in the film industry may have been largely the result of provincial tax credits.<sup>191</sup>

By the time of the MCP's second progress report in 2008 (which was the halfway point of the plan's horizon), 60% of actions had been addressed – at least to some extent. Toronto had experienced faster growth in creative industries than Montreal, San Francisco, and Chicago. However, it should be noted that Toronto's creative industries

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<sup>187</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City: Progress Report I*, 2005

<sup>188</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City: Progress Report I*, 2005, p. 5

<sup>189</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City: Progress Report I*, 2005, p. 6

<sup>190</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City: Progress Report I*, 2005, p. 9

<sup>191</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City: Progress Report I*, 2005, p. 11-19

were already growing quite quickly before the plan was created. The cultural sector employment statistics still had not been updated since 2001, so it is not clear that the MCP was leading to more jobs. Also, the comparator cities may have more mature creative industries, hence their slower growth – they grow slower because they have less growing left to do. Similarly, this may have been the reason (or at least one of the reasons) why Toronto's cultural sector was growing faster than industries such as financial services, IT, and business services. These may have been more mature industries in Toronto.<sup>192</sup>

Live With Culture aimed to “capture the momentum” from Cultural Renaissance.<sup>193</sup> Unlike the Cultural Renaissance, however, Live With Culture included some neighbourhood-based projects like “Arts in the Hood.” It also included the very successful Nuit Blanche, among others. In all, \$3 million was invested in the Live With Culture campaign, with support coming from all three levels of government.<sup>194</sup>

By this point the City could boast some significant achievements during the life of the plan in terms of attendance at cultural events and activities. There was a 20% increase in attendance at City-funded cultural events from 2003 to 2007.<sup>195</sup> There was a particularly large increase in youth attendance, which went from 281,000 to 593,000 in just two years (2004 to 2006 – the only years for which that indicator was tracked).<sup>196</sup>

In the same year that the second progress report for *Culture Plan for the Creative City* was presented to Council, the City also contracted AuthentiCity (consulting firm led

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<sup>192</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City: Progress Report II*, 2008, p. 13-14

<sup>193</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City: Progress Report II*, 2008, p. 8

<sup>194</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City: Progress Report II*, 2008, p. 3

<sup>195</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City: Progress Report II*, 2008, p. 3

<sup>196</sup> City of Toronto, *Culture Plan for the Creative City: Progress Report II*, 2008, p. 16

by Greg Baeker) to investigate options for the next phases of creative city development in Toronto. AuthentiCity prepared a report titled *Creative City Planning Framework*. The framework is clearly focused on economic issues, though it addresses a number of other issues related to municipal cultural planning, such as the need for coordination within and among governments, the importance of aligning City plans, and the need to protect unique places in the city. The report does not offer any new sector-specific strategies, but instead outlines the strategies/projects that already exist (there are a lot of them from all levels of government and the private sector) and the need to improve coordination of these strategies and projects.<sup>197</sup>

AuthentiCity's report was really about capitalizing on the momentum. It was prepared with the belief that “the Mayor's vision of creativity as an economic engine” and “Richard Florida's arrival in Toronto” were “two prominent indications of the importance of creativity at this moment in the city's history.”<sup>198</sup> Creative occupations grew at more than three times the rate of Toronto's labour force from 1991 to 2004.<sup>199</sup> It is interesting to note, as mentioned earlier, that most of this time period was before *Culture Plan for the Creative City* was created, so the MCP's effectiveness in growing the creative workforce was still unclear. Nevertheless, the fact that the cultural/creative sector has become a more significant player in Toronto's economy over the past couple of decades certainly gives it more political leverage.

In spite of the desire of many bureaucrats to measure everything (hence the progress reports), the *Creative City Planning Framework* included an interesting (and

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<sup>197</sup> City of Toronto, *Creative City Planning Framework*, prepared by AuthentiCity, 2008

<sup>198</sup> City of Toronto, *Creative City Planning Framework*, prepared by AuthentiCity, 2008, p. 2

<sup>199</sup> City of Toronto, *Creative City Planning Framework*, prepared by AuthentiCity, 2008, p. 18

refreshing) discussion of the problems with using traditional utilitarian approaches to policy analysis, such as cost-benefit analysis (CBA).<sup>200</sup> CBA is probably the most well-known and commonly-used approach to policy analysis. It is also the approach most frequently taught to aspiring economists. However, it requires that all costs and benefits be known, measurable, and in the reasonably near (predictable) future. This does not work well with investments in creative place-making. Is it really possible to measure civic pride? Or a community's sense of identity? One of the weaknesses of the MCP's progress reports is that they are limited to things that are relatively easy to measure, which excludes a lot of important aspects of place and culture. Baeker and his associates seem to be aware of this, but it is still not clear how they propose to address this problem.

Following AuthentiCity's report, the City's Economic Development Committee prepared a document titled *Creative Capital Gains: An Action Plan for Toronto*. The committee was guided by the Creative Capital Advisory Council, which was made up mostly of business leaders and representatives from Toronto's major cultural institutions. They were also advised by high-profile academics and consultants, including Richard Florida. The plan has three areas of focus:

- ▲ Focusing on service;
- ▲ Using the City's convening power;
- ▲ Making cultural investments where only the City can.<sup>201</sup>

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<sup>200</sup> City of Toronto, *Creative City Planning Framework*, prepared by AuthentiCity, 2008, p. 18

<sup>201</sup> City of Toronto, *Creative Capital Gains: An Action Plan for Toronto*, 2011

This action plan was not meant to be a true municipal cultural plan. It was meant more as a short-term plan for creative economy development with goals for the current term of City Council.<sup>202</sup>

Many of the people consulted with said that working with the City could be difficult. A lot of the business groups consulted with said that greater awareness of the City's plans would affect their funding decisions with many saying that they would be willing to provide more support to projects where they could coordinate their investment with the municipality. Part of the challenge is that culture is (necessarily) spread across many different departments. The report recommends the creation of a “Creative Capital Working Group” to improve coordination.<sup>203</sup> Other issues that were identified include:

- ▲ Access to affordable space for cultural organizations;
- ▲ Space and infrastructure for start-up cultural entrepreneurs;
- ▲ Equitable distribution of cultural services;
- ▲ Ongoing, stable operating funding for the not-for-profit arts sector;
- ▲ Recognition and support of cultural clusters;
- ▲ The need for greater collaboration to promote Toronto as a creative capital.<sup>204</sup>

The report identified Toronto's strengths as having: a large, fast-growing creative sector; many high-quality educational institutions; and world-renown cultural organizations.<sup>205</sup> Another strength is the public-private funding mix. The action plan acknowledges that almost every business is subsidized in some way and public funding is

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<sup>202</sup> Personal communication with a Senior Policy Advisor for the City of Toronto, September 27, 2012

<sup>203</sup> City of Toronto, *Creative Capital Gains: An Action Plan for Toronto*, 2011, p. 4-5

<sup>204</sup> City of Toronto, *Creative Capital Gains: An Action Plan for Toronto*, 2011, p. 6

<sup>205</sup> City of Toronto, *Creative Capital Gains: An Action Plan for Toronto*, 2011, p. 8-9

needed for culture. It celebrates the successes of artists like K'naan and other cultural workers like Atom Egoyan who were initially publically-funded, then managed to “monetize their creative work.”<sup>206</sup> This raises the question: what about creative work that cannot (or should not) be monetized? To be fair, the plan does recognize the need to invest in more than just the 'elite' cultural institutions that bring in significant dollars. It is recognized that with the Cultural Renaissance projects complete, it is now time to focus on improving public spaces and investing in the spaces of smaller arts/culture organizations.<sup>207</sup> There is an acknowledgement that there is a lack of affordable space for community arts organizations in many neighbourhoods. The report, to its credit, also acknowledges that development pressure is threatening what affordable space remains. There are many City-owned facilities that may be able to help address space issues, such as libraries and recreation centres.<sup>208</sup> The report also proposes continuing Culture Build, while also using Section 37 to fund these sorts of projects.<sup>209</sup>

“Toronto is a city of neighbourhoods and within each of them is a wealth of existing cultural activity that deserves to be highlighted and celebrated.” The action plan proposes choosing a neighbourhood to be the “Cultural Hotspot of the Year.”<sup>210</sup> The fact that the importance of neighbourhoods is being recognized is encouraging, but the way they proposed to do it is a bit concerning. It could further the problem of a lack of affordable space discussed above. How to promote a neighbourhood as Toronto's “cultural hotspot” without causing the cost of space in that neighbourhood to rise is not

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<sup>206</sup> City of Toronto, *Creative Capital Gains: An Action Plan for Toronto*, 2011, p. 11

<sup>207</sup> City of Toronto, *Creative Capital Gains: An Action Plan for Toronto*, 2011, p. 14

<sup>208</sup> City of Toronto, *Creative Capital Gains: An Action Plan for Toronto*, 2011, p. 16-17

<sup>209</sup> City of Toronto, *Creative Capital Gains: An Action Plan for Toronto*, 2011, p. 14

<sup>210</sup> City of Toronto, *Creative Capital Gains: An Action Plan for Toronto*, 2011, p. 21

discussed. A somewhat more promising neighbourhood recommendation is to support the development of a creative cluster at Weston Mount Dennis and use it to “showcase the community's history.” The details of how this is to be done are not clear. However, the idea of ensuring that a “creative cluster” is appropriate for the neighbourhood's unique history is encouraging.<sup>211</sup>

### **5.7 Reading cultural planning in the ‘new’ City of Toronto in terms of the Framework for Understanding Placeless Space**

The Cultural Renaissance could have been an opportunity to address all aspects of placeless space, especially placeless buildings and infrastructure and a lack of opportunities for participation in cultural activities. The extent to which this occurred is debatable. It is not clear that these cultural facilities are unique to the place in which they are situated. Plans for a very ambitious, architecturally stunning ballet-opera house were scrapped and replaced with the Four Seasons Centre for the Performing Arts – a building that has fantastic acoustics, but is not a Toronto landmark. There is nothing about this building that could not have been built somewhere else. Similar claims could be made about other Cultural Renaissance projects. For example, the infamous ROM crystal is interesting – at least in the sense that it is unusual – but it has been criticized for being unrelated to the building to which it is attached. Like the Four Seasons Centre, the crystal could have been put anywhere – it just happened to be Toronto. A further criticism of the Cultural Renaissance projects is that they have led to higher ticket/admission prices at the eight venues/organizations involved.<sup>212</sup> This calls into question the extent to which these projects created new opportunities to participate in cultural activities. For the most part,

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<sup>211</sup> City of Toronto, *Creative Capital Gains: An Action Plan for Toronto*, 2011, p. 26

<sup>212</sup> Yu, p. 47-52

people that are able to attend performances at Roy Thompson Hall or exhibits at the Art Gallery of Ontario today are people who were already able to do so before the Cultural Renaissance. Meanwhile, some pre-Cultural Renaissance participants may have been priced out.

The second and third groups of recommendations in *Culture Plan for the Creative City* (Recommendations 10 – 22), which deal with public art and cultural corridors, could easily address a lack of opportunities for cultural expression. They could also address the other aspects of placelessness too. Public art is a relatively simple way to engage a community in creating unique and interesting spaces. As well, “cultural corridors” can be great places for unique, place-specific businesses. Many of Toronto's cultural corridors or nodes, including the Annex, the Distillery District, West Queen West, Parkdale Village, and others, are full of unique shops and restaurants.

“Telling Toronto's story” (the focus of the fourth group of recommendations in *Culture Plan for the Creative City*) may not directly improve places, but it could build civic pride in some of the great places that Toronto already has, which could build support for resisting the destruction of these places. Heritage preservation can also be an opportunity for cultural expression. In fact, when a community decides which aspects of its heritage are important enough that they must be preserved, that *is* a form of cultural expression in itself. Other heritage-related recommendations in the plan, such as those in the sixth group, take a more direct approach to building great places through the protection of heritage by creating heritage conservation districts. This can be a way to resist the making of placeless buildings and infrastructure. However, the extent to which the City of Toronto's heritage preservation efforts have been effective is questionable.

Toronto has 4500 designated heritage properties, but it may not be enough because of how intense development pressure in the city has become. The City's heritage staff have identified an additional 3500 heritage properties that are not yet designated – a backlog that could take years to clear.<sup>213</sup> Threats to heritage landmarks remain one of the most common problems that Toronto residents' associations are dealing with.<sup>214</sup>

Like earlier cultural policies, Toronto's more recent cultural planning documents still address the issue of funding. It is an issue that will likely never go away. The difference now is that the discussion of funding options has expanded, and this has opened up new opportunities with regards to resisting the making of placeless space. In addition to creating opportunities for cultural expression and participation in cultural activities, as all funding for culture should do, the use of funding mechanisms like Section 37 and CIPs are directly linked to the creation of great spaces. For example, Section 37 can be used to ensure that new developments include space for artists and artisans or other unique businesses, or it can be used to create community gathering places like public parks. West Queen West is an example of how Section 37 can be used effectively. However, this neighbourhood's experience with Section 37 also presents reasons to be cautious about the use of this part of the Planning Act. For example, it is unclear what can be done if a developer fails to fulfill their commitments.

Many of the key issues identified in *Creative Capital Gains* could address placelessness in a variety ways. For example, access to affordable space for cultural organizations, space and infrastructure for start-up cultural entrepreneurs, and recognition

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<sup>213</sup> City of Toronto, "Frequently asked questions about heritage properties," viewed January 28, 2013  
<[http://www.toronto.ca/heritage-preservation/heritage\\_questions.htm](http://www.toronto.ca/heritage-preservation/heritage_questions.htm)>

<sup>214</sup> Personal communication with Geoff Kettle, Chair, Federation of North Toronto Residents Associations, November 21, 2012

and support of cultural clusters could probably all address all four aspects of placelessness at least to some extent. Providing space for cultural organizations is a two-way street. The organizations benefit from the affordable space, but they can also help to remake the space into something more unique and interesting. “Cultural entrepreneurs” can do the same. As well, support for these entrepreneurs addresses the issue of placeless business.

The recognition of the need to shift focus from elite cultural institutions to smaller arts/culture organizations now that the Cultural Renaissance projects are complete is encouraging. Smaller cultural organizations tend to be more accessible. They are located in neighbourhoods throughout the city and typically have much lower ticket/admission prices than the major institutions. This means that they are better suited for addressing the need for more opportunities for community engagement. As well, investment in the physical infrastructure of these smaller organizations can address the problem of placeless buildings and infrastructure throughout the city, as opposed to investment in the “Majors” which was concentrated downtown.

## **5.8 Grassroots resistance to the making of placeless space in Toronto**

There are a lot of grassroots place-making groups in Toronto. Many of these grew out of, or were connected to, the former Toronto Public Space Committee (TPSC). TPSC was created in 2001 to serve as an umbrella group for public space-related initiatives in Toronto, but disbanded 10 years later once many of its initiatives were able to stand on their own.<sup>215</sup>

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<sup>215</sup> Toronto Public Space Committee, viewed January 21, 2013 <<http://www.publicspace.ca/>>

The Toronto Public Space Initiative (TPSI) is a particularly active group that grew out of the former TPSC. They are involved in many initiatives that they often refer to as “place-making,” though many of them (especially the advocacy efforts) are really more about resisting the making of placeless space (though they do not use this term). Many of their initiatives are aimed at bridging research and action. Research is a role that municipalities can be well-suited to perform, since they have access to a lot of important resources, but it is often a tough sell for bureaucrats because it may not result in direct benefits. Also, community-based organizations are likely to want to act on the results of research immediately (if they have the resources to do so), since they are usually doing the research with the specific purpose of guiding their advocacy efforts.<sup>216</sup>

TPSI is certainly not “in bed” with City Hall (they object to many of the things that the municipal government does), but they do not ignore it either. They are well aware of the fact that almost all place-making/placelessness resistance initiatives must involve the municipal government in some capacity. For example, TPSI is currently engaged in an Animated Laneways project in hopes of enhancing underused laneways in the city. This project is not just about public art; it is also about allowing for a greater number of uses for these laneways, while recognizing the distinct identity of each one. TPSI hopes that the Animated Laneways project will result in policy recommendations for City Hall.<sup>217</sup> Many of the laneways are owned by the municipality, and even in laneways that are privately owned, municipal approval will still be needed if significant changes are being made.

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<sup>216</sup> Personal communication with Jayme Turney, Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Public Space Initiative, November 9, 2012

<sup>217</sup> Personal communication with Jayme Turney, Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Public Space Initiative, November 9, 2012

TPSI manages to find opportunities for both advocacy and collaboration with the municipality. For example, TPSI organized a community design process for the revitalization of St. Enochs Square between Yonge and Victoria Streets. The input from the community enables TPSI to advocate on behalf of this community, but also creates an opportunity for TPSI to work with City Hall on the revitalization of the square. Advocacy is a role that municipal cultural planners cannot fulfill themselves. To a certain extent, City staff are able to be advocates within the bureaucracy, but they are limited in terms of what they can say to City Council. Sometimes, City staff, for political reasons, must make “recommendations” to Council that they do not personally agree with. Groups like TPSI can be the ones to challenge these recommendations.

TPSI's focus is primarily on the public realm (hence the name of the organization), but they also seem to be interested in the connections/overlap between the public and private realms. This includes business uses of public space (i.e. for advertising). This is something that municipalities can (and sometimes do) regulate. In an era in which many businesses have become placeless, so too has their advertising. Also, when “public” space is controlled by private/corporate interests, opportunities for the community to use this space for community gatherings and cultural expression may be limited. Ongoing TPSI research projects are examining the impact of billboards and LED boards.<sup>218</sup>

TPSI is really doing a lot more than simply protecting public space. They are enhancing it through art, gardens, community involvement, etc. In other words, they are place-making. Also, they are resisting the making of placeless space by fighting back

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<sup>218</sup> Personal communication with Jayme Turney, Chief Executive Officer, Toronto Public Space Initiative, November 9, 2012

against actions that would strip places of their identity. Culture, identity, community, and heritage are all central to what they do. These things are explicitly stated goals of a lot of their projects, but relevant to everything that they do in some way. *People* create communities and make places of spaces. By striving to protect public space, much of what TPSI does is about insuring that there is space for people – and therefore space that can (at least potentially) be made into a place. They make sure that people continue to be permitted in certain spaces and that these spaces reflect the local community and its history and culture. Also, they open up space for cultural and artistic expression through a number of their projects. A good example of this is the “Before I Die” Wall, which facilitates a very bottom-up culture by providing a space for members of the community to share their dreams in a creative way.

In addition to TPSI and the other groups that grew out of the former TPSC, there are many other community-based place-making and placelessness resistance organizations in Toronto. This includes some that were the direct result of municipal cultural initiatives. One of the most successful has been Artscape. As mentioned previously, Artscape was created by the City of Toronto in 1986 following the Hendry Report. It is now an independent organization, but still work closely with the municipality. Artscape has become a national leader in creating space for artists, artisans, and arts and culture organizations. It has led 15 projects in Toronto, which usually involve regenerating an underused or vacant space in the city. Some of its most notable regeneration projects include the Wychwood Barns, Liberty Village, and the Distillery District. These have all become “trendy” areas of Toronto, but the Artscape facilities ensure that there is still affordable space for artists in these neighbourhoods even as

gentrification occurs. The municipality has been, necessarily, involved in every Artscape project in some way, but the type of involvement varies. Sometimes the municipality makes a direct financial contribution, but often the City will contribute to the project by providing the land/building, accelerating the permitting process, providing loan guarantees, etc.<sup>219</sup>

Residents associations (RAs) and other groups organized at the neighbourhood-level are also important players in many place-making and placelessness resistance initiatives. Unlike groups like Artspace and TPSC/TPSI they do not have a whole city focus, but they are able to rally a great deal of support and involvement from the residents of the neighbourhoods they represent. In a lot of cases this includes the local councillor. Because Toronto, like most municipalities in Ontario, uses a ward system for selecting city councillors, neighbourhood-based initiatives often have an easier time finding political support than city-wide initiatives, since they have a natural champion on Council. Nevertheless, maintaining support between crises can be difficult. As Geoff Kettle, president of the Federation of North Toronto Residents Associations (FONTRA), explained, RAs often find that they can rally their neighbourhood behind a very specific cause (i.e. preventing the destruction of a beloved landmark in the neighbourhood or stopping an unwanted high rise from being built). However, interest tends to wane after the crisis is over. This means that RAs often find themselves moving from crisis to crisis, which makes it difficult for them to offer a more holistic perspective on the direction that the municipality should take with regard to neighbourhood-level planning. Serving as an

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<sup>219</sup> Artscape, viewed January 21, 2013 <<http://www.torontoartscape.org/>>

umbrella organization for 27 RAs in Toronto, FONTRA provides organizational support for these groups in hopes of creating greater stability.<sup>220</sup>

One of the most active neighbourhood-level groups in recent years has been Active 18 in the West Queen West neighbourhood (Ward 18). Active 18 is an activist group (not a residents association) that formed in response to three proposed condo developments in an area known as the West Queen West Triangle. This had been an industrial area, and was still zoned as such. In more recent years, however, a vibrant arts community had evolved in West Queen West. In fact, the neighbourhood has the fifth highest concentration of artists of any neighbourhood in Canada, second highest in Toronto after The Annex.<sup>221</sup> Many of these artists had found interesting ways to use the area's former industrial buildings. They lived and worked in the buildings that were about to be torn down to make room for the new condos. This included the building at 900 Queen Street West, which was an Artscape project and the first legal live/work space for artists in Canada. The area began to gentrify in 2004, following the redevelopment of the Drake and Gladstone Hotels, which are across the street from the West Queen West Triangle at the corner of Queen Street West and Gladstone Avenue. The revitalization of these historic hotels was in keeping with the character of the neighbourhood, but the proposed developments in the Triangle were typical condo towers that in no way fit the architecture and heritage of West Queen West. Also, Active 18 was concerned about the loss of space for artists, as many of the artists in the neighbourhood were already feeling

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<sup>220</sup> Personal communication with Geoff Kettle, Federation of North Toronto Residents Associations, November 21, 2012

<sup>221</sup> Personal communication with Lori Martin, Senior Cultural Affairs Officer, City of Toronto, September 27, 2012

the pinch from rising rents as gentrification was occurring.<sup>222</sup> Since the proposed developments were not consistent with the City's cultural plan, the municipality backed Active 18 and fought the developers at the OMB.<sup>223</sup> The problem was that, since the area is classified as industrial land, the OMB was reluctant to prevent any development. Generally, anything goes on industrial lands.<sup>224</sup> Another problem was that the OMB did not afford much weight to the City's MCP, since it was not integrated into the OP. All three rulings went in favour of the developers, but the Mayor (David Miller) decided to appeal the rulings, since they were inconsistent with the cultural plan. This would have meant significant legal costs for the developers, so it encouraged them to begin negotiating with the City and Active 18.<sup>225</sup>

Unfortunately, only minor concessions were secured from two of three developers. One of these developments, known as the Bohemian Embassy ("BoHo"), has been particularly disastrous from the perspective of the both community and the developer. The building has a boring, uninteresting design that is an eyesore across the road from the historic Drake and Gladstone Hotels. The company had only suburban experience prior to this project, and, in the opinion of Kelly McCray (director of Active 18), did not seem to know how to create good urban development. Few concessions were made to protect space for artists and the community, and some of those that were made

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<sup>222</sup> Personal communication with Kelly McCray, Active 18, November 23, 2012

<sup>223</sup> Personal communication with Lori Martin, Senior Cultural Affairs Officer, City of Toronto, September 27, 2012

<sup>224</sup> Personal communication with Kelly McCray, Active 18, November 23, 2012

<sup>225</sup> Personal communication with Lori Martin, Senior Cultural Affairs Officer, City of Toronto, September 27, 2012

were not kept. The developer went bankrupt, and much of the commercial space on the first two floors remains vacant.<sup>226</sup>

With the third developer, Alan Saskin, much more significant concessions were achieved through negotiations. Saskin's company, Urbancorp, now owns most of the Triangle, and Active 18 continues to have a good working relationship with him. Urbancorp has completed more than 20 condo development projects in Toronto. This includes a large cluster of projects just east of Dufferin Street between King and Queen Streets (an area that includes the West Queen West neighbourhood).<sup>227</sup> In the West Queen West Triangle, Urbancorp agreed to sell Artscape part of its new building at 150 Sudbury St. (known as the West Side Lofts), so that Artscape could preserve space for artists in this development. Artscape purchased 56,000 square feet of space for \$8.4-million, which was less than half the appraised value of this space.<sup>228</sup> Urbancorp is also contributing \$1.25 million towards the creation of a public park in front of another condo tower that they are now building in the Triangle.<sup>229</sup> The City has allowed Urbancorp to exceed the height and density limits for the area because of these concessions. The goal for the City and Active 18 has been “no net loss” of space for artists in the neighbourhood.<sup>230</sup> Now that condo development has spread to the north side of Queen Street West as well, it will be interesting to see if Active 18 – with help from the City and Artscape – can continue to secure concessions from developers using Section 37 and other municipal policy tools.

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<sup>226</sup> Personal communication with Kelly McCray, Active 18, November 23, 2012

<sup>227</sup> Urbancorp, viewed January 21, 2013 <<http://www.urbancorp.com/previousprojects.htm>>

<sup>228</sup> Artscape, viewed January 21, 2013 <<http://www.torontoartscape.org/>>

<sup>229</sup> Personal communication with Kelly McCray, Active 18, November 23, 2012

<sup>230</sup> The “No Net Loss” policy is now official City policy and serves as a guide for negotiations with developers in West Queen West.

## **5.9 Conclusion**

In many ways the City of Toronto is further along with municipal cultural policy development than any other municipality in the province. Toronto/Metro Toronto was developing cultural policies decades before the municipal cultural planning partnership was formed and municipalities across the province began to realize the importance of considering culture in local planning decisions. Within the past two decades, the focus of municipal cultural policy in Toronto has broadened into a more holistic approach – something that could be called 'true' municipal cultural planning, though with some limitations.

Toronto cultural planners can boast some notable accomplishments. This includes increasing awareness within the City's Planning Department of the importance of considering cultural issues in planning decisions. They have also formed key external partnerships with organizations, such as Artscape and neighbourhood-based groups that have been important for carrying out specific projects and protecting some culturally-significant areas of the city. That said, some of the major issues that have been identified in the past (i.e. asset rich but cash poor, confusion surrounding grant applications and City policies, etc.) remain. Also, Toronto's cultural planners still have a much easier time dealing in very concrete, easily definable notions of space and culture than with more abstract notions of these concepts.

As discussed in Chapter Three, cultural plan development often begins with a cultural mapping project that deals with absolute space – the simplest of Harvey's three types of space. The goal of these cultural mapping exercises is simply to find out what cultural resources (however those are defined) are present in the community. To their

credit, Toronto cultural planners have advanced to a somewhat more complex form of cultural mapping that shows an understanding of the importance of relative space. For example, Toronto cultural planners have examined the location of cultural resources relative to transportation routes, where artists and cultural workers live relative to where creative enterprises are located, etc. This has helped the cultural planners identify culturally-significant neighbourhoods such as West Queen West. However, relational space – the most complicated of Harvey's three types of space – remains a difficult concept to incorporate into policy. Places are created through the relationships between people and their surroundings – the intersection of culture and space. Yet the unique relationships between people and their surroundings in a place, how these relationships make the place unique and special, and how these relationships may be affected by municipal decisions (for example, when reviewing a development proposal) can be difficult for planners and policy-makers used to dealing in more concrete terms to even get their own heads around – then alone articulate to the OMB, for example. This problem came to light when the City attempted to fight the three proposed developments in the West Queen West Triangle that were not consistent with the intent of the City's MCP. Explaining the intentions of this policy document to OMB members who were used to dealing with much more concrete ('black and white') policies proved difficult.

The City of Toronto's understanding of culture, as with space, is becoming broader and more complex, though it is still more limited than it ought to be. Traditional cultural policy, in Toronto and elsewhere, was mostly limited to the narrowest of Williams' three conceptions of culture: culture as art. This seems to be changing – at least to some extent. Early cultural policy in Toronto (the Silcox and Hendry Reports) was

focused almost entirely on the arts. More recently, cultural planning in Toronto seems to be following a similar trend to what Kovacs found in Ontario's midsize cities: the arts make up a large, but not overwhelming, share of the plan. Likewise, Toronto's MCPs – including the one full MCP created post-amalgamation, *Culture Plan for the Creative City* – include more recommendations that address a lack of opportunities for cultural expression (the cause of placelessness most directly associated with the arts) than the other four causes of placelessness discussed in Chapter Four. Nevertheless, Toronto's cultural policies certainly seem better-suited to addressing the problems of placeless businesses, placeless buildings and infrastructure, and a lack of opportunities for social interaction and community engagement now than in the days of the Silcox and Hendry Reports.

Some of the constraints to the success of municipal cultural planning in Toronto come from the provincial government. In particular, the reluctance of the OMB to recognize the value of MCPs has been problematic. Provincial legislation formerly acknowledging MCP as a municipal policy/planning tool should help, but the City could address this problem by itself by better integrating its MCP with its OP. To their credit, the City's decision to fight the West Queen West developers in court after losing at the OMB showed their commitment to their cultural plan and willingness to find ways to ensure that it is enforced even if the province is not supportive. However, the heavy focus on economic issues in Toronto's cultural planning seems to be intensifying (even though it is not clear whether Toronto's most recent MCP has actually been responsible for growth in the cultural sector). *Creative Capital Gains*, which was centred almost entirely on a narrow set of economic interests, was not a full MCP (that is, not a replacement for

*Culture Plan for the Creative City*), but it was meant to lay out goals for this term of Council. If Council's focus is on using culture as an instrument for achieving economic objectives than their willingness to fight placeless developers (or any placeless business) may be quite limited.

Though *municipal* cultural planning is about insuring that culture is considered in everything that the municipality does, it seems to work best at resisting the making of placeless space when the municipality works in partnership with the community. A number of Toronto neighbourhoods (and not just the very affluent neighbourhoods) have community groups that are actively resisting the making of placeless space. The West Queen West neighbourhood has provided an example of how a city's cultural plan can serve as a guide/support for these groups. Some municipal policy/planning tools (i.e. Section 37) have been helpful in neighbourhoods like West Queen West, but it is the fact that there was a plan in place that was not consistent with what the developers were proposing that led the City to back Active 18. It will be interesting to see whether this can work in other neighbourhoods, especially now that David Miller – who had supported Active 18 – is no longer Mayor.

## **6 Chapter: Mississauga**

### **6.1 Description and history of the municipality**

People have lived in what is now Mississauga for more than 10 000 years. Prior to 1700 AD these were mostly Iroquoian-speaking peoples. Between 1700 and 1720 the Mississaugas, an Ojibwa tribe, came to establish themselves along the north shore of Lake Ontario. This included settlements along the Credit River in what is now the City of Mississauga.<sup>231</sup>

The Town of Mississauga was created in 1968 as an amalgamation of Lakeview, Cooksville, Lorne Park, Clarkson, Erindale, Sheridan, Dixie, Meadowvale Village, and Malton. Streetsville and Port Credit were added in 1974 to create the City of Mississauga. It has grown rapidly to become Canada's 6th largest city, and the fourth largest city on the Great Lakes, with a population of more than 700,000.<sup>232</sup>

Immigration has been an important part of Mississauga's growth. By 2006 more than half of the City's residents were foreign born.<sup>233</sup> Not surprisingly, Statistics Canada has found that Mississauga is one of the most ethno-culturally diverse cities in Canada in terms of religion, mother tongue, country of origin, and almost any other category. Less than half of Mississauga's residents identify English as their first language.<sup>234</sup> Much of Mississauga's growth is likely 'spill-over' from Toronto. Since highway expansion in the 1960's and 1970's, most development in Mississauga has been typical suburban

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<sup>231</sup> Heritage Mississauga, "Aboriginal Culture," viewed January 26, 2013  
<<http://www.heritagemississauga.com/page/Aboriginal-Culture>>

<sup>232</sup> Mississauga Culture Plan, p. 28

<sup>233</sup> Mississauga Culture Plan, p. 28

<sup>234</sup> Statistics Canada, 2006 Census

development. However, there has been some employment growth in Mississauga in recent years as well, with the city now being home to a number of head offices.<sup>235</sup>

Mississauga faces a number of challenges. Like many Canadian cities, its population is ageing. Though it was, until recently, thought of as a city of young families, the 35 – 50 age group now represents almost half of Mississauga's population. The City is now looking for ways to attract young people from elsewhere. Perhaps the biggest challenge that Mississauga now faces is that it is fast becoming 'built out' (running out of development land). This means that revenue from development charges, which has been a significant portion of the City's budget for years, will decline substantially in the years to come. Meanwhile, Mississauga's civic infrastructure is ageing, and much of it will need to be replaced in the not-too-distant future. As well, traffic congestion has become a major concern, so demand for public transit is increasing. Major investments will be needed to improve the transportation system at the same time as municipal revenues are declining. This will certainly put a major strain on the City's finances in the coming years.<sup>236</sup>

During the public consultation sessions as part of the creation of the City of Mississauga's strategic plan, *Our Future Mississauga*, residents expressed a desire for their city to be more than just a bedroom community for Toronto.<sup>237</sup> It seems as though the City has been moving in this direction in recent years with substantial investments in cultural facilities, such as the Living Arts Centre (LAC), and through initiatives aimed at developing Mississauga City Centre as a true “downtown” for the city. That said, the City

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<sup>235</sup> Mississauga Culture Plan, p. 28

<sup>236</sup> Mississauga Culture Plan, p. 28

<sup>237</sup> City of Mississauga, *Our Future Mississauga*, 2008, p. 23-7

recognizes that many more investments will be needed in order for Mississauga residents to not have to rely so heavily on Toronto for big city amenities and employment.<sup>238</sup>

As a city that is typically thought of as a suburban, bedroom community, Mississauga is certainly not well-known for its cultural sector. However, the cultural mapping exercise undertaken as preparation for the creation of the City's first municipal cultural plan identified more than 1500 cultural assets. Cultural assets can include: community cultural organizations; cultural and natural heritage sites and landmarks; theatres, galleries, museums, and other cultural facilities; festivals and events; public art; cultural occupations; ethnocultural organizations; creative industries; and anything else that helps to make the community unique. The fact that there are so many cultural assets in Mississauga did not come as a surprise to everyone. At public consultation sessions many residents told the consultants that they felt that Mississauga has a strong base of arts, culture, and heritage organizations, though they may not be well-known. The study found that "amateur and semi-professional cultural activity has a strong presence in Mississauga, and practitioners are supported by a range of development opportunities provided through educational institutions, non-profit cultural organizations, and governmental agencies." There is also some professional cultural activity in Mississauga, though it is less evident because it is dispersed across many small organizations throughout the city. There are only a few large employers in the cultural sector in Mississauga, such as the Mississauga Public Library and the Musical Theatre, and Mississauga's creative industries are not clustered in a particular area of the city (other

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<sup>238</sup> Mississauga Culture Plan, p. 28

than a small cluster of film/video producers and graphic/software designers along HWY 401).<sup>239</sup>

## **6.2 The mayor**

Mississauga is perhaps best known for its mayor, Hazel McCallion, who is known as “Hurricane Hazel.” She has been the Mayor of Mississauga since 1978, which makes her Canada's longest serving mayor. Following a successful career in business and engineering, McCallion decided to devote herself to politics beginning in the late 1960's. She became a member of the Planning Board for the then Town of Streetsville in 1964, becoming Chair of the Board in 1966. McCallion was elected Mayor of Streetsville in 1970, and then was elected to both Mississauga City Council and Peel Regional Council when they were created following amalgamation in 1974. Now in her twelfth term as Mayor of Mississauga, McCallion has served on almost every City and Regional committee that has ever existed in Mississauga and Peel, and also served as Chair of the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) in the late 1970's.<sup>240</sup>

McCallion can boast a number of accomplishments during her long tenure as Mayor. Despite the massive amount of infrastructure that the City of Mississauga has needed to build to accommodate its rapid growth, the City has managed to avoid having to borrow money during McCallion's tenure. She has created new opportunities for residents to engage with their local government, such as annual public budget forums. As well, McCallion has supported the development of new industries in Mississauga. This includes substantial growth in the biotechnology sector, for which she recently received

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<sup>239</sup> Mississauga Culture Plan, p. 28

<sup>240</sup> City of Mississauga, “About the Mayor,” viewed January 26, 2013  
<<http://www.mississauga.ca/portal/cityhall/mayor>>

an award from The Biotechnology Initiative. Regionally, she worked with other municipal leaders in the GTA to improve regional planning and coordinate local economic development strategies in the area. She was appointed Chair of the Central Ontario Smart Growth Panel – which includes over 20 cities making it the largest panel of its kind in Ontario – in 2002 to address issues such as gridlock and waste disposal. At the provincial level, McCallion was part of the “Who Does What” Panel in 1996 that made recommendations to the Government of Ontario regarding the re-organization of service delivery. Nationally, she has received Canada's highest civilian honour, induction into the Order of Canada, as well as being honoured for her service in municipal politics by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. Her achievements have also been recognized on the world stage, as she was a finalist for the title of World Mayor in 2004 and 2005.<sup>241</sup>

In addition to those accomplishments, McCallion has also broken barriers for women in politics, business, and sports. She was the first woman to ever hold the positions of: President of the Streetsville and District Chamber of Commerce; President of the Anglican Young Peoples' Association of Canada; Mayor of Streetsville; and Mayor of Mississauga. McCallion was recently a finalist for the Jo Anna Townsend Award, which honours a woman who helps women entrepreneurs achieve success in international business. In 2007 she was named one of Canada's Most Powerful Women by the Women's Executive Network, who awarded McCallion with the Trailblazers and

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<sup>241</sup> City of Mississauga, “About the Mayor,” viewed January 26, 2013  
<<http://www.mississauga.ca/portal/cityhall/mayor>>

Trendsetters award. She has also been honoured by Hockey Canada for her efforts to promote women's hockey.<sup>242</sup>

Though her accomplishments are many, McCallion's tenure as Mayor has not been without controversy. When researching the City of Mississauga's role in supporting multiculturalism, Kristin Good discovered a disturbing trend when speaking with organizations that receive municipal funding. Many of these organizations were afraid to challenge municipal policy, and especially to challenge the Mayor, since they believed that the Mayor could cut off their funding “with one phone call.” Interestingly, Good did not find any cases of the Mayor actually stopping an organization's funding unilaterally.<sup>243</sup> However, the fact that many people seemed to believe she had this power, and consequently were not willing to challenge her, is quite concerning. Though she has presided over tremendous growth in the city, in some ways McCallion may be an impediment to progress. She has stated that this will be her last term in office. The post-McCallion era will be an interesting time for Mississauga. On the one hand, they will be losing one of the most experienced and respected municipal leaders in the country, and inevitably some institutional knowledge will be lost too. On the other hand, a new mayor could bring a new set of ideas, and this could be an opportunity for Mississauga residents to have a more open discussion about what sort of city they would like to live in.

### **6.3 History of cultural planning**

This section does not need to be nearly as lengthy as the discussion of Toronto's history of cultural policy development in the previous chapter. Cultural policy was not a

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<sup>242</sup> City of Mississauga, “About the Mayor,” viewed January 26, 2013

<<http://www.mississauga.ca/portal/cityhall/mayor>>

<sup>243</sup> Good, p. 103-104

priority for the City of Mississauga until quite recently. Its Culture Division was created in 2007 and its first municipal cultural plan (*Culture Master Plan*) was adopted in 2009. The plan mostly focused on funding and infrastructure for arts and heritage organizations, and capitalizing on the economic contributions of the cultural sector. However, some first steps were taken towards cross-departmental collaboration and integration of culture with other municipal operations (i.e. city planning, economic development, recreation, etc.).<sup>244</sup>

You can often tell a lot about a municipal cultural plan just by looking at the first few pages. This is the case with Mississauga's MCP. The opening sentence of the Executive Summary is quite telling. It reads, "This is a Culture Master Plan for a young city that welcomes the world."<sup>245</sup> The plan seems to have been created under the belief that currently Mississauga is living in the shadow of Toronto. It does not yet have its own identity, and is not currently a culturally-significant city (despite having more than 1500 cultural assets and 11,000 people who work in the cultural sector), since it is such a "young city." However, there also seems to be a belief that it is now time for this young city to 'grow up.' With more than 700,000 people Mississauga is now starting to feel like a major city in its own right. The large numbers of immigrants coming to Mississauga from all over the world help to give the city credibility as a true "global city," and the desire of residents to be more than just a bedroom community for Toronto seems to be working its way into municipal policy and planning decisions. However, there is also a recognition that Mississauga has a long way to go, and that its Culture Master Plan is an important step.

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<sup>244</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009

<sup>245</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 5

At first the Culture Master Plan reads like a fairly traditional arts policy (just a little broader), as it “envisions strengthened arts, culture, and heritage organizations,”<sup>246</sup> but then starts to sound more like a true cultural plan, as it “calls upon departments inside City Hall to work collaboratively”<sup>247</sup> to incorporate cultural perspectives into the operations of the municipality. Also, one of the guiding principles of the plan is to focus on “quality of place” instead of being a plan for individual artistic disciplines. Another one of the plan's guiding principles is to “create an authentic and shared identity” by valuing “all the elements of the local cultural system and the interrelationships between them.”<sup>248</sup> As well, it is recognized that one of the major benefits of cultural planning is the opportunity to “develop cities with a sense of place, identity, and belonging.”<sup>249</sup> This really reflects the essence of the difference between conventional arts policies and municipal cultural plans.

What is also encouraging about Mississauga's MCP is its very broad definition of culture, though it is still not all encompassing. The plan was developed with help from a consulting team led by researchers at the Canadian Urban Institute (CUI). CUI has a particularly broad understanding of culture that they use when developing these sorts of plans. They understand the culture of a city as including all the “values, vibes, and virtuosity” of that community.<sup>250</sup> It is interesting that CUI, like both Raymond Williams and myself, divide culture into three broad categories. CUI's categorization of culture is quite similar to my own, even though our definitions were developed independent from

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<sup>246</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 5

<sup>247</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 5

<sup>248</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 6

<sup>249</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 17

<sup>250</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 15

one another. “Virtuosity” refers to “the expression of artistic excellence and the appreciation of artistic merit.”<sup>251</sup> This is similar to my broad arts category (and Williams' culture as art category), except that CUI uses an active definition. The term “values” is being used to encompass identity, customs, memories, and stories.<sup>252</sup> This is similar to my broad heritage category. “Vibe” is the one category that is somewhat different. It is defined as “the buzz that pours out into the street from the commercial culture of a place.”<sup>253</sup> This is somewhat like my miscellaneous category (and Williams' culture as a way of life category), but much narrower as it is limited to commercial activity. Nevertheless, including this category in the definition is a recognition of the importance of the public realm.

There are certainly signs of neoliberal ideology evident throughout the plan, such as a reluctance to use public funds and a desire to rely on the private sector for service delivery whenever possible. For example, the plan includes a recommendation to create a “Stabilization Fund” aimed at kick-starting private sector support for Mississauga cultural organizations.<sup>254</sup> There is also a desire to attract and retain skilled labour in an era in which labour (and capital) has become increasingly mobile.<sup>255</sup> However, at the same time, there are some post-neoliberal approaches in this plan along the lines of the social investment perspective described by Jane Jenson. The Culture Master Plan often makes reference to the role of the City as a coordinator and enabler.<sup>256</sup> It acknowledges that there are certain things that only the municipality can do (i.e. zoning regulations), but that

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<sup>251</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 15

<sup>252</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 15

<sup>253</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 15

<sup>254</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 10-11

<sup>255</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 6

<sup>256</sup> For example, see Strategic Direction 4: “Build partnerships and increase collaboration” in City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 10

the City must be careful not to end up in direct competition with community-based organizations.<sup>257</sup> Many of the recommendations involve partnership-building between the municipality and various community organizations.<sup>258</sup>

There is a benchmarking section that compares Mississauga to cities that are comparable in terms of population growth in recent decades, such as Calgary; population, such as Vancouver; and various demographics, such as the ethnocultural make-up of city, the age of the population, etc.<sup>259</sup> Though benchmarking is common practice in public administration, it could put a municipal cultural plan at risk of becoming a 'cookie-cutter' plan – a plan that aims to do the same sort of things that everyone else is doing, but (hopefully) better. Since culture and creativity, by definition, require uniqueness (if it is not unique, it is not creative), then a cookie-cutter MCP is not truly a cultural plan. However, despite the benchmarking section, it is encouraging that there seems to have been at least some effort to avoid a cookie-cutter plan. There are aspects of the Mississauga Culture Master Plan that tap into the city's distinct advantages. For example, as mentioned previously, Mississauga has one of the most ethnoculturally-diverse populations by almost any measure anywhere in the world. This is acknowledged as a unique feature of the city early on in the plan, and one of the plan's guiding principles is to “celebrate multiculturalism and interculturalism.”<sup>260</sup> This is particularly encouraging because of the desire to move from multiculturalism as it has occurred in Toronto (the “city of villages”) to a greater focus on “interculturalism,” which implies cultural exchange between different groups. In other words, Mississauga recognizes its potential

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<sup>257</sup> For example, see City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 53

<sup>258</sup> For example, see City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 10-11

<sup>259</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 9-10

<sup>260</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 6

to move from simply being a city with multicultural demographics to being a truly multicultural city. As well, the plan recognizes that the fact that Mississauga was built in pieces and consists of many former towns and villages is also a distinct advantage. The importance of the historic towns that make up the current City of Mississauga – including Cooksville, Clarkson, Streetsville, Port Credit, and Meadowvale – as well as the need to preserve the unique character of these communities is acknowledged. Also, it is recognized that the fact that Mississauga is so close to the largest urban centre in Canada creates certain advantages, such as access to a very large concentration of cultural workers.<sup>261</sup>

Another strength of Mississauga that the plan touches on is its festivals and events. There are quite a number of festivals that take place each year in Mississauga, and several of them draw very large numbers of attendees. For example, Carassauga, an event that celebrates Mississauga's cultural diversity, draws about 250,000 people per year. Despite the impressive numbers, the plan seems to downplay the significance of Mississauga's festivals by noting that the Mississauga/Toronto West Tourism Board decided that none of Mississauga's festivals are currently worthy of a tourism marketing campaign.<sup>262</sup> However, the fact that the local tourism board is not interested in marketing Mississauga's festivals to tourists is not entirely a bad thing. There is certainly value in building local events for the local community. In fact, the plan acknowledges that

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<sup>261</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 9

<sup>262</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 39

community events play a key role in place-making,<sup>263</sup> especially if they are affordable and accessible.<sup>264</sup>

It is admitted that cultural planning is not currently well integrated in the municipal bureaucracy in Mississauga. Compounding this problem is the fact that municipal cultural facilities do not interact much amongst themselves.<sup>265</sup> It is hard to imagine the City making any significant improvements in the integration of cultural planning into municipal departments and agencies outside of the Culture Division if the municipality's cultural facilities are unable to integrate their objectives into the City's cultural plan. But, this plan seems to have the potential to fix that. There is a recommendation to work to improve communication between municipal departments and agencies regarding cultural issues. Also, a number of the other recommendations – including encouraging community celebrations and festivals, strengthening cultural infrastructure, building partnerships and collaboration, and creating an artful public realm – will require the cooperation of several different municipal departments, such as recreation, tourism, planning, public works, etc.<sup>266</sup> The support of the mayor will be helpful in bringing departments and agencies across the corporation on to the same page.

The Mississauga Culture Master Plan touches on a number of opportunities for place-making. There is an identification of cultural nodes, and a recommendation to create an artful public realm. There is also a desire to build an “authentic, shared identity.” This is a place in which this plan moves beyond a narrow set of economic goals. For example, arguably the plan to create more waterfront parks will take up a lot of

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<sup>263</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 40

<sup>264</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 45

<sup>265</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 8

<sup>266</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 10-11

valuable land that the private sector would love to have, but it creates a better place and ultimately a better city.<sup>267</sup>

Heritage preservation must be part of place-making, since heritage can create a shared identity and an understanding of the importance of a place. The plan recognizes that Mississauga must embrace “a broader definition of heritage, one that reflects the cultural traditions and beliefs of many new immigrants whose histories and cultural traditions may not yet have manifested themselves in physical form in the community.”<sup>268</sup> Unfortunately, how to actually do this can be difficult. The Ontario Heritage Act could be a stumbling block in this regard, as the act reflects a traditional western understanding of what heritage preservation entails (heavy focus on built heritage). The heritage organizations that the City partners with can also be part of an outdated model of heritage preservation, such as the Mississauga Heritage Foundation, which was created in the 1950's to save a historic home.<sup>269</sup> Research by Isin and Siemiatycki revealed the difficulty that western cultural bias in land-use planning rules (including heritage preservation requirements) has created for Muslims attempting to build mosques in the GTA.<sup>270</sup> The plan also makes reference to celebrating Aboriginal heritage,<sup>271</sup> but again the Ontario Heritage Act and established approaches to heritage preservation could prove to be a challenge.

There can also be opportunities in unexpected places. Just as Michael Noble's research found “lovely spaces in unknown places” in Toronto's inner-suburbs,

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<sup>267</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 21

<sup>268</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 34

<sup>269</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 36

<sup>270</sup> Isin, Isin, Engin F. and Myer Siemiatycki, “Making Space for Mosques: Struggles for Urban Citizenship in Diasporic Toronto” in *Race, Space, and the Law*, Ed. Razack, Shreene (Toronto, ON: Between the Lines Press, 2002)

<sup>271</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 37

Mississauga also has potentially interesting nodes of cultural activity hidden in unknown and seemingly uninteresting places. These include Mississauga's large surface parking lots, though the plan regards these lots as a problem. The plan states that, "Large expanses of surface parking are common in Mississauga, and they often act to stifle cultural activity."<sup>272</sup> While this is usually true, there are also times when parking lots can provide space for cultural events, including some of Mississauga's large festivals. The fact that Mississauga hosts many large festivals and events may be, at least partially, a result of the large amount of open, flexible space offered by its surface parking lots.

Mississauga's Culture Master Plan includes two vision statements: a short-term vision looking at the next five years and a longer-term vision looking towards the year 2035. The short-term vision is fairly modest. It mostly focused on establishing a Culture Division and sorting out the organizational structure at City Hall. Many of the goals discussed in this vision have already been achieved – most notably the establishment of the Culture Division. The long-term vision, however, is very bold. It is heavily focused on Mississauga's diversity and creative potential. It also addresses place-making by envisioning the public realm as a beautiful place where people really enjoy being. The Mississauga of the future is made to appear as a place full of authentic cafes and unique shops – a far cry from the box-store-dominated Mississauga of today. The long-term vision also discusses economic objectives, such as raising property values, increasing the tax base, and being able to "compete on a global scale."<sup>273</sup>

The vision statements, particularly the long-term vision, raise some concerns. Although the authors of these statements certainly wanted to present Mississauga as a

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<sup>272</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 74

<sup>273</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 13-14

city for everyone (hence the focus on diversity), there is no mention of the possible consequences of rising property values on Mississauga's lower-income residents. Also, it is questionable whether Mississauga residents really want their city to become a “global city” in the way this plan imagines. In fact, most of the residents who were consulted with were much more interested in seeing Mississauga develop and enhance a vibrant local culture to be enjoyed by the local residents – instead of developing so-called “world class” cultural amenities aimed at luring in people from around the world.<sup>274</sup> This is not surprising considering that Mississauga does *not* have an attraction problem. The city attracts more immigrants per capita than almost any other city in the world. In this sense, Mississauga already *is* a global city – though it does not (yet) offer the sort of vibrancy that is expected in a global city.

The Culture Master Plan is not shy about admitting that Mississauga faces many challenges. The plan acknowledges that creative development in suburban communities with limited density and few unique heritage buildings (few unique buildings period) can be difficult. Though the plan does not explicitly acknowledge that the City is at least partially to blame for the sorry state of its urban landscape – and there is certainly no mention of the responsibility of the developers themselves in this problem – there is at least a recognition that urban design must improve in order to spur creative development.<sup>275</sup>

Another problem that the plan acknowledges is that, as noted earlier, “the creative core is dispersed throughout Mississauga and does not exhibit any substantive

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<sup>274</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 55

<sup>275</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 17

clustering.”<sup>276</sup> Although there is some clustering of cultural assets in the historic towns, most notably Port Credit and Streetsville, and in the City Centre, cultural workers are not clustered in any particular area. This is unusual, as research by Kelly Hill has shown that cultural workers in Canada's large cities tend to cluster in certain neighbourhoods.<sup>277</sup> This may be reflective of the way that the city is built (without an historic downtown at its core and without very many unique neighbourhoods other than a few historic towns), and it may limit the ability of the creative core to support place-making initiatives. In cities like Toronto where cultural workers tend to concentrate in particular neighbourhoods, these neighbourhoods often undergo substantial changes in terms of economic activity, property values, and aesthetics.<sup>278</sup> However, in Mississauga it may be difficult to amass a sufficient number of cultural workers in any one neighbourhood in order for this to occur. One place where some cultural industries (though not necessarily the people who work for them) do cluster in Mississauga is along the 401. These include businesses in film production and graphic design. These firms are primarily making products to be consumed elsewhere (hence the fact that they cluster along a major highway), so it is questionable whether or not they can contribute much to place-making in Mississauga.<sup>279</sup> It is encouraging that Mississauga's Growth Management Strategy includes the creation of districts of mixed-use space.<sup>280</sup> These could become clusters for creative cultural activity in the future. The report noted that no current arts or culture organization in

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<sup>276</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 42

<sup>277</sup> Hill, Kelly, “Putting arts and culture on the map: Literally!” (Toronto, ON: Hill Strategies, 2010)

<sup>278</sup> This is discussed elsewhere in this paper. Note that these 'improvements' in the neighbourhood may not end up being in the best interest of the cultural workers and may not be sustainable long term. This can depend a lot of municipal policy. See the chapter on Toronto.

<sup>279</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 43

<sup>280</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 45

Mississauga is interested in becoming a property developer,<sup>281</sup> so this may need to be a role for the municipality.

It is interesting, though not entirely surprising, that the consultants' research found that “audiences and supporters of 'signature' arts groups . . . are characterized by high levels of income and education; long-standing residence in the community; and low levels of diversity.”<sup>282</sup> In other words, this is a group that is not reflective of one of the most culturally diverse cities in the world. Participants in many of Mississauga's festivals and in less established arts and culture activities are often much more diverse. That is why it is encouraging that this plan uses such a broad definition of culture. That said, the so-called “signature” arts organizations still get a disproportionately large share of municipal funding and representation on municipal committees. The challenge going forward will be to adapt long-standing institutions in Mississauga to the reality of the city's current demographics.

Major issues identified during the public consultation sessions included the need for: the Living Arts Centre “to act as a hub, supporting local arts, culture, and heritage activity;” stronger protection of heritage buildings, as well as a broader story of local heritage; more art in public places; more opportunities to experience professional performances; and more attention to be paid to Mississauga's diverse cultural groups. Things that were not major issues included the development of tourism and creative

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<sup>281</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 77

<sup>282</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 54

industries.<sup>283</sup> It is interesting that despite all the hype surrounding Florida's creative class theory, economic issues were NOT the main concern for Mississauga residents.<sup>284</sup>

Recommendation 33 of the Culture Master Plan includes a list of 12 cultural indicators to be reported on regularly by the Culture Division.<sup>285</sup> The Culture Division released its first Culture Report Card reporting on these indicators in 2011. The report card was fairly limited, since the plan had only been in effect for a few years and most of the indicators had not been tracked for very long. As a result, there are few year-over-year comparisons. Also, the link between the stats and policy is not always clear. Nevertheless, the report card shows that, contrary to the belief that Mississauga is 'just a bedroom community', there is a lot going on in the city. More than 500 000 people attended festivals and events supported by the City, the film industry has been experiencing substantial growth, investment in culture has increased, and there are now more than 3 000 listed heritage properties in Mississauga. As well, more than one third of Mississauga's workforce now works in the creative sector, which suggests that this sector will likely begin to have greater political clout in Mississauga.<sup>286</sup>

#### **6.4 Reading cultural planning in Mississauga in terms of the Framework for Understanding Placeless Space**

Like the early cultural policies in Toronto/Metro Toronto, Mississauga's first MCP was focused largely on addressing opportunities for cultural expression and participation in cultural activities. A lot of the City's role in culture to date has been about funding cultural organizations, facilities, and festivals/events – similar to what was

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<sup>283</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 55

<sup>284</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 62

<sup>285</sup> City of Mississauga, *Culture Master Plan*, 2009, p. 70

<sup>286</sup> City of Mississauga, *Celebrate Culture in Mississauga: The 2011 Culture Report Card*, 2011

happening in Toronto/Metro Toronto up until the 1980's. However, there are some aspects of the *Culture Master Plan* that could address other factors that contribute to placeless space as well.

While it is unfortunate (and somewhat curious) that the definition of “vibe” (the third part of CUI's definition of culture) was limited to commercial experiences, this does show a recognition of the importance of place-specific businesses. Recommendations to implement design guidelines for the historic downtowns (in Streetsville, Port Credit, and other former towns) and to invest in creating a more vibrant City Centre could create spaces for unique place-based businesses to thrive, while also limiting space for placeless businesses like box stores and fast food restaurants. The City's investments in Mississauga City Centre (most notably creating Celebration Square) also create places for community gatherings. The fact that many of the events that the City supports are attracting such large crowds suggests that they are having some success in this regard, though more work is still needed to really make Mississauga City Centre a special and unique place. Currently, the City Centre is still dominated by a large mall, Square One, which is made up mostly of chain stores and restaurants.

The recommendation to improve design guidelines (especially in historically significant areas of the city), and the desire to avoid large surface parking lots, is a step towards addressing Mississauga's abundance of placeless infrastructure. Creating an “artful public realm” by investing in public art projects can also help make the city's infrastructure more interesting and place-specific. The City has already made some progress in this area by passing a public art policy and hiring a public art coordinator. According to the Culture Report Card, Mississauga now has 30 works of public art,

almost half of which were funded by the municipality.<sup>287</sup> As mentioned previously, the plan admits that currently cultural planning is not well integrated into the municipal bureaucracy. Improving coordination with the Planning Department will be crucial if the city's infrastructure is to be improved upon.

## 6.5 Conclusion

It is encouraging that the City of Mississauga has taken some first steps towards a more integrated approach to cultural policy. This is particularly impressive considering that until recently this municipality seemed stubbornly determined to limit its focus to the traditional roles of municipal governments – namely building and maintaining 'hard' infrastructure and providing a few basic services like garbage collection. Culture was not really even on the radar with this municipality until quite recently beyond designating some heritage properties and providing some support for the arts (i.e. building the Living Arts Centre). Despite coming late to the party, the City of Mississauga managed to cover a lot with its first municipal cultural plan. Arguably, Mississauga's *Culture Master Plan* is broader than the early cultural policies in Toronto/Metro Toronto – though the purpose of this thesis is not to compare these two unique cases – in terms of protecting heritage, recognizing cultural nodes and corridors, celebrating diversity, and supporting creative industries. Yet Mississauga, like Toronto, still seems to have an easier time dealing in more concrete terms (absolute space and culture as art) and addressing a lack of opportunities for cultural expression more so than the other causes of placeless space.

Considering the City of Mississauga's long-standing focus on hard infrastructure and basic services, it is not surprising that its first cultural planning activities also deal in

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<sup>287</sup> City of Mississauga, *Celebrate Culture in Mississauga: The 2011 Culture Report Card*, 2011

very concrete terms. For example, the City's cultural mapping project, though extensive, deals only in absolute space. On the surface, it would appear that mapping has been a very significant part of cultural planning in Mississauga. The City used innovative new software that has piqued the interest of cultural planners in other municipalities (including the author of this thesis), and the City won an award for this project. However, so far Mississauga cultural planners have not analyzed the relative location of cultural resources (other than a very basic study by CUI), never mind the relationships between these cultural resources and the communities they are apart of. Also, while the *Culture Master Plan* identifies a number of important areas within the city, these areas typically follow the boundaries of former municipalities (i.e. Streetsville, Port Credit, etc.). The City has yet to incorporate into policy more flexible understandings of “neighbourhood” and “community” – one in which these spaces are defined by the interactions and relationships between people and their surroundings, instead of by rigid legal/political boundaries. It remains to be seen whether Mississauga's cultural map will actually become a tool for city planning and policy-making – rather than just a tool for residents and tourists to find out about cultural activities and attractions in Mississauga (though that is still important). In any event, if the City's cultural planners are unable to allow for a more community-driven understanding of space, then its ability to understand the intersection between space and culture and to respond to the community's needs in this regard will be limited.

Mississauga needs to be careful not to fall into the 'benchmarking trap'. By trying to measure everything, while always looking to compare themselves to other cities, they risk creating 'cookie-cutter' plans and policies. In other words, a placeless approach to

municipal governance – the exact opposite of what is needed to resist the making of placeless space. *Culture Master Plan's* long-term vision certainly shows signs of being stuck in the benchmarking trap by trying to be too much like Toronto and assuming that big city amenities and attractions are desirable. This approach may make sense when using a very narrow 'culture as art' (or even narrower 'culture as high art') definition of culture. What gets counted as art, and in particular what gets counted as so-called 'high art', may not differ much between Toronto and Mississauga. However, Mississauga is not Toronto. Using a much broader 'way of life' understanding of culture reveals a number of cultural differences between these two cities. Mississauga residents typically have a longer commute to work and rely more heavily on their cars. They are more likely to live in lower density, more family-oriented communities, and the cost of housing is somewhat lower. This lifestyle creates some challenges, but it also creates opportunities. More affordable housing can be helpful for new immigrants who must deal with very tight budgets as they get settled in their new home. Lower density can leave space for more parkland and places for neighbourhood events and activities. Even the much-maligned large surface parking lots that sprawl across the suburban landscape can be spaces for farmers markets, festivals/fairs, and concerts. Trying to be like Toronto with 'world class' cultural amenities will not work in a city that does not have the population density needed to support these amenities; nor is this necessary in a city that is so close to a place that already has world class cultural amenities. The fact that the residents of Mississauga expressed a different vision for their city during public consultation – one in which the focus is on fostering a vibrant local culture to be enjoyed by the local community instead

of a city full of world class cultural amenities – is encouraging. Let's hope their voices are heard at City Hall.

It is concerning that there are not many community groups in Mississauga that are committed to resisting the making of placeless space in their city. A search of Mississauga News articles from 2003 to the present using key words such as “development,” “planning,” and “municipal” revealed a limited number of stories about citizens fighting placeless development or the making of placeless space in Mississauga. There has been some community organizing around environmental issues – most notably a successful fight to stop a gas power generating plant from being built near a residential area. Rallying community members around cultural issues has been less common. There are some cases of residents organizing to save heritage buildings. As mentioned earlier, it was community organizing to save an historic house that led to the creation of the Mississauga Historical Society, which has been a key partner in municipal heritage initiatives. However, these community-based heritage preservation initiatives tend to be somewhat limited. They are usually about saving a particular building in a particular neighbourhood, though this still creates opportunities to engage residents in a discussion of what they would like to see in their community.

There is a recent case of residents in Lakeview – a neighbourhood in the southern part of Mississauga, east of Port Credit along Lake Ontario – protesting condo development because it did not seem to fit the character of their neighbourhood. Community organizers in Lakeview have made sure that the community has had an opportunity to be involved in planning the redesign of industrial lands in the area, which should create a much nicer waterfront. Interestingly, the lead community organizer was

Jim Tovey, who has now been elected to Mississauga City Council. Council now seems committed to giving community groups a say in what sort of development occurs in their neighbourhood, but they face the same provincial obstacles as Toronto. Recently, Mississauga City Councillors joined other GTA politicians by calling for the abolition of the OMB after the provincial board refused to take the expressed wishes of local residents into account when ruling on a controversial condo development in Mississauga. The Council unanimously passed a motion to that effect, but it remains to be seen whether the Government of Ontario will act on the recommendation and abolish (or even significantly reform) the OMB. Regardless of what happens at the provincial level, the success of municipal cultural planning in Mississauga in creating more unique, culturally-vibrant places in the city will still require the involvement of the community. It will be interesting to see if the community energy that went into resisting the gas plant can now be directed towards a broader range of city planning issues.

## **7 Chapter: Conclusion**

This thesis has put forward a framework for understanding how placeless space can be made in cities through placeless businesses, placeless buildings and infrastructure, a lack of opportunities for social interaction and community engagement, and a lack of opportunities for cultural expression and participation in cultural activities. It has also explored the emerging practice of municipal cultural planning and its ability to stop the making of placeless space in two cities covering both urban and suburban areas in Canada's largest metropolitan region. The research questions that this thesis sought to answer were:

- Can municipal cultural planning be an effective mechanism for resisting the making of 'placeless space' (space without an identity) in cities?
- How has this practice been used (or not used) to address placelessness in urban and suburban municipalities, specifically the Cities of Toronto and Mississauga, in the Greater Toronto Area?
- Does municipal cultural planning help or hinder community-based efforts to resist the making of placeless space?

The framework for understanding placeless space put forward in Chapter Four was used to analyze municipal cultural plans in each of the case study municipalities. Both cases showed that, in conjunction with various community initiatives, MCP can address each of the four causes of placeless space, but with some limitations. There is still a tendency for addressing a lack of opportunities for cultural expression to make up a disproportionately large percentage of cultural plans – something that is more along the lines of traditional cultural policy. Cultural planners in the GTA may have moved beyond

a view of 'culture' that includes only the high arts, but incorporating a much broader 'culture as a way of life' definition into municipal policy continues to be a challenge. Similarly, moving to a more complex understanding of space has proven difficult for cultural planners as well. To some extent cultural planners in Toronto have managed to move from a purely absolute understanding of space to more of a relative understanding of space, but a relational understanding of space is still difficult to incorporate into policy.

Each case is unique. The purpose of this thesis was not to undertake a comparison of municipal cultural planning in the two cities. However, some common themes emerged. Most notably, in both Toronto and Mississauga the municipality (or municipalities in the case of pre-1998 Toronto) supported culture through funding cultural organizations, building cultural facilities, designating heritage properties, and other limited or one-off initiatives before attempting to integrate culture into the municipality's strategic planning. Both municipalities still find those traditional 'focused' cultural policies easier to implement than more complex strategic initiatives, such as requiring developers to justify their developments in terms of the culture of the community in which they are building. Nevertheless, the scope of cultural policy in both cities has certainly expanded in recent years. The fact that Mississauga's first MCP addressed more of the other three causes of placeless space than the early cultural policies in Toronto/Metro Toronto suggests that the growing 'community of practice' of MCP in Ontario is having a tangible impact. As pioneers in this field, early municipal cultural policy-makers in Toronto had no guide books to follow. Mississauga's first municipal cultural planners had the Municipal Cultural Planning Partnership, the Creative City

Network of Canada, and numerous books, articles, reports, and studies by Colin Mercer, Greg Baeker, and others to follow.

Though having examples and research to guide the development of municipal cultural plans can be helpful, it also increases the risk of creating cookie-cutter plans. This is another similarity between cultural planning in Toronto and Mississauga. Both municipalities seem determined to compare themselves to other cities, as benchmarking forms a significant part of their MCPs. If the goal is to foster a unique, vibrant local culture, then justifying policy decisions by using comparisons to other cities is foolish. This leads to placeless “cultural” plans that can be parachuted into any city. In recent years, Florida's creative class theory has often been the parachute. Its influence can certainly be seen in the MCPs in both Toronto and Mississauga. The City of Mississauga, however, may be moving past benchmarking and looking internally. The City's 2011 Culture Report Card avoided comparisons to other cities, and instead focused on evaluating Mississauga's cultural sector on its own terms. The City of Mississauga's approach to assessing the state of culture in the city is not without flaws (as discussed in Chapter Six), but it is encouraging that they are now doing this on their own terms. In contrast, the City of Toronto refers to other cities as “competitors” in its cultural planning documents. If the City of Toronto were truly committed to understanding Toronto's unique culture and incorporating this into municipal policy – in other words, if they truly wanted Toronto to be 'Toronto' – then how could any other city be a competitor? What city could be better at being Toronto than Toronto? A city defining what it means to be a great city on its own terms is a difficult concept to grasp for economic development officers who are used to discussing “competitive advantage” and engineers and planners

who are expected to meet industry and professional standards. Politicians also like comparisons that can give them quick, easy sound bites to use in election campaigns. “Starchitects”<sup>288</sup> – highly paid consultants and academics that move from city to city selling their approach to city building – are happy to exploit bureaucrats’ and politicians’ thirst for benchmarks. It is clear, for example, that the City of Toronto certainly wants to put a lot of ‘star power’ behind its recent *Creative Capital Gains* plan.<sup>289</sup> In an era of “new public management”<sup>290</sup> and increasing global integration, mobility, and competition it is doubtful that benchmarking will disappear – even from areas of public management where benchmarking is illogical (i.e. cultural planning) – anytime soon.

In neither city does there appear to be one clear reason for the adoption of MCP as part of municipal governance. All of the reasons discussed in Chapter One come into play in both cities. In addition to the influence of Florida’s creative class theory being present in both cases, rescaling as part of neoliberalism/post-neoliberalism, together with the changing role of municipalities more generally, was certainly a factor as well. The City of Toronto has seen a great expansion of municipal responsibilities, which has led to significant financial difficulties for the City, but has also made Toronto an innovator in many areas of municipal governance – including cultural planning. Similar changes are now occurring in Mississauga – they just started later. It was not long ago that a long-time Mississauga City Councillor was complaining about councillors in Toronto who

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<sup>288</sup> This term is something used to refer specifically to highly sought after architects. In this case, however, I am using the term more generally to refer to a variety of consultants, academics, and others (including architects) who have considerable name recognition (“star power”) and receive substantial compensation for offering their ideas and putting their name behind urban renewal or strategic planning initiatives.

<sup>289</sup> See Appendix B for a full list of advisors.

<sup>290</sup> This is a term used to describe public sector management in the neoliberal (and post-neoliberal) era. It involves a greater emphasis on “accountability” (usually understood as financial accountability) and pressure on public servants to act more like private sector managers.

were trying to broaden the scope of what the municipality did by bringing new perspectives to the table. “Does a socialist take the garbage from the curb differently?” he asked angrily.<sup>291</sup> For him, municipalities picked up the garbage and paved the roads, but now the City of Mississauga has plans in place that address a much broader range of issues – not unlike Toronto has done.

Concern about a loss of community identity was also present in both cities, though for slightly different reasons. In Toronto, the fear has been that the entire city will be “Manhattanized” (an entire city full of high rises), leaving little room for the formerly-independent inner-suburbs to maintain their distinctiveness. In Mississauga, the fear has been that the city would not be able to 'cut the cord' from Toronto and establish its own identity. The GTA is unique, and other metropolitan regions will have their own issues. However, the identity challenges faced by Toronto's inner and outer suburbs are probably similar to the challenges faced by suburbs in other regions: recognizing the economic importance of the central city, while at the same time trying to establish their own unique identity. These challenges are magnified by the fact that Ontario municipalities must rely heavily on property taxes and development charges for their revenue. An influx of people and capital for the central city increases development and property values in the suburbs, therefore increasing municipal revenues. In Mississauga this has enabled the City to finance the creation of key cultural facilities, such as the Living Arts Centre and Celebration Square. However, development pressure in Mississauga has also led to an

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<sup>291</sup> Mississauga City Councillor (1998 - present) Nando Iannicca, quoted in Good, p. 98. Councillor Iannicca was a well-known, out spoken member of Mississauga City Council. She was interviewed by Kristin Good as part of Good's research into how municipalities in the GTA are responding to changing demographics and the large influx of new immigrants in the area. Iannicca was cynical of the new roles that some municipalities were taking on, suggesting that it was merely the influence of left-wing political parties (namely the NDP) from the senior levels of government that was leading to this broadening of municipal governance.

influx of placeless businesses, the expansion of placeless infrastructure, and the loss of public space. It is likely that almost every suburb faces a similar balancing act, but the solution to this challenge must be specific to the place in question.

One final (and important) similarity between Toronto and Mississauga is the influence of capital in the making of placeless space and an unwillingness or inability on the part of the municipalities to recognize this problem. Everyone from Jane Jacobs to David Harvey to Richard Florida has noted that cities are places where wealth is created. They are spaces with a sufficient population density to enable efficient production and an exchange of ideas. Considering the crucial role that cities play within capitalist economies, it is not surprising that “economic development” tends to be such a big part of what municipalities do, including providing basic transportation infrastructure, building industrial parks and other spaces for businesses to operate, and creating favourable zoning and planning regulations. Both of the municipalities examined in this thesis provided ample reasons to believe that municipal cultural planning is simply a continuation of the traditional role of municipalities as facilitators of capital accumulation. Cultural planning documents from both municipalities include lots of talk about the economic value of place and culture, but no mention of the fact that some people benefit financially from the making of placeless space. As discussed earlier in this paper, most municipal cultural planners speak of place-making, but rarely mention the making of placeless space. Cultural planners in Toronto and Mississauga are no exception. Like their counterparts in other cities they seem to view placeless space as something that results from an absence of place-making instead of acknowledging that it is something that can be consciously made.

All four of the causes of placeless space discussed in Chapter Four benefit certain people – people who are often in a position to influence public policy decisions. This may explain why the case study municipalities are more reluctant to address some of these causes than others. In particular, placeless businesses seems to be an issue that the Cities of Toronto and Mississauga would prefer to avoid. As discussed in Chapters Five and Six, MCPs in both cities include recommendations that could encourage the development of more place-specific businesses. However, neither municipality seems prepared to also discourage the development of placeless businesses (such as by banning chain stores and restaurants, for example).<sup>292</sup>

### **7.1 Final thoughts: recommendations and areas for further research**

As the practice of municipal cultural planning in Ontario (and elsewhere) continues to expand, the need for more research into its effectiveness becomes ever greater. This thesis should not be seen as the definitive final word on MCP, but rather as just one piece of a puzzle. Kovacs' research shed light on how the practice of MCP is evolving in midsize cities in Ontario. This thesis has expanded our understanding of MCP by investigating its effectiveness at addressing the making of placeless space in urban and suburban municipalities in a major metropolis. What is still needed is further research into MCP in smaller cities and towns and rural and remote communities. There also needs to be research that asks whether MCP can be an effective tool for resisting the making of placeless space in communities where the population is stagnant or declining.

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<sup>292</sup> To be fair, this sort of policy does exist in a very small part of Toronto. Chains are not allowed in the Distillery District, which is an Artscape project that the City supported. However, chain stores and restaurants, along with many other placeless businesses, are still permitted (and exist) in most of Toronto. The City of Toronto's cultural planning documents, though they brag about the success of places like the Distillery District, provide no plan for reducing the prevalence of placeless businesses in other parts of the city.

These communities still must confront the forces that create placeless spaces, but the causes and nature of these forces could be quite different where development pressure is far less intense than it is in the GTA.

Another area of further research that ought to be explored is the role of the provincial government in supporting (or hindering) municipal cultural planning. The Government of Ontario has provided financial support for the creation of municipal cultural plans and related activities through the Creative Communities' Prosperity Fund (CCPF), and both Toronto and Mississauga were able to take advantage of this support. However, CCPF was only a small contribution (just \$9 million over four years) and it is being discontinued, so it is not clear what provincial support (if any) will be available in the future. Also, provincial policies and institutions – most notably the OMB – have been a hindrance to the success of MCP. In order for municipalities to be able to implement place-specific policies, provincial policy constraints need to be lessened. Comparative research looking at how Canadian provinces have (or have not) dealt with this problem could be helpful. Some international comparisons may be helpful too, though the specific constitutional arrangements among different levels of government will make each country unique in this regard.

If MCP is going to become a more significant part of municipal governance, then some fundamental changes in the way municipal public servants are trained will need to occur. As discussed earlier in this chapter, the focus will need to shift from benchmarking and industry and professional standards (not that these do not have a place in the municipal policy-making process) to a renewed focus on the specific local context. Arguably the most significant profession in the municipal bureaucracy are land use

planners. To some extent changes in the way planners are trained to account for MCP may already be underway. Lori Martin, the City of Toronto land use planner most closely involved in MCP-related initiatives, has been contracted to teach at the University of Waterloo's School of Planning. She felt that one of the reasons she was chosen for this job was because of her connection to cultural planning and because the university recognizes that this practice should be part of the future of land use planning.<sup>293</sup> The University of Toronto's Geography and Planning Department has also begun to encourage more research looking at the role of culture in urban planning by establishing the Cultural Economy Lab. Although it has a specifically economic focus, the research interests of its faculty and students branch out to cover a wider range of issues.<sup>294</sup> In my own experience as a cultural planner with the Cities of Peterborough and Ottawa, I have found that many planners are at least curious about municipal cultural planning and interested in seeing how it can complement the work that they do. Other professions in the municipal bureaucracy will need to adapt as well, including economic development officers. Again, this may already be happening. Despite its flaws, Florida's theory has brought culture and creativity into economic development discussions. Future research could examine the extent to which key professions (planners, engineers, economic development officers, etc.) are being adapted to support MCP, and what work still needs to be done in this area.

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<sup>293</sup> Personal communication with Lori Martin, Senior Cultural Affairs Officer, City of Toronto, September 27, 2012

<sup>294</sup> More information on the Cultural Economy Lab can be found here: <http://www.utoronto.ca/cultureconomy/index.html>. Jason Kovacs, whose research into municipal cultural planning in Ontario was very helpful for this thesis, was a member of the lab.

Integration of cultural planning across the municipal bureaucracy not only enables MCPs to cover a much wider range of issues, but it may also be necessary to insure that municipal cultural planning continues at all. There can be no doubt that the role of municipalities has changed and will continue to evolve. The exact path this evolution will follow is difficult to predict. However, what is clear is that for the foreseeable future municipalities in Ontario are going to face the dual pressures of being expected to take on more and more responsibilities but with increasingly limited resources. If cultural planning is to remain, it must be seen as something that can (and should) be built into the work that municipal staff are already doing – not as something extra that is being added on at extra cost to the municipality. The extent to which this occurs will likely dictate the extent to which MCP is part of the future of municipal policy-making.

Municipal cultural planning is not a 'quick fix' or a guaranteed solution for placeless space in cities. As long as there are those who can benefit from placelessness, then attempts at making placeless space will likely continue. The willingness and ability of municipalities to stop these attempts at making placeless spaces depends on numerous political, economic, cultural, historic, and other factors. However, this thesis has shown that MCP can be an effective tool in this regard if municipalities are willing to embrace it.

## **Appendices**

### **Appendix A**

#### **Toronto Cultural Policy/Planning Timeline**

**1953**

*Metro*

- ▲ The Municipality of Metropolitan Toronto is formed.

**1957**

*Metro*

- ▲ The beginning of funding for artistic and cultural organizations, as Metro Council awards grants of \$75,000 each to 10 organizations.

**1964**

*Old City of Toronto*

- ▲ The Toronto Arts Foundation, which later became the Toronto Arts Council, is incorporated. This organization allows the City to support arts/culture organizations without City Council having to make decisions about grants directly.

**1965**

*Metro*

- ▲ The regional municipality begins to take on a larger role with regards to cultural and heritage facilities/properties, as Metro acquires Exhibition Place and Old Toronto City Hall.

**1966**

*Metro*

- ▲ Metro begins to involve the lower-tier municipalities in decisions regarding cultural/heritage properties, as it leases Todmorden Mills to the Borough of East York, so that this heritage site can be developed.

## 1968

### *Metro*

- ▲ Metro acquires the O'Keefe Centre for the Performing Arts.

## 1973

### *City of Toronto*

- ▲ Alderman Karl Jaffary delivers report "Toronto Arts Foundation and Toronto Cultural Policy" to City Executive Committee on April 25 of this year. This leads to the commissioning of David Silcox to prepare a report on Metro's support for the arts.

## 1974

### *Metro*

- ▲ Metro Council adopts the "Silcox Report," *Metropolitan Toronto's Support for the Arts*, as a blueprint for future action.
- ▲ Toronto Arts Foundation changes its name to Toronto Cultural Advisory Corporation (Toronto Arts Council). Its revised objects are still in effect today.

## 1977

### *Metro*

- ▲ Metro begins to assume a larger role in supporting public art. The Metro Toronto Reference Library opens that year, and includes two major public art projects and an art gallery. The TTC opens the Spadina subway line, with 9 major public art installations.
- ▲ Metro cultural grants exceed \$1 million for the first time.
- ▲ Metro Council approves a \$5 million contribution towards the construction of Roy Thompson Hall.

## 1979

### *Metro*

- ▲ Metro's Director of Cultural Affairs, a position created following the Silcox Report, issues a report titled "Review of Metropolitan Toronto cultural policy and future directions."

## **1980**

### *Metro*

- ▲ Metro Council approves a \$5 million capital grant for the Royal Ontario Museum in support of its expansion.

## **1982**

### *Scarborough*

- ▲ Arts Scarborough, which was then recognized as an arts council, issues report "Arguments for the Arts", written by Paul D. Schafer.

## **1983**

### *Metro*

- ▲ The Cultural Affairs Division is established within the office of the City's Chief Administrative Officer.

### *Scarborough*

- ▲ "An Arts Policy for Scarborough" is released.

### *East York*

- ▲ Institute of Environmental Research creates a culture and recreation master plan for the Borough of East York.

## **1984**

### *Old City of Toronto*

- ▲ Toronto Arts Council hosts the first intergovernmental forum bringing together federal, provincial and municipal arts funders to plan collaborative funding work. Foundations were later added to the group which continues to meet on a semi-annual basis as the IRAFF (Intergovernmental Forum of Arts Funders and Foundations).

## **1985**

### *Metro*

- ▲ The Cultural Incentive Grants program is established to assist projects outside the old City of Toronto

- ▲ Metro cultural grants exceed \$5 million for the first time.
- ▲ "Cultural Capital: The Care and Feeding of Toronto's Artistic Assets", otherwise known as the Hendry Report (after its author, Tom Hendry) is commissioned and published by Toronto Arts Council.
- ▲ The Visual, Film and Video Arts Ad Hoc Committee of Canadian Artists' Representation Ontario releases a response to the Hendry Report titled "Amendments to Cultural Capital Report."
- ▲ The Toronto Arts Council creates Artscape, an organization with a mandate to create and manage cultural facilities.

#### *Old City of Toronto*

- ▲ The City establishes its Public Art Program and Public Art Commission.

#### *Scarborough*

- ▲ The Director of the City of Scarborough's Recreation Division issues a report titled "A White Paper on the Arts Development in Scarborough"

#### **1986**

#### *North York*

- ▲ The City's Arts Policy Advisory Committee issues a proposal titled "City of North York Arts Policy Proposal."

#### **1987**

#### *City of York*

- ▲ The City launches its Purchase Award Program for public art.

#### **1988**

#### *Metro*

- ▲ Metro Council creates a Public Art Policy Advisory Committee (PAPAC).
- ▲ The Toronto Arts Council releases a report titled "No vacancy : a cultural facilities policy for the city of Toronto."

#### **1989**

#### *Metro*

- ▲ Metro Council approves a Public Art Policy Framework.
- ▲ Metro Council directs the Chief Administrative Officer to prepare a cultural

policy.

- ▲ The municipalities Management Services Department releases a review of Metro Toronto's Cultural Affairs Division
- ▲ The Art of the Avenue University public art study is completed.

## 1990

### *Metro*

- ▲ Metro Council approves a contribution of \$4 million towards the Phase 3 expansion of the Art Gallery of Ontario.
- ▲ Metro Council approves a contribution of \$20 million towards the construction of a new Ballet-Opera House (though this was not built).
- ▲ Metro Council approves a \$500,000 loan guarantee for the Canadian Stage Company.

## 1991

### *Metro*

- ▲ Metropolitan Toronto Archives and Records Centre opens
- ▲ Metro adopts a regional heritage program and establishes a Heritage Technical Coordinating Committee.
- ▲ Metro Council approves the creation of a \$200,000 cultural stabilization fund for deficit reduction.

## 1992

### *Metro*

- ▲ A discussion paper titled "Metro's Role in Arts & Culture" is released.
- ▲ The Toronto Arts Council commissions E.A. Julian to create a report on "cultural equity"

### *Etobicoke*

- ▲ Ernst & Young delivers a report titled "City of Etobicoke Performing Arts Complex feasibility study: final report."
- ▲ Etobicoke Council adopts recommendations to encourage the provision of art in public places, a policy framework which led to the establishment of a Public Art Advisory Committee to assist the City in implementing its public art objectives.

## 1993

### *Metro*

- ▲ Metro Council adopts a report that streamlines support of film production on Metro properties and establishes an interdepartmental Film Policy Committee.
- ▲ Metro Council adopts "access guidelines" for all grant programs.
- ▲ The Toronto Arts Council's "Let's Talk" forum highlights the need for an arm's length agreement between the city and the arts council to make sure arts funding decisions are made by artists, not politicians.
- ▲ Metro Council approves a \$1 million loan to allow the Art Gallery of Ontario to pursue a major international art exhibition from the Barnes Foundation.

## 1994

### *Metro*

- ▲ Metro Toronto releases its first full municipal cultural plan titled "Metro's Culture Plan: Redefining Our Cultural Framework: A Culture Plan for the Metro Toronto Government."

### *Old City of Toronto*

- ▲ The Arm's Length Grants Agreement, the first such agreement ever made between a municipality and an arts council, is signed by the Toronto Arts Council and the City of Toronto.

## 1995

### *Scarborough*

- ▲ The City establishes the Citizens Committee on Public Art. A public forum is then held to seek input on how to further the City's public art objectives.

## 1996

### *Etobicoke*

- ▲ The City of Etobicoke issues a community cultural plan titled "The South Etobicoke Community Cultural Plan: Final Report Spring 1996."

### *Toronto*

- ▲ The Toronto Arts Council issues a report on arts funding and the economic impact of the arts in Toronto titled "State of the arts: an analysis of economic activity of the arts in Toronto."

## 1997

### *Amalgamation Transition*

- ▲ Following the announcement from the provincial government that Metro Toronto will be amalgamated into one city, a transition team is created.
- ▲ The Arts, Culture and Heritage Work Group is created as part of the Toronto Transition Team.
- ▲ The work group issues a report titled "Building on Strength: Arts, Culture and Heritage in the City of Toronto."
- ▲ The Toronto Arts Council responds to concerns about what amalgamation could mean for the arts in Toronto by releasing a working paper titled "A Blueprint for Arts and Culture in the New Toronto." The arts council then submits a report to the Greater Toronto Services Board titled "The Role of Culture in the GTA" and a report to the Toronto Transition Team titled "A Recipe for a Beautiful Future: Arts and Culture in the New Toronto."

### *York*

- ▲ York City Council adopts "A Policy for Community Public Art." This policy, developed by the City's Public Art Advisory Committee, outlined priority sites for public art, the procedures and mandate of the Committee, and gave specific direction for program funding, and jury selection, artist, and works selection.

### *Scarborough*

- ▲ Scarborough Council approves a two-part policy on public art.

## 1998

### *New City of Toronto*

- ▲ The newly amalgamated City of Toronto is created on January 1<sup>st</sup>.
- ▲ A Culture Division is created in the new city's Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Department. The new division then issues report outlining how development of the Culture division has lagged as behind the rest of the department.
- ▲ The Director of the Toronto Arts Council presents a paper titled "The Arts, Diversity and Civil Society: An Examination of the Toronto Arts Council Experience 1967 – 1997" to the Canadian Cultural Research Network Colloquium.
- ▲ The head of the Economic Development, Culture and Tourism Department presents a report titled "Overview of Key Issues and Opportunities in Economic Development, Culture and Tourism" to the City's Economic Development Committee.

## **1999**

- ▲ The Culture Division issues a report titled "The Economic Importance of Culture to Toronto", using data released by Statistics Canada regarding cultural tourism in Toronto.

## **2000**

- ▲ The Culture Division begins the Creative City planning process.
- ▲ The City's Planning Division receives report from GHK International (Canada) titled "The Future of Downtown Toronto: Background Study No. 8, Culture, Entertainment and Tourism in Downtown Toronto."

## **2001**

- ▲ The Culture Division delivers to City Council a document titled "Toronto the Creative City: A Workprint." This was the preliminary working document of the Creative City planning process that led to the creation of the amalgamated city's first municipal cultural plan.

## **2002**

- ▲ The Toronto Arts Council issues a report titled "FALSE ECONOMY? A Study of Need in Toronto's Non-Profit Arts Sector."

## **2003**

- ▲ Cultural mapping: ERA Architects prepares a report for Culture Division titled "A Map of Toronto's Cultural Facilities: A Cultural Facilities Analysis."
- ▲ The City adopts its first municipal cultural plan since amalgamation. It is titled "Culture Plan for the Creative City."

## **2005**

- ▲ The Culture Division releases the first two year progress report for the municipal cultural plan.
- ▲ Deloitte & Touche delivers a report titled "Economic Contribution of Toronto's Culture Sector" to City Council.

## **2007**

- ▲ City Council adopts draft guidelines for its Percent For Public Art program. This program sees a percentage (usually at least 1%) of capital expenditures go to public art.

## **2008**

- ▲ AuthenticCity delivers a report titled "Creative City Planning Framework" to City Council. This report is part of the City's Agenda for Prosperity Initiative.
- ▲ The Culture Division releases the second progress report for the municipal cultural plan.

Source: Robarts Centre for Canadian Studies, York University, prepared for the Mavor Moor Cultural Policy Symposium, October 24, 2008, using research by Lewis Kaye

## **Appendix B**

### **The Creative Capital Advisory Council**

#### **Co-Chairs:**

- Robert Foster, CEO, Capital Canada
- Karen Kain, Artistic Director, National Ballet of Canada
- Jim Prentice, Vice-Chair, CIBC

#### **Advisers:**

- Nichole Anderson, President and CEO, Business for the Arts
- Cameron Bailey, Co-Director, Toronto International Film Festival Group
- Claire Hopkinson, Executive Director, Toronto Arts Council
- Che Kothari, Executive Director, Manifesto Community Projects/Manifesto Festival of Community & Culture
- Gail Lord, Co-President, Lord Cultural Resources

#### **Special Advisers:**

- Richard Florida, Author and Director of the Martin Prosperity Institute
- Kevin Stolarick, Research Director, Martin Prosperity Institute
- Jeff Melanson, Executive Director and Co-CEO, Canada's National Ballet School; and Special Advisor to the Mayor - Arts & Culture

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