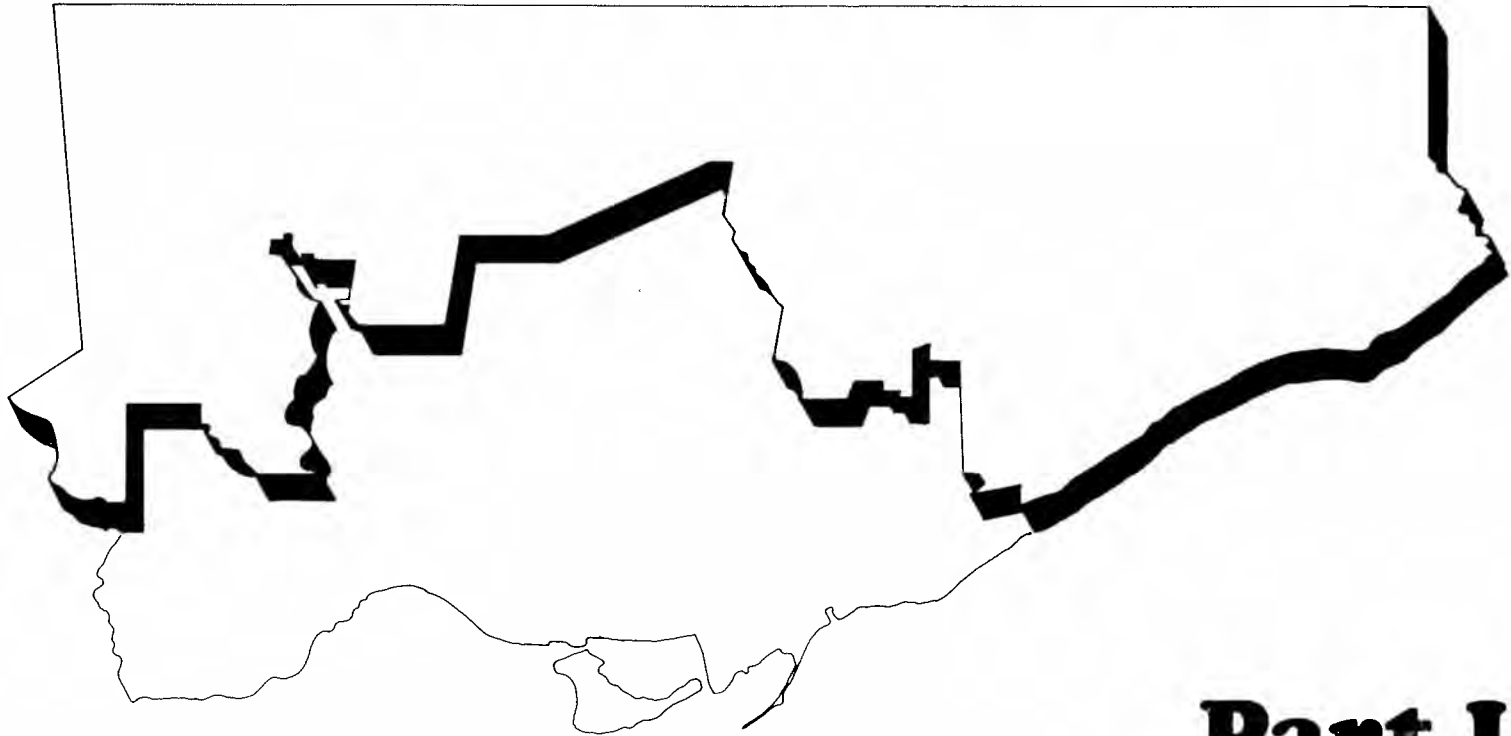




SOCIAL PLANNING
COUNCIL
OF
METROPOLITAN
TORONTO

Planning Agenda for the Eighties



Part II: Metro's Suburbs in Transition

Policy report



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POLICY REPORT

PLANNING AGENDA FOR THE EIGHTIES--
PART TWO: METRO'S SUBURBS IN TRANSITION

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**RECOMMENDATIONS
SUMMARY**

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S S U M M A R Y

The Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto is calling for dramatic shifts in public priorities and planning to re-build Metro's suburbs for what they were originally intended to be, a place for family living.

The suburbs now contain 50% of all inner city students in Metro's schools, most of Metro's families with both parents in the labour force, high numbers of single parent families, significant groups of unemployed and alienated youth, and a multitude of cultures and races. The absence of urgently needed help for the diverse needs of suburban families is a deep source of concern. Severe spending cutbacks by the Ontario government have delayed the introduction of pre-school day care, school programs for children with special needs, multi-service centres to help families with many problems, neighbourhood agencies for outreach to isolated groups, counselling for immigrant families, community services for troubled youth, child-parent centres, after-hours and crisis support, and affordable recreation programs for children of poor families.

In the policy report, Planning Agenda for the Eighties (Part II: Metro Suburbs in Transition), the Social Planning Council spells out new directions for suburban adaptation and metropolitan renewal.

During the past year, new planning efforts have started in the suburbs and at Metro. Scarborough, North York, and Etobicoke now have special committees looking at social needs in their municipalities. Metro is working on an economic strategy, examining housing needs, responding to racial tensions, promoting co-ordinated planning for social programs, and developing multi-year day care objectives. However, without consistent policy leadership from Metro Council, ongoing planning for social needs in the suburbs, and new social priorities at Queen's Park to finance needed suburban programs, Metro faces a decade of social stagnation and population decline.

Restrictive land use practices promoted by local groups in Metro throughout the seventies, have

limited the availability of family housing, crisis community services, and densities necessary to support public transit services in the suburbs. Without suitable housing choices and appropriate support programs, families will continue to leave Metro, and Metro's population will decline as projected.

With fewer people in Metro, the cost of maintaining public services will increase significantly. There is already evidence of cost intensification patterns in Metro for major public services. During the seventies, Metro's population remained relatively fixed at approximately 2.1 million people. Nevertheless, per capita costs in 1971 dollars for police services grew by 84%, and for public transit subsidies by 69%.

The Social Planning Council report calls for government to assume once more a leadership role to address economic and social needs, and thereby reverse the passivity and drift of the seventies. Ontario needs responsible public spending policies to generate new economic productivity, and to respond to pressing human needs. (R:3.1/ R:3.3)^① Within Metro, integrated planning for land use and

^① Denotes recommendation numbers in the report.

service provision should take place at both levels of local government, in partnership with the private sector, community agencies, and public interest groups. These are the essential principles upon which the Council's recommendations rest.

At the Metro level policy leadership is recommended in the following areas:

- * That Metro Council convene a task force to develop a family housing strategy for Metro as a first priority of planning. (R:6.1)
- * That Metro Council provide major financing for up to twenty new neighbourhood voluntary agencies in the suburbs (R:6.3), develop a network of community social service programs for high risk groups (R:4.1), co-ordinate the development of a planning system for human services in Metro (R:2.5), work with municipalities to establish multi-service programs (R:6.6), and establish with boards of education a central youth resource centre in each suburban municipality (R:7.10).

- * That Metroplan be amended to include land use policies which increase densities across Metro -- medium densities in residential areas; higher densities along transportation corridors and in re-developed commercial centres. (R:2.2)
- * That Metroplan be amended to end exclusionary zoning in Metro municipalities (R:2.3), and to promote fair share distributions of group homes, crisis accommodation facilities, and day care centres. (R:7.1)
- * That Metro Council and the Toronto Transit Commission (T.T.C.) formulate proposals for a major east-west public transit capacity north of Highway 401 (R:6.2), and that the T.T.C. consider operating scheduled neighbourhood shuttle services in suburban communities where people have difficulties connecting to local resources. (R:6.9)

- * That both Metro school boards each document the range of special needs of students in their schools and prepare a financial projection for meeting these needs. (R:4.4)

In Metro's suburban municipalities, ongoing planning for social needs is required in the following areas:

- * That suburban councils and boards of education recognize their joint responsibility to plan together for social needs, and establish in each municipality a Municipal Liaison Board for Human Services (R:5.3), to review annually social spending, monitor trends in needs, propose allocation priorities, (R:5.6), develop joint projects between community agencies, and improve the use of existing community facilities. (R:5.7)
- * That suburban municipal councils establish standing committees of council to review and recommend social policies and programs for their municipalities (R:5.1), and set up municipal committees for race relations. (R:7.21)

- * That suburban councils incorporate explicit social objectives and procedures into land use planning (R:1.2), and prepare a major review of social conditions in their municipalities subsequent to the 1981 Census. (R:5.8)
- * That suburban councils institute proportionate wards by 1982 to ensure fair representation of all social groups in their municipalities. (R:8.1)
- * That Etobicoke and Scarborough boards of education initiate special needs studies (R:7.6), and that all three suburban boards establish standing committees on multi-culturalism (R:7.19), and increase their numbers of school-community workers to involve parents in the schools. (R:7.7)
- * That multiple uses be introduced into suburban school, recreation, library, and church facilities and spaces, to provide alternative places to commercial plazas for social contact and casual activity (R:6.7); this would include

amenities such as indoor eating and conversation areas; convenience and specialty outlets; activity lounges; compact parks, garden allotments, tot lots, outdoor information and performance areas.

- * That suburban education boards and planning boards conduct a joint review to preserve neighbourhood uses of surplus school sites and facilities (R:6.8); that Separate School use of surplus schools is a priority neighbourhood use.
- * That suburban recreation departments develop new neighbourhood programs to build up local community associations (R:6.10), ensure that affordable athletic and cultural programs are available to children and youth from poor families (R:7.12), and that each community has sufficient recreation facilities for casual activities. (R:7.13)
- * Because suburban libraries will become important community centres for information, self-directed learning, and support in the eighties, that suburban libraries conduct a major review

to re-assess service objectives and strategies developed in the early sixties.

(R:6.11)

- * That crisis accommodation facilities for women, children, and youth be established in each suburban municipality. (R:7.8;R:7.14)
- * That community agencies establish new career opportunities for senior adults -- voluntary service with honorariums -- to draw upon the diverse experience and backgrounds which seniors can offer the community. (R:7.23)

The provincial government must establish new social priorities to address social needs in the community. The Social Planning Council report notes that:

"Provincial statements which affirm prevention as a central children's services objective, and cite the family as the essential unit of society, are not backed up with programs and resources. There is an unwillingness to invest in children during critical periods of their development." (p.185)

In 1980, Ontario spending on social needs will be second lowest of all provinces in Canada. The

Council calls for a re-assessment of Ontario spending policies. It notes that cutbacks have reduced our ability to deal with urgent social needs in the suburbs and Metro, and have not served to address serious structural problems in the Ontario economy.

Responsible levels of social spending are required from the provincial government to:

- * finance 1,750 new subsidized day care spaces for pre-school children for each of five years, at a net cost to the province of \$1.7 million in year one. (R:7.3)
- * increase Ontario's share of financing local education in Metro, particularly programs for children with special needs. (R:4.6)
- * provide appropriate funding for support and counselling services to dispersed and isolated suburban immigrant families. (R:7.16)

- * finance child-parent centres and after-hours family support programs in the suburbs. (R:7.5)
- * cost-share: the development of multi-service programs (R:6.6); capital costs to adapt suburban facilities, including schools, to new neighbourhood uses (R:6.7); Metro Council and municipal contributions to neighbourhood voluntary agencies in the suburbs (R:6.4); all local government contributions to plan and co-ordinate social programs within Metro (R:2.6); and, the continuation of suburban community committees on police and race relations. (R:7.20)

Provincial help will also be required to finance community services for troubled youth, home support for seniors, affordable recreation programs for children and youth of poor suburban families, and neighbourhood shuttle services. The Social Planning Council report states:

"In a balanced provincial program of economic and social development, with a public investment strategy and appropriate revenue

measures (R:3.2), there would be the fiscal capacity to deal with a wide range of needs in Ontario." (p.63)

"In our judgement, Ontario has the capacity to finance or cost-share the spending required to meet identified social needs in Metro's suburbs." (p.70)

The Social Planning Council remains optimistic that the suburbs can adapt to new conditions, and that Metro can preserve and enhance its unique urban tradition in the eighties. What is called for are climates for renewed growth in Metro, responsible public spending policies, new planning capabilities, recognition of adaptation priorities, sensitivity to special needs, and a representative municipal electoral structure.

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P R E F A C E

The sixty-five recommendations contained in this report emerge from more than three years of research, planning, consultation, and exchange by the Social Planning Council of Metropolitan Toronto on social conditions in Metro's suburban municipalities.

The review -- entitled Metro's Suburbs in Transition -- has been divided into two stages. Part I: Evolution and Overview was released in April 1979, and served as a background report on trends and patterns. The report served to stimulate a wide range of community discussion and public review. Part II: Planning Agenda for the Eighties is a policy report on the state of planning and service development for suburban needs.

Both parts of the suburban report reflect the contribution of Social Planning Council volunteers and community resources who, with Council planners, have constituted the Council's Suburban Committee. The recommendations of this report were formulated by the Suburban Committee and approved by the Social Planning Council Board of Directors.

The recommendations draw on data and information prepared for this report, perspectives drawn from related Council activity, priority themes of recent years in the social planning field, and established principles of the Social Planning Council. We recognize that interpretations and judgements based on common data can vary significantly. In formulating recommendations we have endeavoured to remain consistent with available data and information. Recommendations invariably contain prior assumptions and discerned patterns, which should always be subject to re-assessment and reconsideration.

The Social Planning Council is one of a number of public interest organizations in Metropolitan Toronto. The recommendations therefore represent one contribution to what we hope becomes a climate for renewed planning.

The report suggests that we have reached another cross-road in the evolution of Metropolitan Toronto, in which the achievements of the past are no longer a guarantee for the future. Suburban social changes

are part of a new set of urban conditions in Metropolitan Toronto.

The suburbs are part of a metropolitan and provincial context. The recommendations cover themes and issues related to the present planning climate.

Section 1.0 reviews the important initiatives of special committees established in suburban municipalities during the past year. It also recognizes new planning initiatives at Metro Council.

Section 2.0 describes the metropolitan pattern in relation to other established urban regions, and to the regions surrounding Metro. It suggests the need for a strong commitment to renewed growth and fair distributions within Metro. The issue of jobs and affordable family housing are critical. Effective planning is needed to manage large sums of public dollars for social programs. A major barrier to renewal is the trend to exclusionary land use which contributes to cost intensification pressures.

Section 3.0 reviews Ontario spending policies for social programs. It questions the neo-market perspective in Ontario which has led to a low

priority for social spending. Even with cutbacks, there has been little improvement in the economy.

Section 4.0 reviews metropolitan social spending issues. Metro Council has placed a consistent priority on social spending in the seventies. Metro school boards should review the special needs of all students in their schools and identify the costs of providing adequate programs. Differences in per capita spending for public health services in Metro should be assessed.

Section 5.0 proposes the establishment of municipal liaison boards for human services as essential building blocks in a metropolitan planning system for social programs. The proposed functions of a liaison board are reviewed.

Section 6.0 examines major adaptations required in the suburbs in community services and land use in response to new social conditions. The importance of building a network of services and facilities at the community level is stressed, to promote social integration, outreach and response. There is an urgent need to address housing and transportation issues.

Section 7.0 highlights special needs of children, families, youth, immigrants, and senior adults which should receive particular consideration within the larger framework of suburban adaptation.

Section 8.0 indicates the need for proportionate suburban wards in light of population growth and decline patterns.

While cities are in constant states of adaptation, the levels of adaptation required in Metro in the eighties call for a climate of urgent recognition and consistent initiative. The recommendations are directed to a number of public authorities and community organizations. In some instances they call for more immediate responses. Where issues are more complex, they suggest the need to initiate a process of review and planning.