TORONTO'S MIDDLE-INCOME NEIGHBOURHOODS ARE DISAPPEARING, CITIES CENTRE REPORT SHOWS
Toronto divides into a rich city and a poor city

TORONTO, ON – If current trends continue, the City of Toronto will eventually be sharply divided into a city of wealthy neighbourhoods and poor neighbourhoods with very few middle-income neighbourhoods. This is the conclusion of a new report released today by the Cities Centre, written by J. David Hulchanski with the support of a research team from the University of Toronto and St. Christopher House.

In 2007, the Cities Centre released a report on the “Three Cities in Toronto,” using data from the 1970s to 2001. The new report uses 2006 census data to update the trends identified in that earlier report and shows long-term patterns are continuing.

Among the report’s key findings:

- 4 per cent of neighbourhoods that were middle-income in 2001 became part of the group of increasingly affluent neighbourhoods that the Cities Centre calls “City #1”.

- 7 per cent of formerly middle-income neighbourhoods lost ground to become part of the group of neighbourhoods with declining incomes known as “City #3.”

- If this trend continues, by 2025, City #1 will consist of about 30 per cent of all Toronto’s neighbourhoods, City #3 will cover 60 per cent of the city and the formerly middle-income neighbourhoods (City #2) will make up the remaining 10 per cent.

“The suburban municipalities around Toronto are subject to the same trends. This is not a 416 versus 905 problem,” says Hulchanski. “The middle-income group throughout the region is shrinking, resulting in fewer middle-income neighbourhoods throughout the Toronto region. Although there are more middle-income neighbourhoods in the 905 region to begin with, the number is steadily decreasing and has done so since 1970, while the numbers of low-income neighbourhoods are steadily rising. Twenty percent of 905-region neighbourhoods are now low income, compared to none in the 1970s.”
The three groupings are defined by the average individual income of residents of each census tract in the city. In the neighbourhoods of City #1, the average income is 20 per cent or more above the average individual income for the census metropolitan area as a whole. In City #2, the average income is within 20 per cent above or below the average. In City #3, the average income is 20 per cent or more below the average.

The 32-page report also adds a wealth of detail about the socio-economic and demographic characteristics of each of the Three Cities within Toronto. Although the three groups of neighbourhoods are defined by the average individual income of their residents, they differ in many other ways, from education levels to travel patterns to household characteristics to housing tenure. The research was funded by the Community University Research Alliance program of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

The Cities Centre launches the report at a seminar and press conference today, December 15, 2010, at 9:30 a.m. in the Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work, University of Toronto, 246 Bloor Street West, room 548.

The full report is available here: www.NeighbourhoodChange.ca

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