

toronto summit 2007 **MAKING BIG THINGS HAPPEN**

Highlights of the Discussion and Opportunities for Action

November, 2007

Toronto City Summit Alliance



www.torontoalliance.ca

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Introduction

The Toronto City Summit Alliance (“TCSA”) is a not-for-profit, non-partisan coalition led by a steering committee of over 50 civic leaders from the private, labour, voluntary and public sectors. It was created following a 2002 summit of Toronto civic leaders convened to consider challenges to the Toronto region’s social and economic future. These leaders believe that government alone cannot address the challenges we face, and have committed themselves to helping.

The TCSA’s 2003 report, *Enough Talk: An Action Plan for the Toronto Region*, provided a roadmap for dealing with issues where there was a clear consensus for action and where it was felt that progress could be made quickly. *Enough Talk* was endorsed at a second Summit in 2003 and, since then, the TCSA has advocated for the *Enough Talk* recommendations and worked with community partners and governments to implement them. Thousands of people in the Toronto region have been involved in TCSA-initiated projects responding to the *Enough Talk* recommendations, including the following:

Initiative

Toront03 Alliance
Toronto Region Immigrant Employment Council (TRIEC)
The Affordable Housing Coalition
Toronto Region Research Alliance (TRRA)
Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force
Task Force on Modernizing Income Security for
Working-Age Adults (MISWAA)
YMCA-Toronto Alliance Youth Forums
Emerging Leaders Network (ELN)
Luminato

Focus

Post-SARS Tourism Recovery
Immigrant Integration
Promoting Affordable Housing
Building on R&D Strengths
Stronger Community Services

Reforming Income Security
Dialogues with Youth
Connecting City-Builders
Promoting Arts & Creativity

On February 26-27, 2007, over 630 invited Toronto region leaders participated in the third Summit, **Toronto Summit 2007: Making Big Things Happen**. The Summit was both a celebration of the Toronto region's recent successes and an opportunity to consider new as well as continuing challenges. The two days included 11 sessions, each focussing on a different policy topic. The sessions began with a speaker or panel offering insights on the issue, followed by an opportunity for civic leaders to share their perspectives and work through a series of questions key to charting a course for Toronto. Backgrounders on each topic were made available prior to the Summit and they, as well as recordings and speeches from the Summit, are available at www.torontoalliance.ca.

This document contains the highlights of the Summit 2007 discussions and summarizes the opportunities for making decisions and taking actions that will **make big things happen** in our region.

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Jian Ghomeshi photo courtesy of jian.ca.

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Susan Pigott photo courtesy of the Ontario Citizens' Assembly on Electoral Reform.

Courtney Pratt photo courtesy of Toronto Region Research Alliance.

Summit Agenda

Monday, February 26th

- 9:00 am** **Summit Welcome** – David Pecaut, Chair, Toronto City Summit Alliance (TCSA), and Senior Partner, The Boston Consulting Group
Remarks by Senator Hugh Segal on behalf of the Government of Canada
“Making Big Things Happen” – Ric Young, President, E-Y-E
- 10 am – 12 pm** **Morning Workshops (Concurrent Sessions)**
- **Beyond the Gas Tax: Closing Toronto's Fiscal Gap**, chaired by the Hon. Bob Rae, Partner, Goodmans LLP, and former Premier of Ontario
 - **Toronto's Cultural Renaissance**, chaired by Helen Burstyn, Chair, Ontario Trillium Foundation
 - **Making Diversity Count**, chaired by Sujit Choudhry, Professor, University of Toronto Faculty of Law
 - **A Decent Living For All**, chaired by Susan Pigott, CEO, St. Christopher House
- 12:15 pm** **Lunch with His Worship David Miller, Mayor of Toronto**, introduced by John Honderich, Chair, Voting Trust, Torstar Corporation
- 2 – 4 pm** **Afternoon Workshops (Concurrent Sessions)**
- **Investing for the Future**, chaired by Ross McGregor, President & CEO, Toronto Region Research Alliance
 - **Making Housing Happen**, chaired by Anne Sado, President, George Brown College
 - **Toronto's Waterfront: From Vision to Reality**, chaired by Bruce Kuwabara, Partner, KPMB Architects
 - **Success in School, Success for Life**, chaired by Courtney Pratt, Chairman, Stelco
- 4:15 pm** **Closing Address by the Honourable Jack Layton, Leader of the NDP Party of Canada**, introduced by Ratna Omidvar, Executive Director, Maytree Foundation
- 6:30 pm** **Evening Opening** – Jian Ghomeshi, Musician and Broadcaster, CBC Radio
Dinner Welcome – David Pecaut
- 8:00 pm** **Keynote Speaker** – Amory Lovins, CEO, Rocky Mountain Institute

Tuesday, February 27th

- 9:00 am** **Welcome** - Julia Deans, Executive Director, TCSA
Remarks by John Tory, Leader of the Official Opposition
Overview of Challenges and Report out on Day One – David Pecaut, TCSA Chair and Senior Partner, The Boston Consulting Group
- 10:00 am** **A Green Toronto** – The Hon. David Crombie, former Mayor of Toronto and President & CEO of the Canadian Urban Institute, and Louise Comeau, Director of the Sage Climate Project and former Director of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Centre for Sustainable Communities
- 11:45 am** **Lunch with the Honourable Stéphane Dion, leader of the Liberal Party of Canada**, in conversation with Andy Barrie, Host of CBC Radio One’s Metro Morning
- 1:00 pm** **Transit & Transportation: Getting to Sustainability** – Anne Golden, President, Conference Board of Canada, in conversation with Rob MacIsaac, Chair of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority (GTTA), and Adam Giambrone, Chair of the Toronto Transit Commission
- 2:45 pm** **Strong Neighbourhoods, Stronger Toronto Region** – Frances Lankin, President of United Way of Greater Toronto, and Paul Grogan, CEO of The Boston Foundation
- 4:15 pm** **Closing Address by the Honourable Dalton McGuinty, Premier of Ontario**, introduced by Dominic D’Alessandro, CEO of Manulife Financial
- 4:45 pm** **Summit Wrap-up** – David Pecaut



Session Highlights

The Summit agenda offered delegates the opportunity to participate in two of eight workshops and three plenary sessions on issues and opportunities for the city region. Session Chairs and guest speakers gave short presentations to provide context for the discussions. Delegates were then charged with working with their tablemates to answer three questions and report their recommended actions back to the larger group. Each of the following session highlights sections provides:

- A brief summary of challenges for the city region
- Common themes from the discussions of the various groups in each working session
- Delegates' recommended opportunities for action

The challenges are included to provide context. Background papers prepared for the Summit on each topic are available at www.torontoalliance.ca for those who want more information. We have attempted to be comprehensive in capturing the opportunities for action. As many groups put similar ideas forward, we have synthesized and integrated the proposals.



Beyond the Gas Tax: Closing Toronto's Fiscal Gap



Pictured: Enid Slack, Joe Berridge, Shelley Carroll

Session Chair: Hon. Bob Rae,
Partner, Goodmans LLP
Roger Anderson,
Regional Chair, Region of Durham
Joe Berridge,
Partner, Urban Strategies
Shelley Carroll,
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Enid Slack, *Director, Institute on Municipal Finance & Governance, Munk Centre for International Studies, University of Toronto*

“How do we get beyond the usual demands to ‘give me more dough or give me more room’? These aren’t new. How do we get innovation to happen at all levels of government to deal with the issues – and not just play the blame game?”

- The Honourable Bob Rae, Session Chair

The Challenge

The revenue-raising capacity of most Greater Toronto Area (GTA) municipalities is inadequate to meet their expenditure responsibilities. This situation is most acute for the City of Toronto, which faces a combined capital and operating fiscal shortfall of \$1.1 billion annually¹. There are four main reasons for the gap:

- The Province of Ontario requires its municipalities to pay for public housing and to deliver and pay part of the costs of social services. It is one of the few jurisdictions in the world that downloads these expensive income redistribution programs, which are not appropriate to fund out of the property tax base.
- The City's primary source of revenue is property taxes (41% of revenues). Property taxes do not keep pace with economic growth or inflation to the same extent that income and sales taxes do.
- Toronto's City Council has been reluctant to increase property taxes or impose user fees. There is little flexibility to increase property taxes on businesses, which are already over-taxed compared to residential properties and compared to the rest of the GTA. Raising residential property taxes is difficult politically; however, other GTA municipalities have done so far more aggressively. The new City of Toronto Act allows the City to levy a broader range of taxes and user fees but, again, this is difficult politically and the revenue potential is limited.
- The traditional service delivery methods used by the City are considered by many experts to be old-fashioned, costly, and inefficient. While 55% of services are contracted out², there appears to be a reluctance to make wider use of public-private partnerships, which have been used successfully elsewhere.

In recent years, the Ontario government has assisted the City through such measures as one-time funding assistance (\$100 million in 2006) and provincial gas tax sharing (\$160 million). The federal government has also responded to the plight of cities with measures such as infrastructure funding, a full rebate of the municipal GST, gas tax sharing, and special transit capital funding.

The support of the provincial and federal governments has been very helpful, but it is generally unpredictable and short term. The gap still remains, forcing the City to increase its debt load and deplete its reserves to balance its annual budgets - effectively mortgaging its future. We need to go beyond the gas tax to close Toronto's fiscal gap. There is no single silver bullet. A variety of measures are required to ensure that infrastructure and services keep pace with population growth and sustain the city region's competitiveness and quality of life.

¹ Conference Board of Canada, *Measuring Toronto's Fiscal Capacity: An Executive Summary*, 2005

² Shelley Carroll, *Remarks at the 'Beyond the Gas Tax' Workshop*, Toronto Summit, 2007

Common Themes from Discussions

- **Move ahead and start fixing our own problems.** Failure to achieve transfers from other levels of government is not an excuse for inaction. More funding will still be needed but we will be in a much stronger position to argue for adequate resources to fund the type and quality of services that we should be delivering if we are making an effort ourselves. Toronto needs to look first at how it can do things more creatively and efficiently with existing revenue sources and new approaches to service delivery.
- **New taxes or fees must be justified and linked to the problem they are intended to solve.**
- **Take a regional perspective on regional services such as transit.**
- **The province must upload social services,** which should not be funded by property taxes.



Pictured: session participants

Opportunities for Action

Form a Task Force to “reinvent” the way we organize, govern and deliver services in the City of Toronto and the city region. This could be a City, provincial or TCSA initiative. We should seek to learn from innovative approaches in other city regions and benchmark Toronto against other cities in its use of innovative approaches and technologies. We should enhance performance management and link incentives to outcomes. We should be open to radical new ideas like breaking up Toronto’s bureaucracy into separate autonomous units such as Toronto Water, Toronto Housing, Toronto Waste Management - *“give each unit a performance mandate and get the best talent in the world to run it.”*

Toronto and surrounding municipalities need to find innovative ways to do more with less and to “rationalize, reallocate, and better leverage city assets.” They should act on both revenues and costs:

- Increase revenues through higher residential property taxes, real cost pricing for services (e.g. garbage collection), and selective use of user fees (e.g. road tolls). Delegates had mixed views on the latter but generally agreed that municipalities must justify any user fees and take an objective-based approach, for instance using regional road tolls to fund transit while

influencing behaviour in positive ways. Several groups favoured vehicle surcharges and increased gas taxes to help fund transit and encourage people to switch to more environmentally friendly vehicles as they felt that surcharges may be easier to implement and less politically difficult than user fees.

- Be open to the increased use of alternative, cost-effective delivery methods including public/private partnerships and involving the community in service delivery by using volunteers for City activities.
- Leverage assets better: for instance, use development rights, tax increment financing and other financial incentives on transit corridors to attract private investment in infrastructure development.
- Offer incentives to staff to improve cost effectiveness.

The Province should upload social services and equip cities with better revenue tools that are appropriate, reliable and sufficient to deliver mandated and municipal services. The latter could include access to sales or income taxes that grow with the economy. One way to do this would be to transfer income tax room and make cities accountable for using that tax room by having them set their own rates.

Other ideas included uploading the TTC to the GTTA because “*Toronto can’t afford it*” and giving responsibility for Union Station to Infrastructure Ontario.

Achieving Toronto's Cultural Renaissance



Pictured: Meric Gertler, Catherine Hernandez

Session Chair: Helen Burstyn, *Chair, Ontario Trillium Foundation*
Sara Diamond, *President, Ontario College of Art and Design*
Meric Gertler, *Co-Director, PROGRIS, Munk Centre, University of Toronto*
Catherine Hernandez, *Writer and Theatre Practitioner*
Tim Jones, *CEO, Artscape*

“Creativity is one of the most important engines of the GTA’s economy, just as it is in other world cities like New York, London, and so on. We need to think of creativity from a supply chain perspective starting with the high profile signature institutions which are only the tip of the iceberg, while the bulk of the city’s cultural economy is made up of thousands of lower profile organizations, artists, and other practitioners. An effective creative city strategy must nurture all parts of the supply chain starting with properly funded arts education in public schools and adequate funding for non-profit arts and cultural organizations.”

- Meric Gertler, Session Speaker

The Challenge

To many, Toronto's cultural building boom is visible proof that we are experiencing a cultural renaissance. Many projects are underway including new or enhanced homes for the AGO, the Canadian Opera Company and the National Ballet of Canada, the Gardiner Museum, the National Ballet School, The Royal Conservatory of Music, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and the Toronto International Film Festival, as well as highly visible arts-related developments in the city core such as the OCAD Sharp Centre for Design, the Distillery District, and the expansion of the Evergreen Commons at the Brickworks. These capital projects are truly exciting and important, but are insufficient to achieve the full promise of a cultural renaissance.

There have been a number of recent promising developments such as Luminato, the annual festival of arts and creativity initiated by the Toronto City Summit Alliance, and the City of Toronto's 2005/06 "Live with Culture" campaign, which culminated in the successful Nuit Blanche, but for the most part arts efforts and strategies unfold in isolation, without links across sectors or communities. A full cultural renaissance also faces other challenges including: limited and unbalanced funding, particularly for operations; little access to cultural and creative activity in low-income neighbourhoods and new immigrant communities; a limited supply of affordable, accessible space for artists and cultural enterprises; and weak legislation, planning tools and resources to develop and protect creative space. We must nurture, connect and support all of our creative assets and talents if we are to overcome these challenges, make our emerging cultural renaissance sustainable and spread its benefits throughout the city region.

Common Themes From Discussions

- **Toronto is the cultural map.** Stop only thinking big. Think small, diverse, local, grass roots. Small dots can make a big picture – employ a place-based approach to creative sector development, one that supports the right mix of hard (e.g. affordable, stable space) and soft (e.g. networking mechanisms) infrastructure at the local level, to sustain diversity, collaboration and innovation among various cultural and creative pursuits.
- **Apply recent and new learning from other creative city regions** that have been successful at making and sustaining essential linkages, and at finding new ways to generate resources and providing affordable space.
- **Put arts education back in schools.** Getting children involved and excited about art is essential to developing the audiences and artists of the future.

Opportunities for Action

Take a regional leadership approach to connect individual artists, creative organizations and resources in producing coherent support for culture and creativity across the city region. It must be non-bureaucratic and could be a 'cultural Toronto Region Research Alliance'.

The London Development Agency and its Creative London arm provide a state-of-the art example of how this approach can be employed³ to:

- Develop and support creative enterprise and artists and showcase their talent to the rest of the world;
- Work with non-profit agencies to provide affordable space for creative activity;
- Deliver creative programming through ‘creative hubs’ in low-income neighbourhoods and communities, and develop hubs where they don’t exist; and
- Link a large number of creative organizations and artists together to foster mutual learning opportunities across the region.



Pictured: Tim Jones

Delegates also suggested creating stronger linkages between traditional and new media and cultural communities – to break through silos and foster increased collaboration between these sectors.

Expand resources available to support the arts through increased government funding, as well as new funding mechanisms. Suggestions included: a new ‘United Way for Culture’; sharing the hotel tax; using new City of Toronto Act financial tools, such as an arts levy on new developments; a lottery for the arts; a share of bank ATM fees; and artist-business partnerships to provide mentorship and venture funds for creative sector entrepreneurs.

Change planning systems, and develop policies and tools to ensure affordable space for artists. Move from adversarial to cooperative planning that nurtures creative strategies like Cambridge, Massachusetts, or equips not-for-profit organizations to acquire land and develop infrastructure for artists like New York and London; the latter could include scaling up existing successful models like Artscape and 401 Richmond. Create mechanisms for artists to own their own space to reduce risk of displacement, possibly leveraging Canadian Housing and Mortgage Corporation’s surplus stock.

Make ‘the city as a cultural project’ the focus of tourism and use public space more creatively. Make TTC stations and vehicles ‘palettes for artists’ or cultural attractions. Create a Toronto Arts Pass or debit card for culture. Create a culture map of Toronto that is available online and updated annually. Make parks a focal point for culture, like Millennium Park in Chicago. Feature diverse communities. Create a cultural manifesto for Toronto.

³ Meric Gertler, *Remarks at the ‘Beyond Buildings: Achieving Toronto’s Cultural Renaissance’ Workshop*, Toronto Summit 2007

The federal government should designate top arts organizations as ‘national treasures’ and feature them in tourism marketing. These could include high quality, high profile organizations in other Canadian cities, such as the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and the Royal Winnipeg Ballet, in addition to the National Ballet, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and the Canadian Opera Company.

Get children involved and excited about art and thus develop future audiences and artists. Put arts education back in schools. Use schools and libraries as community stages. Attach an artist to each public school. Develop properly outfitted creative spaces for children and youth arts instruction that also integrate broader community programming; these creative spaces could be developed in surplus school properties and other underutilized public buildings. Look at what others are doing to expose kids to the arts, such as Arts Umbrella in Vancouver and the use of storefronts for arts education in Brooklyn. Also look at examples of arts-enriched daycare services, similar to what is provided at 401 Richmond.

Making Diversity Count



Pictured: Myer Siemiatycki, Alejandra Bravo, Paul de Silva

Session Chair: Sujit Choudhry, *Professor, University of Toronto Faculty of Law*
Alejandra Bravo, *Manager, Leadership and Learning, Maytree Foundation*
Michelle DiEmanuele, *Deputy Minister of Government Services and Chair of Civil Service Commission, Province of Ontario*
Paul de Silva, *Executive Director of the International Council for Diversity in Film & Television*
Zabeen Hirji, *Chief Human Resources Officer, RBC Financial Group*
Dr. Myer Siemiatycki, *Professor of Politics and Public Administration, Ryerson University*

“Canada is a relatively tolerant country. Canadians have become used to the idea of having fellow citizens who grew up somewhere else, practice different religions and have different skin colours from them. We have managed to integrate vast numbers of newcomers with little social conflict. What we have not done nearly as well is act on the agenda of inclusion. Our public and private sector institutions have a long way to go to look like this city, the province, or the country we have become.”

- Sujit Choudhry, Session Chair

The Challenge

Diversity is both a fundamental value of Canadian society and a defining demographic reality in the Toronto region. The GTA is one of the most diverse city regions in the world, with 44% of its population born outside Canada and 37% comprising visible minorities,⁴ yet this diversity is not adequately reflected in the electoral participation, governance and leadership of the city region and its institutions. This matters because, as Session Speaker Dr. Myer Siemiatycki said, *“The common denominator of shared belonging should play out in the public realm and in our political system.”* Yet his and others’ research shows that:

- 263,000 people in the City of Toronto, equivalent to 15% of the population or one in six permanent residents, do not have the right to vote because they are not yet Canadian citizens.
- Attaining citizenship can take three or more years, at which point many new immigrants have limited awareness or knowledge about why and how they should vote or otherwise engage in political life.
- Of Toronto’s 140 neighbourhoods, voter turnout is disproportionately below average in those with higher proportions of visible minorities and new immigrants.
- 26 other countries, many in the European Union, have responded to global migration by extending municipal voting rights to their non-citizen residents.
- Visible minorities comprise 43% of the City of Toronto’s population but only 11% of the elected representatives on Toronto City Council.
- Calgary and Edmonton are ahead of Toronto in electing minority representatives to their city councils in proportions that better mirror their presence in their communities.

The situation is similar in the private sector. A Spencer Stuart report indicated that Canadian companies lag behind US comparators when it comes to visible ethnic minority representation at the board level, with only 44% of Canadian boards having at least one visible minority director, compared to 80% in the US.⁵ According to the Conference Board of Canada, although Canadian organizations say they value diversity, they have not yet fully committed their policies, practices and resources to embedding diversity in their operations.⁶

The Backgrounder for this session describes a number of initiatives that have helped to broaden participation of visible minorities and new immigrants in the governance and workforces of public institutions and business corporations, including: the Toronto City Summit Alliance/ Maytree Foundation’s Toronto Region Immigration Employment Council (TRIEC); Maytree’s abcGTA database, which facilitates the appointment of diverse leaders to agencies, boards and commissions; and Inclusive Cities Canada, a partnership of community and elected municipal

⁴ Based on Toronto Census Metropolitan Area, Statistics Canada, 2001 Census

⁵ Spencer Stuart, *“Canadian Board Index.”* 2005

⁶ Conference Board of Canada, *“Report on Diversity: Priorities, Practices and Performance in Canadian Organizations.”* December 2006

leaders. But much more can be done to ensure that the leadership and governance of our public and private institutions reflect the diversity of the region's population.

Common Themes from Discussions

- **Inclusion means everybody, not only visible minorities, because “*the more people participate in civil society, the better civil society will be.*”** Participation can take many forms including voting or running for office.
- **Lead by example.** Mayors, City Councils and leaders in diverse GTA communities can all play a role in identifying and actively encouraging new diverse leaders to play leadership roles in their communities and to participate in city government or run for public office.
- **What gets measured is what matters.** Baseline data, goals and ongoing tracking are essential to measure progress in reflecting the region's diversity in its electoral and political systems.



Pictured: Faduma Mohamed, Anne Lamont

Opportunities for Action

Support the ‘One Resident, One Vote Campaign’ to give all permanent residents in the Toronto region the right to vote in municipal elections. As one delegate said, “*this is a no-brainer.*” This would require Ontario to amend the Ontario Municipal Elections Act to give municipalities the right to decide who is eligible to vote in local elections. Many suggested looking at what the 26 other countries did to put this into effect, and that we use the fact that we are behind to “*shame ourselves into action.*”



Pictured: Zabeen Hirji, Sujit Choudhry

Increase voter turnout by making voting mandatory. This would increase participation of all residents: low voter turnout is not just a visible minority issue. Other ideas for increasing voter turnout included educating new immigrants on how society and the democratic process work and general public education on the importance of voting. Municipal politicians and organizations such as United Ways could help with education and awareness building.

Increase diversity of local government by making it easier for youth, women and visible minorities to run for office successfully, and encourage them to do so. Participants suggested limiting municipal councillors to three terms in order to remove the huge advantage enjoyed by incumbents, and that mayors, city councils and leaders in diverse GTA communities should all play a role in encouraging women and minorities to run for office.

Monitor and report on progress by creating a ‘Report Card on Diversity’ or a Diversity equivalent to ISO Certification. We should measure and report on participation rates in the governance bodies of public institutions in the GTA (including agencies, boards and commissions) of: women; visible minorities; youth; Aboriginal peoples; people with disabilities; and other groups identified as facing barriers to access and participation. An extended report card could assess the governance makeup of large corporations.

Improve access to networks and leadership opportunities for emerging diverse leaders and visible minorities in all sectors. Suggestions included: established leaders of diverse communities or networks seeking and developing new leaders from their communities; established leaders demonstrating the value of civic involvement and leadership development to their communities; establishing innovative alliances to bring together diverse leaders (such as the TCSA’s Emerging Leaders Network); building on existing initiatives like Inroads, abcGTA, and TRIEC; and leveraging sports or other extracurricular activities in public schools, “*the institution that serves us all*”, to bring together parents from diverse communities.

An innovative idea for the Toronto City Summit Alliance would be to create a multi-cultural body (non-elected) of people drawn from neighbourhoods across the city region to identify and address barriers to participation or inclusion.

A Decent Living for All



Pictured: Hugh Segal, Susan Pigott

Session Chair: Susan Pigott, CEO, St. Christopher House
Deena Ladd, Coordinator, Workers' Action Centre
Bill MacKinnon, Chairman, KPMG
Dr. Deb Matthews, MPP and Parliamentary Assistant to the
Minister of Community Services
Senator Hugh Segal

“One of the most important benefits of the MISWAA process was education as to how income security policies and programs really affect low-income people. I strongly believe that we must modernize our income security programs to more fully achieve the purpose for which they are intended: to meet the needs of low-income Canadians. The business community shares your concerns about deep and persistent poverty and its potential to create a permanent underclass and the social problems that go along with that. Poverty is a real impediment to creating a healthy, educated and just society - a society in which all have a stake and all benefit.”

- Bill MacKinnon, Session Speaker

The Challenge

The Task Force on Modernizing Income Security for Working-Age Adults (MISWAA) was a broad-based coalition of civic leaders initiated by the Toronto City Summit Alliance and St. Christopher House. Members determined that many working people cannot earn enough to make ends meet, even when working full-time and full-year, due to a combination of low wages, loss of government benefits when they become employed, and increased costs tied to employment. Ontarians who receive social assistance or disability support programs are often trapped in a system that provides insufficient income yet impedes their ability to achieve stable work and meaningful community participation.

There have been a number of promising provincial and federal developments since MISWAA released its report in May 2006. At the provincial level, these include: rule changes aimed at removing barriers to employment; modest social assistance rate increases; and the recently announced Ontario Child Benefit (OCB). The OCB will provide low-income families, regardless of source of income, with a lump sum up to \$250 per child in July 2007, and will grow to a yearly maximum of \$1,100 per child by 2011. The federal government has introduced a Working Income Tax Benefit, increased federal child benefits by more than inflation, and is considering changes to Employment Insurance to improve accessibility and benefit levels. At the session, both Senators Segal and Eggleton indicated that they will be completing work on poverty-related issues over the course of 2007.

All of these actions will help but they are basically changes to existing programs. Session speaker and MPP Dr. Deb Matthews noted that one of her constituents had recently told her that *“poor people don’t need more programs, they need more money.”* The larger challenge remains: to redesign and modernize our income security system and programs to meet the needs of today’s workforce and to ensure that Ontarians who work are assured a decent living and that those who cannot work can live in dignity.

Common Themes from Discussions



Pictured: Deena Ladd

- **Our discussion tables must be bigger.** They must include all sectors, particularly business and youth, who often do not have a seat at the table. We need to see more pairings of CEOs of major corporations and leading anti-poverty advocates on the same podiums.
- **Be bold, break down the silos and make the connections between social policy and other important policy issues explicit.** Social issues and policy are intertwined with issues in education, labour market development, health, immigration and settlement, environmental, and economic

policies. We need to look at the big picture to make a more compelling case for reform to a broader range of people.

- **Public education is essential on a number of fronts.** The public needs to be educated on the issues relating to poverty and why they should care. They need to understand why many adults living in low-income need education and training to improve their lives and why, like all children, children living in low-income families need access to pre-school development programs.
- **Don't wait for governments to act.** There is scope for action on many fronts.

Opportunities for Action

Bring together a large representative group of actors in civil society to build a consensus around long-term goals such as: “we want to live in a society where no one lives in poverty.” We need to move beyond MISWAA's focus on programs and articulate what those goals mean in concrete terms, including establishing clear long-term targets and benchmarks to measure progress.

Ensure sufficient public education and awareness of the problem to generate true momentum for structural reform: we need to seek the ‘tipping point’. The public needs to understand how the lack of a strong income security system or social safety net affects everyone in our economy and society. We need to inject some passion behind creating and implementing solutions - maybe using ‘cultural heroes’ for specific actions.

Initiate a \$10 per hour minimum wage campaign. This campaign already has momentum. Premier McGuinty has committed to an eventual \$10 per hour minimum wage but many want this to happen faster.

Many specific fixes to government programs were suggested, including:

- Federal government should: improve the WITB and National Child Benefit; make EI surplus money available for skills training; broaden the Supporting Community Partnerships Initiative (SCIPI) concept to address poverty in general.
- Province should: institute ongoing review of social assistance rates and provide for automatic increases with inflation to ‘take the politics out of rate setting’; and take an ‘opportunity planner’ approach to help social assistance recipients navigate the system and connect to the employer community.
- Municipal governments should act as enablers, not just funders.
- All orders of government should replace small programs that no longer deliver on their original intent and free up dollars for larger, higher impact activities.

Education is critical, and not just for adults.

- Should systematically review programs already in place at the federal and provincial levels to see what is working.

- Must focus on early childhood education for ages 0 to 6 if we want to make a long-term impact on workforce skills.
- Life skills training is important for youth and other new entrants to the labour force, including things such as: how to be a good tenant; how to live independently; and an orientation to the world of employment.
- Adult education and training for improving literacy and upgrading education and skills need to be more accessible. The Province should provide people who are in training with financial assistance that is outside of social assistance.



Pictured: Mitzie Hunter, Sarah Blackstock, Art Eggleton

Improving enforcement of employment regulations requires business sector leadership and good employers to be advocates for change, in addition to government action. Ideas included: a code of conduct for employers; a sticker campaign to identify which businesses are adhering to employment standards, so the public can choose which to patronize; and rankings of the best and worst companies to work for. Governments can help by creating a new role of Ombudsman for the enforcement of labour laws, and instituting a policy that temporary and permanent workers should be treated equally under the law.

Form partnerships and alliances between the private and not-for-profit sectors to help scale up programs that are working, share best practices and successes, and show governments where investments should be made. Some successful programs cited included Pathways to Education and the Quick Start Program, which engage disadvantaged youth.

‘Big’ or innovative ideas included: don’t wait for government to set up the multi-sector minimum wage commission recommended by MISWAA - do it ourselves; set up social venture capital funds; and provide all low-income families with a Guaranteed Annual Income, similar to the program already for seniors.

Investing for Future Growth



Pictured: John Cartwright, Hazel McCallion

Session Chair: Ross McGregor, *President & CEO, Toronto Region Research Alliance (TRRA)*
John Cartwright, *President, Toronto & York Region Labour Council*
Don Drummond, *Senior Vice President and Chief Economist, TD Bank Financial Group*
Dr. John Evans, *Chairman, MaRS Discovery District and Co-Chair, TRRA*
Tom Jenkins, *Executive Chairman and Chief Strategy Officer, Open Text Corporation*
Her Worship Hazel McCallion, *Mayor of Mississauga*

“Everything flows from this session. Growing the economic pie is essential to generating the wealth necessary to fund all the other things we are likely to recommend - more affordable housing, a dynamic waterfront, increased social equity, etc. These won’t be affordable unless we can strengthen the regional economy in the face of growing international competition.”

- Ross McGregor, Session Chair

The Challenge

The Toronto region has a powerful and exceptionally diverse economy that has demonstrated strong growth for the last twenty years. Despite its strengths, there are signs that the Toronto region's economy is slipping relative to other Canadian city regions. The Backgrounder to this session and session speakers provided a litany of reasons for this slide, including: a lack of investment in physical and social infrastructure; transportation congestion at borders and in the city region; a 40% rise in value of the Canadian dollar; a lack of strategic government investment in innovation beyond Ontario's strong support for the auto industry; uncompetitive taxes on businesses; and a lack of private sector investment in R&D.

Many of the pressures on Toronto's economy are either controllable or surmountable. Other city regions like Stockholm, Albany, and Austin have been more aggressive than Toronto in marketing themselves and attracting anchor investments by multinational firms. They have successfully transformed their economies. We must find ways to compete more successfully for international investment and enable the growth of already-established local firms so that we can sustain and improve our quality of life. We must mobilize the resources of governments, the business sector and the community at large to make this happen.

Common Themes From Discussions



Pictured: John Cook and Yacoub Idris

- **Look at the geographic region from an international perspective** and define the city region more expansively to maximize attractiveness for investment.
- **Be strategic, starting with economic development**, before moving on to marketing strategy and tactics. Include business and other sectors in strategy development and implementation.
- **Build on the organizations already in place** - like the Greater Toronto Marketing Association (GTMA), the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority (GTTA), and the Toronto Region Research Alliance - and resource them appropriately to implement the strategies.
- **Position the Toronto region to be an international leader in the use and sale of green technologies.**

Opportunities for Action

Define Toronto's economic region clearly and more expansively, viewing it from an international perspective, as the Toronto Region Research Alliance does. Including Waterloo would strengthen the region and help to ensure that is big enough to compete globally. Strong political leadership will be critical to promoting cooperation and building trust among the many stakeholders and interest groups. Recognizing that Toronto is the 'heart of the GTA', the Mayor of Toronto should play a particularly strong leadership role. The Province could also leverage its funding power to force cooperation.

The Province should lead the development of a regional economic development strategy (not just a marketing strategy) through a process that involves all orders of government, business, academia, and other key stakeholders. That strategy should provide for:

- Investing in essential supports for strong industries such as transportation infrastructure, an electricity grid, and 'green' and other key technologies. Don't try to identify specific winners and losers as that can pre-ordain outcomes.
- Offering competitive incentives to attract international investment in innovation and technology-intensive industries, as well as multinationals seeking North American headquarters. Appoint 'deal-brokers' who have the authority and accountability to make quick and effective decisions on incentives.
- Bringing immigrants to the table and leveraging their entrepreneurial energy and networks to attract international investment and businesses.
- Creating conditions to attract and keep skilled people here. Solicit feedback from the community in dealing with issues such as ineffective immigrant settlement and credential recognition.
- Defining a clear structure and roles for implementation, including the streamlining of agencies to make it easier to coordinate efforts. Learn from best practices of others, such as Edmonton Health and Translink in BC, to streamline decision-making at a regional level.



Pictured: Mohamed Dhanani, Chaviva Hošek

Beef up the GTMA and make it more effective by providing it with the resources needed to lead the development and implementation of a regional marketing strategy. The resourcing of the GTMA must be accompanied by a clear understanding of the roles of all levels of government, institutions, regional bodies and the private sector in marketing the region. The strategy must: articulate Toronto's brand;

emphasize the quality and diversity of the GTA economy and workforce; actively involve leaders from government, business, academia and the community in marketing the region; and turn citizens into 'ambassadors'.

Empower the GTTA and give it the planning, financial and implementation tools to solve regional transportation and gridlock issues.

Change the name of the ‘Toronto City Summit Alliance’ to the ‘Toronto Region Summit Alliance’.

‘Big Ideas’ revolved around making the ‘green economy’ the focus of the regional economic development and marketing strategies.

Making Housing Happen



Pictured: session participants

Session Chair: Anne Sado, *President, George Brown College*
Derek Ballantyne, *CEO, Toronto Community Housing Corporation*
Cathy Crowe, *Street Nurse*
Hon. John Gerretsen, *Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing*
David Hulchanski, *Director, Centre for Urban and Community Studies, University of Toronto*

“One of the main reasons why we haven’t made progress on affordable housing is because we are still debating what the problem is. We are mired in an argument over whether it’s a supply problem or an income problem. Let’s put that to rest – it’s both. We must intervene on both fronts.”

- Derek Ballantyne, Session Speaker

The Challenge

Housing in the Greater Toronto Area is unaffordable to many low-income and some moderate-income households. Between 2000 and 2006, only 1,465 new affordable units were finished in Toronto while one-quarter of the affordable private rental stock, or 33,000 units, became unaffordable to the average tenant household. Social housing continues to deteriorate with a repair backlog that is reportedly in the \$300 million range. As a result, there are currently 67,000 households on waiting lists for social housing in Toronto and almost 200,000 low-income households spending in excess of the recommended 30% of earnings on rent.

The reasons for this are well known. Since federal and provincial cutbacks in the mid-1990s, there has been very little new publicly-funded construction, and construction of affordable rental housing by the private sector has been declining since the mid-1970s. Affordable housing projects typically face significant regulatory delays and neighbourhood opposition, driving up costs and limiting options.

There have been encouraging developments on the housing front. At the Toronto Summit 2007, the Province announced that it would begin using \$392 million it had received as part of the Canada-Ontario Affordable Housing Program Agreement but had refused to spend pending the resolution of a fiscal battle with Ottawa. We can no longer afford to allow jurisdictional squabbles, regulatory delays and neighbourhood opposition to stop us from tackling this increasingly critical issue. We need involvement and investment from all levels of government to develop a coordinated, long-term affordable housing renewal strategy that will produce an adequate supply of affordable housing for the region and for Canada.

Common Themes from Discussions

- **Governments must take the lead in addressing this problem** and involve non-profits in delivery. The market won't solve it as there is no profit potential.
- **Need to build public support for affordable housing** by linking the issue to things that business and the general public care about.
- **Need to disaggregate the problem and develop targeted solutions.** Different segments of the population such as single families, the homeless, and the elderly have different issues and needs.

Opportunities for Action



Pictured: John Gerretsen, Anne Sado

Create a sustainable national housing strategy which:

- **Frames the issue as an economic development challenge** and shows how it links to other important agendas like productivity, strong neighbourhoods, and the green economy.
- **Clearly sets out the roles and priorities of the federal, provincial and municipal governments in funding and delivering affordable housing.**
- **Provides targeted solutions to meet the needs of different population segments**, such as: down payment assistance for low-income tenants who are paying market rents but could otherwise purchase homes, thus freeing up rental space; affordable rental housing for low-income earners and social assistance recipients; supportive housing for victims of domestic violence and persons with disabilities; and supports to make the transition from the street or shelter system to permanent housing for the homeless.

The City must be the champion for adequate affordable housing. It must convince the public of its social and economic importance and involve the public in seeking solutions. We need a full cost accounting of the many benefits of housing, including:

- Economic - better business productivity if entry level workers are able to live a reasonable distance from work; improved image for tourism.
- Environmental - reduce commuting time; retrofitting older rental stock improves energy efficiency.
- Lower costs to governments of having people in housing instead of shelters or on the street - lower health care costs and less pressure on correctional system.
- Quality of life better for all residents.
- Social equity – affordable housing should be a right, not a privilege.

Federal and provincial governments need to deliver an increased supply of affordable and supportive housing and make greater use of rent supplements in the near term to bridge the gap. Learn from the strategies of other cities such as New York and London about how to keep affordable housing throughout the city region.

Municipalities need to expand rehabilitation programs to preserve public rental stock. The Province should help by setting up and contributing to a revolving fund for ongoing maintenance.

Municipalities need to expand and focus emergency relief programs to help people end up in permanent supportive housing, not in the more costly shelter system.

Balance public ownership with private sector development and financing, and remove barriers and create incentives for private sector delivery of moderately priced rental and ownership housing:

- The Province should allow accelerated capital cost depreciation on affordable housing and further facilitate affordable housing development through Planning Act changes.
- Municipalities should use current and new tools, such as: inclusionary zoning; density bonuses; faster approvals; PST and GST rebates on affordable housing; reduced or waived development charges and permit fees; 100-year leases to keep land in public ownership and preserve modest rents; tax increment financing; targeted fast-tracking of affordable housing developments.

Conduct pilot demonstrations of different approaches for different income levels and needs. Ideas included: co-op ownership; rent-to-own models; program to help people with first rental; transitional supportive housing; and harm-reduction housing.



Pictured: Tanzeel Merchant, Michael Shapcott

Other ideas included: creating a ‘smart centre’ at the municipal level to seek and reward creative solutions; establishing a third party to monitor housing conditions and needs; approaching the World Bank for a low-interest loan to build affordable housing in the city region.

Toronto's Waterfront: from Vision to Reality



Pictured: Kristin Jenkins, Joe Deschênes-Smith, Karen Pitre

Session Chair: Bruce Kuwabara, *Partner, KPMB Architects*
Matt Blackett, *Publisher and Creative Director, Spacing Magazine*
Bill Boyle, *CEO, Harbourfront Centre*
John Campbell, *President and CEO, Toronto Waterfront Corporation*
Ken Greenberg, *Principal, Greenberg Consultants Inc.*

“At 2000 acres, the revitalization of Toronto’s waterfront is one of the largest urban/rural projects in North America – possibly second only to rebuilding New Orleans. I know there is a lot of scepticism about it actually happening, which comes honestly as the first studies were done back in 1763 by Lord Simcoe! In the past few years we have come a long way. We have strong political support and a firm funding plan from the three levels of government. We are now shifting from planning to execution. While planning is important, the absence of shovels has fed that scepticism about whether we are ever going to be successful. I can tell you that will change in a big way this year!”

- John Campbell, Session Speaker

The Challenge

Toronto's waterfront revitalization is focused on the 2000-acre area between Jameson and Coxwell Avenues. Once complete, the waterfront will have 750 acres of parks, 40,000 residences and one-million square metres of employment space. There are high expectations that this effort will put Toronto at the forefront of global cities by: transforming the waterfront into beautiful, sustainable new communities, parks and public spaces; fostering economic growth in knowledge-based, creative industries; and, ultimately, redefining how Toronto, the Province and the country are perceived by the world.

Major international cities such as London, Barcelona, Sydney and Boston have undertaken large-scale revitalization of their waterfronts and successfully transformed them into major urban assets. The most successful projects have several characteristics in common:

- An empowered development corporation charged with leading revitalization;
- Participation by all orders of government;
- Strong political champions; and
- Innovative private sector partnerships.

These ingredients were not initially in place when, in 2000, the three orders of government committed \$1.5 billion to the waterfront and, in 2001, established the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation (recently renamed Waterfront Toronto) to lead all aspects of waterfront renewal. Waterfront Toronto faced uncertainty around the release of funding, had inadequate powers, and was given no direction on its roles and responsibilities with respect to other waterfront agencies. These issues caused delays and fueled ongoing scepticism about revitalization. At the same time, the work Waterfront Toronto had underway was focused on planning and design. While necessary for a project of this size, the absence of "shovels in the ground" further contributed to the public perception that nothing was happening.

Progress on these issues is being made. In 2005, the three orders of governments and Waterfront Toronto reached a formal agreement on when, and on what, the \$1.5 billion will be spent. Waterfront Toronto has also signed agreements with the other waterfront agencies clarifying their respective roles and responsibilities. Master plans and planning approvals are complete for the first new mixed-use waterfront districts - East Bayfront and West Don Lands - and active development is beginning.

Many challenges must be addressed if Waterfront Toronto is to stay true to its vision over the next 25 to 30 years it will take to complete the revitalization effort. The first is to overcome residual scepticism about whether revitalization can be successful and to engage the active participation and support of the public region-wide to build still greater momentum and progress. As part of this effort, we need to mobilize our business, cultural and tourism sectors to market the waterfront locally and internationally as a premier investment location so that future residents can both live and work in vibrant and sustainable neighbourhoods.

Common Themes from Discussions

- **There is a sense of optimism among those familiar with the revitalization.** We need to help the broader public to understand why and to overcome their scepticism.
- **It is important to make linkages and connections between the waterfront and the rest of Toronto and vice versa,** as well as along the waterfront, which is unique in stretching 39 miles from Pickering to Etobicoke.
- **The waterfront must be designed first to be a destination for GTA residents,** not to be a major tourist attraction.



Pictured: Bahadur Madhani, Scott Haldane, Kamala-Jean Gopie

Opportunities for Action

Ensure mixed use to create a vibrant living and working community, including:

- Employers from knowledge-based businesses like film production and media and ‘green companies’ that are in green businesses or use green approaches in running their companies;
- Residential areas that are so unique that they become attractions in and of themselves; and
- A mix of living and working places - don’t create zoned areas like an ‘arts ghetto’.

Create a beautiful built environment with exceptional services and amenities and employers will locate there. Other key suggestions for attracting new employers included:

- Transit with multiple links to the City – *“Building Canary Wharf before the subway line is what caused the Reichmanns to go broke.”*;
- Appropriate balance between transit and roads – the latter provide access for deliveries; and
- A smooth, expedited approvals process at the City and reasonable taxes.

Create a place that the average GTA resident wants to visit, not just attractions for tourists

- Provide lots of recreational, sports and programming options in all four seasons that reflect the cultural diversity of the City and serve people at different life stages.
- Provide covered walkways and heated bus shelters to increase winter usage.
- Make the waterfront walkway a destination for holding walkathons and runs for causes; this will get people to the waterfront and help reduce traffic jams in the City.
- Build flagship attractions that will appeal to both residents and tourists, such as a botanical garden, an aquarium, a Great Lakes History Museum – not giant water parks.
- Create a *“piazza or marketplace atmosphere or feeling”*.

Increase accessibility and enhance linkages between the waterfront and the city region, as well as between different parts of the waterfront.

- Improve TTC access throughout the waterfront with multiple links to downtown and regional hubs, and provide ferry boat transit for commuters and recreational users.
- Increase parking capacity as well or we will face future congestion.
- Make safety a priority with wide, well-lit walkways that lead to the waterfront.
- Complete the waterfront trail, connect it with other trails and the ravine system, and maintain it all year round.
- Create connections between the waterfront and existing tourist attractions and arts-related developments, including the CN Tower, the CNE, Ontario Place, the Brickworks, and the Distillery District.

Engage the public on an ongoing basis to overcome scepticism and reinforce the importance of the waterfront to the city region and get them excited. *“Communication must be interactive, up-to-date, continuous and multi-media.”* Some of the many creative ideas included:

- A 3D virtual tour on the Web;
- Updates on billboards along the Gardiner;
- Interactive displays at Union Station and at the Pearson International and Island airports;
- A report card on progress; and
- Continuing community consultations: reaching out to community leaders and involving current attractions in planning and programming.

Use green approaches and green technologies as much as possible.

- Be proactive in seeking world-class green companies to locate at the waterfront and in helping companies that locate there to adopt green approaches and technologies.
- Become an ‘ecotourism’ destination with attractions and programming to support it.

Seek private sector funding to help expedite waterfront revitalization, such as:

- Endowment funding;
- Corporate sponsorship related to specific aspects, e.g.: Bombardier for transportation, security companies for safety; and
- Tree-planting fundraisers, where every Torontonion can plant a tree for \$1 and help create a mini-forest.

Success in School, Success for Life



Pictured: Melanie Parrack, Nicole Antoine, Bruce Ferguson, Annie Kidder

Session Chair: Courtney Pratt, *Chairman, Stelco*
Nicole Antoine, *Student, Centennial College*
Bruce Ferguson, *Director, Community Health Systems Resource Group, Sick Kids Hospital*
Annie Kidder, *Executive Director, People for Education*
Melanie Parrack, *Executive Superintendent Student Success, Toronto District School Board*
Jim Spyropoulos, *Principal, Newtonbrook Collegiate*

“Conversations about education often happen only within the boundaries of people directly affected by the system. We talk among ourselves but we have a hard time making the linkages that have to be made. Schools are linked to everything else. Schools are connected to building inclusive communities, culture, strong neighbourhoods, income security, and the hope for a brighter future. When communities are engaged, schools are more successful at achieving the goal of the education system: to prepare students to fully participate in society.”

- Anne Kidder, Session Speaker

The Challenge

Ontario students are strong academic performers, scoring well on international standard tests. Nevertheless, dropout rates, while down, are still alarming, and outcomes between different student populations are increasingly uneven. The failure of the education system to achieve equitable outcomes is of particular concern with respect to the City of Toronto's 370,000 students, a population that is exceptionally diverse linguistically, ethnically and racially. Over 36% of the City's students live in low-income families, more than half speak English as a second language, and 10% arrived in Canada within the last three years.

Curriculum changes and an over-emphasis on labour market success have limited the traditional role of public education in producing well-rounded citizens with a balance of intellectual, physical, cultural and social skills. An increasingly narrow definition of education has resulted in funding cuts to parenting centres, school community advisor programs, technology training, arts and music instruction, and physical and outdoor education. Core curricula have become more demanding while supports for students and teachers have diminished.

The Backgrounder for this session provides numerous examples of programs like Pathways to Education, a community-based mentoring program developed in Regent Park, that have improved outcomes for students. The Toronto District and Catholic District School Boards also have a number of programs designed to lower the drop-out rate and improve children's chances for success at school. Yet many of these initiatives are on shaky financial footing, and a decade of funding cuts has reduced the capacity of Toronto's schools to meet the unique needs of students and their communities.

Schools have also shifted from being centres of community life to being highly specialized facilities, with restricted access and usage largely limited to educators and students during school hours. Schools could and should be neighbourhood hubs for a range of services and programs for both students and members of the community. But prohibitive fees for after-school use act as a barrier to broader student and community use, leaving schools empty at night and on weekends.



Pictured: session participants

The health of our schools matters to more than the individual students, teachers, and parents directly involved in them: the impact of education issues is felt throughout our communities. Our challenge is to develop an educational approach that provides every student with an equal

opportunity for success, while also helping to shape able future citizens, and keeping us economically competitive. At the same time, we need to ensure that schools have the capacity to engage the broader community in supporting school initiatives and connecting those initiatives to neighbourhood and community interests.

Common Themes from Discussions

- **All stakeholders must be engaged in making the education system more effective.** The need is urgent.
- **Schools should be owned by the community and be open and accessible.** Outreach and community engagement should be mandated and measured.

Opportunities for Action

Need a task force or another mechanism to engage all stakeholders in the community in developing and delivering more effective approaches to education. Membership should include teachers, parents, residents, community organizations and businesses. *“The goal should be well-rounded kids who can think.”* Any new approach should broaden the definition of student success beyond current measures to put greater emphasis on important things that aren’t easily measured - like arts, culture, physical condition, creative and critical thinking - and to involve students in their measurement.



Pictured: Jim Spyropoulos

Public schools should be required to engage with their communities and to be public spaces that are accessible for extra-curricular programs. The many suggestions for fostering stronger linkages between schools and communities included: holding administrators accountable for outreach, not just curriculum; measuring and reporting on community connectivity, including surveying parents on their level of engagement; conflict resolution and mediation programs in all schools to increase engagement and a sense of belonging; hosting programs like ESL that link parents to schools; expanding the use of parent advisory boards, especially where there are language barriers; involving the local business

community through things like co-op programs for students to help them afford to stay in school; engaging volunteers systematically, not just school by school (e.g. partner with the Toronto International Film Festival and other organizations to help students across the City find summer jobs).

Schools can lay a stronger foundation for civil society. Summit suggestions included: making diversity a priority by promoting cultural competencies; making curriculum culturally relevant;

recruiting diverse teachers, speakers, and mentors; teaching civics in schools; providing opportunities for students to build ties to the broader community; and inviting successful immigrants to share professional experiences and learning - *“not to give the typical talk on what it is like to be a new immigrant.”*

- Ontario has acted on a key Summit 2007 suggestion by amending the Safe Schools Act to end the Zero Tolerance Policy, which many Summit participants viewed as reinforcing racism and marginalizing and criminalizing black, Tamil, and Muslim children.

Increasing high school completion rates is critical. Many of the ideas above would help. Two particularly innovative ideas included: involving ‘drop-outs’ who are not well served by the system in identifying and addressing the issues and barriers they face; and an ‘Education Passport’ that would allow students to earn credits by subject, not grade level, and to move back forth between applied and academic streams.

Create platforms to share best practices in education, such as: mentorship programs for principals, to improve their leadership abilities; and a system-wide Parent and Teacher Advisory Council to monitor pilot projects like JUMP Math and advise on where and how to scale up successes.

Identify what resources schools need to fulfill broader roles - people, places and money - and where those resources can be obtained (public, private and non-profit sources). Suggestions included: collaborating with arts community and local businesses as places of learning; mentorship by former students; and programs such as JUMP Math and Pathways to Education.

A Green Toronto



Pictured: session participants

Plenary Chair: Honourable David Crombie, former Mayor of Toronto and President and CEO of the Canadian Urban Institute
Guest speaker: Louise Comeau, Director of the Sage Climate Project and former Director of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities Centre for Sustainable Communities

“Toronto faces real and serious risks from the impacts of climate change ranging from: heat waves affecting the sick and the old; to declines in water quality and quantity as lake and river levels decline; storm water overflow from intensifying precipitation (something that is happening already); to extreme events leading to transmission failures, black-outs and costly impacts on city infrastructure. In summary, real impacts on health, quality of life and the city’s economy.”

- Louise Comeau, Plenary Speaker

The Challenge

The environment was cited as their top issue by 26% of Canadians polled by Environics in mid-January, 2007, underscoring the growing consensus that we cannot wait any longer to address issues affecting the sustainability of our communities. While many environmental challenges, such as climate change, must be addressed at the national and international levels, they also invite local action as part of the solution. As Mayor Miller said at the recent G8 Summit on Climate Change, “*where nations fail to lead, cities must lead.*”

We face a number of challenges which are elaborated on in the Backgrounder for this session. They include: tight energy supply; poor air quality, which contributes to many premature deaths each year; high per capita water consumption; low natural cover levels, resulting in habitat loss and a continuing loss of species; a need to significantly improve waste diversion from landfill sites; and the failure of land use planning to halt GTA sprawl leading to increased car ownership and the growth of carbon and other greenhouse gas emissions - the primary drivers of global warming.

Many positive initiatives have been undertaken in recent years; again, these are elaborated upon in the Backgrounder. They include:

- Ontario’s *Places to Grow Strategy*, a long-term plan for managing growth for greater sustainability in the Golden Horseshoe;
- Ontario’s establishment of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority to coordinate transportation planning and delivery and promote sustainable transportation use;
- Green roof initiatives in Toronto, Markham, Kitchener and Waterloo, which have made the broader Toronto region an international leader in this area; and
- Municipal investments in energy reduction initiatives for both heating and cooling, such as the Oshawa City Hall retrofit and the EnWave Deep Water Cooling project.



Pictured: Louise Comeau

In her speech, Louise Comeau advised Toronto to go beyond its current focus on transit to reduce green house gas emissions and to make energy self-sufficiency its top priority if it is to make a real contribution to fighting global warming. This will require the integration of energy planning with land use, transportation and infrastructure planning at the regional level. Yet there is no overarching, coordinated regional plan to increase sustainability, nor any region-wide targets or goals against which we can measure our progress. Without a clear plan, we will not be able to achieve the vision of the GTA as the “Greenest Big City Region” in North America.

Common Themes from Discussions

- **National and international action is crucial, but local decisions, actions and engagement are equally important.**
- **Toronto should aspire to be the “Greenest Big City Region” and lead by example in a spirit of participating, not competing,** with other major urban centres in achieving its goal.
- **Integration is critical to achieving green objectives** across the city region, especially in planning for energy, land use, transportation and other infrastructure.

Opportunities for Action

The Toronto region can and should become the “Greenest Big City Region” in North America, if not the world. This will require a clear vision, measurable goals and a process for monitoring progress and holding ourselves accountable in meeting our goals.

Create an Environmental Task Force of regional stakeholders who will work together to develop specific measures, benchmark current performance and set targets in key areas for environmental sustainability. The Task Force could be charged with articulating roles of stakeholders including the Province, regional municipalities, the private sector, and non-profit and environmental groups, as well as creating a framework for monitoring and evaluating progress in achieving targets and relative to other large cities worldwide. A range of metrics were suggested in the areas of air, land, water, and energy, including: greenhouse gas emissions; smog days; green cover; transit ridership; beach closings; and waste diversion.

Develop public education campaigns to build awareness of the benefits of being the “Greenest Big City Region”, communicate goals and progress clearly and widely, and engage ordinary citizens in helping to achieve the goals. Suggestions for engaging the public included: developing a “green curriculum” for schools; tree planting and recycling campaigns; an online household “green calculator”; recognizing local “ambassadors for the environment;” and profiling success stories of local households and small businesses “going green” and saving money or improving quality of life.

The City and other regional municipalities must participate and support regional governance and integrated planning with a focus on energy self-sufficiency. It was suggested that they: follow the Kyoto Protocol and call on other orders of government to do the same; facilitate a mayoral-level climate agreement, as big city mayors have done in the U.S.; seek and adopt relevant international best practices; educate constituents, making use of icons such as a “green taxi fleet”; update building codes to encourage retrofitting and new green developments; increase



Pictured: David Crombie

tree canopy and add other green space, including green roofs; offer incentives and awards to landlords, homeowners, businesses and entrepreneurs for achieving energy efficiencies, being environmentally friendly and using green technologies; expand recycling and reuse programs including offering Styrofoam recycling bins; and ban high-energy light bulbs.

All orders of government should implement and enforce tough legislation to promote energy efficiency and protect the environment, and themselves demonstrate leadership in the use of green technologies and practices.

The Toronto City Summit Alliance should hold an environmental summit and continue to put pressure on government, and advocate for action by government and other sectors.

Other creative ideas included: conducting a garbage audit; developing an “Environmental Code of Ethics”; and marketing the city region as an eco-tourism destination.

Transit and Transportation: Getting to Sustainability



Pictured: Rob Maclsaac, Adam Giambrone

Plenary Chair: Anne Golden, *President, Conference Board of Canada*
Guest Speakers: Adam Giambrone, *Toronto Transit Commission Chair*, and Rob Maclsaac, *Chair, Greater Toronto Transportation Authority (GTTA)*

“Connective infrastructure, or mass transit and transportation, is one of the four basic building blocks for healthy cities. The GTTA is in a make or break situation. If it isn’t effective in terms of governance and access to funding, so much won’t be possible. The greening agenda won’t proceed as emissions are a huge carbon generator. We won’t be able to reduce sprawl. We won’t become an economic powerhouse.”

- Anne Golden, Session Chair

The Challenge

Increasingly inadequate transportation service levels are reducing our social, economic and environmental wellbeing. The GTA is the fourth most congested metropolitan area in North America, and is headed for second most congested. The existing system is under-funded to maintain current operations by an estimated \$1.3 billion per year (two-thirds for transit and one-third for roads), let alone to keep pace with anticipated growth in the Toronto region. Yet, by 2031, there will be three million more people living in the GTA and Hamilton and 1.5 million more cars on the roads.

The provincial 'Places to Grow' plan presents a more sustainable vision, but its success depends on the implementation of an equally visionary transportation system. More than road and capital improvements are required. There must also be a stronger role for transit, particularly in Toronto, where no major new roads are planned for the next thirty years.

The GTA needs a long-term plan that will deliver adequate transportation infrastructure and an integrated and optimized regional transit system. The Greater Toronto Transportation Authority (GTTA) has the mandate to develop that plan and to coordinate transportation across the region. Successful implementation of the plan will require predictable, sustained, long-term funding to deliver the world-class transportation system that is essential to a healthy economy and liveable city region.

Common Themes from Discussions

- **Sustainable funding is essential** to attract the financing required for long-term infrastructure projects and transportation infrastructure, which take years to build. The provincial and federal governments must play roles in long-term funding. Canada is the only OECD country without a national transit plan.
- **Integrated planning and implementation at the regional level are critical.** As one of the session speakers said, *“the worst case scenario would be for there to be one pot of money, no plan, and GTA municipalities competing for funding for their own projects.”*
- **Riders don't care who funds or operates transit, they only care that it works well.**



Pictured: Paul Bedford

Opportunities for Action

A national transit strategy is needed to ensure federal and provincial involvement in providing predictable, long-term funding for transit and transportation. Some participants suggested dividing funding into capital and operating components, with the federal government and provinces responsible for the former and municipalities for the latter. Funding must be sufficient to reduce reliance on the fare box to a reasonable level - maybe 50% versus the current 68%.

The GTTA must be adequately funded if it is to deliver an effective, integrated transit and transportation system. A number of funding options were suggested, including:

- Road tolls to generate revenue while encouraging transit use and reducing congestion, such as: highway tolls or fees; an annual charge to use 400 series highways; and congestion charges as in London and Singapore. Need to consider the entire region when implementing tolls since, unlike London, the GTA's congestion problem is due to more than traffic in and out of Toronto's downtown core.
- Taxes such as: fuel-economy based car registration fees; a GTTA gas tax; and a dedicated portion of property or income taxes. The first two could be used to penalize gas usage and encourage transit use.
- Financial instruments including RRSP-eligible transit bonds to fund capital infrastructure projects and borrowing against revenue streams (e.g. road tolls) to accelerate infrastructure improvements.
- Private sector partnerships for funding, such as those reportedly used in Hong Kong and the UK. The Teacher's Pension Plan was also suggested as a model.
- Private sector partnerships for operating the system as in London, where several transit lines are operated by the private sector. Proponents of this option suggested that private sector operation of transit may be more cost effective than public operation and that quality can be maintained by contracts requiring the private operators to meet certain reliability and cleanliness standards, or face financial penalties.
- Generate additional revenues from transit system and associated real estate, including: using existing passenger rail capacity for freight in off-hours; developing and leasing space in stations or adjacent lands for retail and advertising applications; and implementing an 'Adopt-a-station' program.
- Generally look at what other jurisdictions have done that could be used effectively in the GTA.

Some expressed concerns about second order effects of things like tolls on people living on low to moderate incomes. Suggestions to mitigate these included ensuring



Pictured: Anne Golden

that alternatives are in place (e.g. greater transit capacity) before implementing tolls and allowing social service agencies to buy tokens at a reduced rate.

The GTTA, as the regional transportation planning authority, should be involved in land-use planning to ensure that decisions about transportation and land use are coordinated. There were differences in opinion as to how much power should be ceded to, versus shared with, the municipalities and transit providers to ensure that local concerns are incorporated. This will clearly require that the GTTA be given the authority to plan for the region but be held accountable to fairly represent municipalities and the public interest. In addition, many believed that transit should be a priority for land use planning and development and that “carrots and sticks” will be required to encourage higher densities on main transit corridors.

Need to actively encourage increased transit usage. In addition to penalizing people for driving, as suggested above, ideas included:

- Improve customer service and reliability in the near term and expand capacity throughout the GTA in the longer term, with local transit services feeding seamlessly into the regional system. Some suggested light rail and more use of GTA rail lines as transit corridors to expedite capacity expansion.
- A public education campaign and improved transit users’ information system to improve the perception of public transit and provide real-time incentives to help riders use the system. This could include having recognized public figures use the TTC or transit regularly.
- Expand weekend operating hours.
- Increase flexibility and variety of fares. Suggestions included selling multi-year passes and introducing a stored-value, contact-less transit pass, like London’s Oyster smartcard.

Expand bicycle paths and routes to reduce both traffic congestion and demands on the transit system, a recommendation that is being acted on by the City of Toronto but not as fast as a number of participants would like to see.

Finally, as in other sessions, there was recognition that transit and transportation have a role to play in moving towards a ‘Green Toronto’. One specific suggestion was to tie the GTTA’s budget to a regional plan for reducing greenhouse gas and carbon emissions.

Strong Neighbourhoods, Stronger Toronto Region



Pictured: Frances Lankin

Plenary Chair: Frances Lankin, *President and CEO, United Way of Greater Toronto*
Keynote Speaker: Paul Grogan, *CEO, The Boston Foundation*

“Why do strong neighbourhoods matter when we are talking about cities? Imagine a city region where no one is disadvantaged by where they live. That vision is at the heart of the work of the Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force and its action plan for the most disadvantaged areas of our city.”

- Frances Lankin, Plenary Chair

The Challenge

Rising housing costs and a lack of affordable housing have forced many low-income families to move to neighbourhoods where housing is least expensive, resulting in overcrowding and a growing concentration of poverty. Many of these neighbourhoods are in the inner suburbs that lie between the old City of Toronto and surrounding Greater Toronto Area communities. These areas are now home to large numbers of newcomers and families led by women. Some appear to be caught in deepening cycles of distress and instability, marked by increased crime, homeowner flight, and changed commercial activity, including a growth in fringe lending businesses. Their residents face prospects of lower school attainment, more unemployment, greater health problems, aging housing stock, and less social infrastructure than those in more advantaged neighbourhoods.

As Paul Grogan said in his speech about Boston's experience, *"The concentration of poverty leads to enormous ills and intractable problems. We have learned through dramatic changes in housing policy and other means that you must de-concentrate poverty to reverse decline."* One of the primary drivers of turnarounds in U.S. cities was the emergence of Community Development Corporations (CDCs), formed by bands of residents who came together to solve some of their neighbourhoods' problems. CDCs worked because they were trusted by their communities, independent, focused on concrete results, and had diverse funding bases that weren't creatures of any one government program. As Grogan said, *"They worked because of the paradox of small victories – the power of one small victory on top of another is phenomenal and ends up being transformational."*

Toronto's neighbourhoods also have, among their residents and within local organizations, rich assets and capacities that can be strengthened and supported to lead community change. Guided by the work of the Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force and the City's Community Safety Plan, the City of Toronto and United Way of Greater Toronto have made neighbourhoods a priority. The Ontario government has also made important investments, but greater participation by both the provincial and federal orders of government is necessary for the Toronto region to succeed in strengthening its declining neighbourhoods and making them safe and healthy places for families to live and raise their children.

Common Themes from Discussions

- **Need to change the language from negative to positive:** *"strength, not weakness; growth, not decline; presence, not absence."*
- **It is not just about the 13 priority neighbourhoods, it is about neighbourhood success everywhere.**
- **Schools must be part of the solution.** The issue of increasing community use of schools requires resolution.

Opportunities for Action

Develop a strategy between all three orders of government as part of a national urban strategy targeted at priority neighbourhoods in major Canadian cities. Vancouver and Winnipeg agreements could be models for an agreement that includes goals, funding commitments, responsibilities, and timelines. Funding commitments must be long-term, not ‘band-aid’ short-term money for one-time projects.



Pictured: Paul Grogan

The federal and provincial governments need to address income security issues and develop new policies to stimulate revitalization. Income security issues that are contributing to neighbourhood disadvantage include the lack of affordable housing and childcare, and immigrant settlement and accreditation issues. New policies, such as no property taxes for five years, could encourage mixed-income housing by creating incentives for people to move to neighbourhoods.

The United Way has made an important contribution in raising awareness and stimulating action and should continue to do so, without stigmatizing disadvantaged neighbourhoods. Avoid ‘ghetto-izing’ communities by over-emphasizing the negative. Ensure that communication and outreach strategies clearly encourage investment to develop “*the untapped assets of emerging neighbourhoods*”. Finally, ensure that the initial focus on 13 neighbourhoods avoids isolating other communities that will not have access to new funding.

Find ways to quickly extend the Toronto Strong Neighbourhood Strategy to more neighbourhoods. Focus on neighbourhoods that want to be redeveloped and made stronger. Identify structures already in place in many communities such as Business Improvement Associations (BIAs), neighbourhood associations, and YMCAs. Invest in building those local assets and developing local leadership for community-led development that is focused on each community’s unique needs and priorities. Put mechanisms in place to share learning and best practices and have successful leaders mentor emerging leaders in other communities. “*We need to believe in people in neighbourhoods and let them lead if we are going to have sustainable, transformational change.*”

Ensure that schools play a strong role in neighbourhood revitalization. Schools should be community hubs and offer programs for all ages including vocational training for adults, ESL courses, and programs that “*inspire kids to reach for something better.*”

Engage the private sector in community reinvestment, most importantly by ensuring that key businesses like banks and grocery stores are present. Other suggested roles for the private sector include: public/private partnerships to provide long-term funding; putting funding

mechanisms in place such as micro-credit to support local initiatives; sponsoring programs for children and youth such as sports and summer camps; and mentoring local leaders.

Innovative ideas included creating a ‘healthy community check list’, and building social enterprises that could be the economic engines to generate money to put back into communities.

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