ACKNOWLEDGING DISPLACEMENT

Uncovering the Displacement of Black Populations in Toronto

MOUNT DENNIS

WESTON RD

EGLINTON AVE

About the Urban Land Institute

The Urban Land Institute is a global, member-driven organization comprising more than 48,000 real estate and urban development professionals dedicated to advancing the Institute's mission of shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide. ULI's interdisciplinary membership represents all aspects of the industry, including developers, property owners, investors, architects, urban planners, public officials, real estate brokers, appraisers, attorneys, engineers, financiers, and academics. Established in 1936, the Institute has a presence in the Americas, Europe, and Asia Pacific regions, with members in 84 countries. More information is available at uli.org. Follow ULI on X (formerly known as Twitter), Facebook, LinkedIn, and Instagram.

About ULI Toronto

The Urban Land Institute is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit research and education organization supported by its members. Founded in 1936, the Institute has members in 80 countries worldwide, representing the entire spectrum of land use and real estate development disciplines working in private enterprise and public service. The mission of the Urban Land Institute is shaping the future of the built environment for transformative impact in communities worldwide.

ULI Toronto brings public- and private-sector leaders together to share and exchange ideas, information, and experiences to shape the way communities grow.

About the Randall Lewis Center for Sustainability in Real Estate

The ULI Randall Lewis Center for Sustainability in Real Estate leads the real estate industry in creating places and buildings where people and the environment thrive. In collaboration with ULI members and partners, the Lewis Center drives industry transformation, cultivates leaders and champions, and helps foster solutions for sustainable, resilient, healthy and equitable cities and communities. The center pursues these goals via cutting-edge research, global convenings, community technical assistance, and other strategies. The center's main programs are Decarbonization, Urban Resilience, and Healthy Places.

About the ULI District Council Partnerships for Health and Racial Equity

Beginning in August 2021, member-led partnerships organized by ULI district councils in British Columbia, Houston, Northwest, St. Louis, and Toronto worked to understand historical inequities and racial discrimination in land use. Working independently and collectively, each team crafted creative strategies to address the ongoing impacts of these inequalities on community health and wealth disparities. Local efforts were part of ULI's District Council Partnerships for Health and Racial Equity, led by ULI's Building Healthy Places Initiative with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. In addition to identifying a local challenge and executing an 18-month scope of work, each team was encouraged to document its project, outcomes, and recommendations, producing a deliverable that would meet the local need. The result is a library of five distinctive reports reflecting the work done in each community. Additionally, a synthesis report and online StoryMap provide a high-level summary of the collective effort and the project overall. More information is available at uli.org/partnerships.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Nearly 20 percent of Canada's 1.5 million Black population (2021 census) resides in Toronto. The Black community in Toronto is diverse, with representation from people of African descent from across the globe. However, the Black population has and continues to be disproportionately affected by racism. This is demonstrated in a history of colonialism and enslavement as well as present-day systemic and structural racism. ULI Toronto began its project with the goal of trying to understand the Black presence and experience in the Toronto area. Over the course of 18 months, ULI Toronto analyzed the city's history: Have there long been barriers to the Black population living in the city? And what is the impact on the Black population's ability to survive, live, and thrive in the city?

The initial aim was to understand the experiences of Blacks in earlier times: how this may have affected their presence in the Greater Toronto area, what factors may have affected the experiences of Black peoples, and if this is similar to patterns we are seeing today. The assumption was that ULI Toronto could work with both qualitative and quantitative data to understand historical Black settlement patterns, movement, and housing tenure and better understand the history of anti-Black racism and displacement of Black populations in Toronto and how it has affected their access to housing and ability to establish a permanent geographic presence in Toronto. However, the ULI Toronto district council team discovered early in the project that being able to tell more comprehensive, nuanced, and accurate Black stories is impeded by lack of historical data.

Recognizing the limitations of quantitative data, this effort has used archival research and community-driven participatory data collection to fill the gaps in Canadian data sets. Importantly, ULI Toronto has drawn on primary data from a community with a significant Black presence in Toronto, Mount Dennis. Through a partnership with a local nonprofit charitable organization, this effort explored experiences and perspectives of Black individuals and organizations serving and working with Black individuals and communities to understand factors influencing their lives.

This approach, ULI Toronto believed, would more fully tell the histories and better understand the current experiences of Black peoples in the Greater Toronto area, with a specific focus on Mount Dennis, and what they identify as important given the development pressures.

The following report provides an overview of ULI Toronto's approach and the qualitative tools developed. It is hoped that this will be useful for those who seek to understand the impact of real estate decisions on Black populations and other groups that may be negatively affected and are interested in taking a more community-centered approach to development and planning. The report concludes with a set of recommendations for the real estate industry, community organizations, and government.

Aerial view of the Toronto skyline.

INTRODUCTION

The Black community in Toronto is diverse, with representation from people of African descent from across the globe.[1] According to the 2021 Canadian Census, 1.5 million Black individuals live in Canada, and 265,005 or 4.3 percent reside in the city of Toronto. Black people have been in Canada for hundreds of years and have contributed in numerous ways. However, the Black population has and continues to be disproportionately impacted by racism. This is demonstrated in a history of colonialism and enslavement as well as present-day systemic and structural racism.

Toronto is the most diverse city in the world. However, the experiences of Black Torontonians and studies continue to show that anti-Black racism still exists in this city, affecting the life chances of more than 200,000 people of African descent who call Toronto home.

— City of Toronto, *Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism*, 2019

The unique experience of racism faced by people of African descent is anti-Black racism, a particular form of racism that impacts and describes Black individuals' and communities' experiences of systemic racism and discrimination and that disproportionately affects Black people. The experience of anti-Blackness or marginalization linked to Blackness is common across African diasporic communities, whether multigenerational Canadians or newcomers; however, the impact is different.

The impact is seen in workplaces, in schools, and in our communities. It affects the ability of Black families to live, survive, and thrive. Despite comparable education levels, Black individuals earn lower-than-average incomes compared to other racialized groups.[2] Importantly, recent studies have shown that Black households continue to face higher rates of rental evictions and face discrimination in the rental housing market.[3] Coupled with an ever-ballooning real estate market that is driving up housing costs, the risk of displacement of Black households is a real concern. And for Black households, which are largely represented in the rental housing market, the ability for them to remain and thrive in their neighborhoods is increasingly threatened.

> **Anti-Black racism is embedded in all parts of society and must be confronted in all of its societal incarnations, whether it is racial profiling, disproportionate levels of mental health challenges, or a higher vulnerability to gentrification and displacement.**
>
> — City of Toronto, *First Annual Report, Confronting Anti-Black Racism Unit, 2018–2019*

In 2016, the Neighbourhood Change Research Partnership mapped the distribution of Black households in Toronto, demonstrating that they are highly concentrated in the northeast and northwest of the city, areas that are well documented for their lack of access to dependable transit and amenities. These same parts of the city have been most negatively affected by COVID-19, making it impossible to ignore the geographic disparities that exist along racial lines.

There has been increased attention to anti-Black racism in the wake of COVID-19 and the social outcry that followed the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020, in Minneapolis, United States, the death of Regis Korchinski-Paquet on May 27, 2020, in Toronto, Canada, and in recognition of the death of many other Black individuals. However, while the current manifestations of anti-Black racism in Toronto receive a lot of discussion, particularly because of the disparities augmented by COVID-19, is this something that is new? Is the city livable for Black individuals?[4] Have there long been barriers to the Black population living in the city? And what is the impact on the Black population's ability to survive, live, and thrive in the city?

Although Toronto's Black population can be traced to the early 1800s and has steadily increased, in recent years both whether those numbers are declining or remain constant and the pattern of movement within Toronto are unclear.

To explore these questions and others, ULI Toronto, in partnership with the Black Planning Project, undertook a research project titled "Tracking Historical Black Displacement in Toronto." The team envisioned researching historical Black settlement patterns, movement, and housing tenure to better understand the history of anti-Black racism and displacement of Black populations in Toronto and how it has affected their access to housing and ability to establish a permanent geographic presence in Toronto.

Project Background

In 2021, ULI Toronto in partnership with Black Planning Project received funding through the Building Healthy Places Program to carry out a research project titled "Tracking Historical Black Displacement in Toronto." The assumption was that the team could work with both qualitative and quantitative data to understand historical Black settlement patterns, movement, and housing tenure and better understand the history of anti-Black racism and displacement of Black populations in Toronto and how it has impacted their access to housing and ability to establish a permanent geographic presence in Toronto.

The project team discovered early in the project that being able to tell more comprehensive, nuanced, and accurate Black stories is impeded by lack of historical data. Simply put, the histories of Black populations that were not consistently tracked are not well known, and they are difficult to piece together without adequate data.

Recognizing the limitations of quantitative data and rich additions qualitative data could play in filling the gaps, the project's qualitative data set includes archival records. Importantly, the research team has drawn on primary data from a community with a significant Black presence in Toronto, Mount Dennis.

In addition, as the work progressed, the research team revised the project outcomes as follows, to

1. Define and describe the challenges facing Black populations historical and present-day access to housing and settlement; and

2. Identify how developers and communities can work together to create more racially equitable real estate development processes, specifically for Black communities, working ways to be responsive to community-identified goals.

This work has mainly focused on the first outcome.

A streetfront in the Mount Dennis neighborhood.

Historical Context

Knowledge of the experiences of Black peoples in Canada is both limited and perhaps misunderstood publicly. The history of Black peoples in Canada is still often seen as a recent history, but few people know of the early Black presence before the 1900s. There may be some knowledge of the Underground Railroad through which some Blacks arrived, but little is known about the Black communities that may have been established during this time and their experiences or other Black populations who settled in this part of Turtle Island.

If there is a known narrative of Black experiences in Canada, it is likely the "North Star" myth. As told by historians such as Natasha Henry and Michelle Williams, this myth paints a picture of Canada as a benevolent country that, receiving formerly enslaved Black people through the Underground Railroad, welcomed them to lives of freedom, safety, and prosperity. Several years ago, Heritage Canada released a series "Heritage Minutes" illustrating the history of Canada through the use of short videos shown on television, one of which featured the Underground Railroad.

While Canada was the North Star offering new hope, from arrival Black peoples encountered difficulties and resistance and faced racism. Consider this: slavery was not yet abolished and was still active in many parts of Canada; and the stigma attached to slavery still shaped the ideas about and treatment of Black peoples, affecting how they were able to set up livelihoods. What was less prominent in the "Heritage Minutes" mini-histories was the establishment of Black communities and the many challenges these communities encountered leading to their destruction and displacement, demise, and erasure and the policy measures created to restrict Black entry into Canada. Planning and real estate development, from land distribution to housing development and urban renewal, played critical roles in shaping Black experiences.

> Urban planning, and planners, were critical to the construction of this extractive and racist system. The complicity, and worst the instrumentality, of the planning profession is evident in specific planning practices, such as urban renewal and large-scale public housing revitalization projects, which have exacerbated these racialized disparities through forced tenant relocation and displacement caused by processes of gentrification in low-income and Black communities.
>
> — Jamilla Mohamud, 2020

The North Star myth was, however, a liability for Canada, for it prevented any sincere examination of the situation faced by Blacks and other "visible minorities." It allowed most Canadians to believe that Canada has no "race problem," that Canadian Blacks were satisfied with conditions here, that there was no cause for concern or for corrective action. When stories of racially motivated violence and white extremist groups in Canada flashed across the headlines in the 1970s, they could scarcely be believed. Following the news bulletins came public opinion polls revealing that large numbers of whites harbored prejudicial attitudes. Statistical studies showed that non-whites experienced more unemployment, lower wages, and poorer job mobility than majority Canadians. The victims themselves reported discriminatory treatment in employment, housing, and services.

Canada's desire to portray itself as a multicultural mosaic, providing a welcoming place for all races and cultures, has not created the space to speak about issues of race, racial discrimination and bias, and racism.

There has been inconsistent quantitative census data with regard to racialized individuals more broadly and people of African descent more specifically. Although Archives Canada shows records of the Census of Canada as early as 1842 that counted Black individuals, how this has been captured varied widely before 1921. Even after the formation of Statistics Canada in 1971, the framing and definition of "Black" varied from census to census, making it difficult to find comparable statistics in recent years.

Statistics Canada's rationale for making changes to the ethnic groups and categories captured in each census is to reflect immigration patterns. However, these changes have made finding consistent data on Black populations and making comparisons across the years very difficult, which Statistics Canada has acknowledged has affected the comparability of data for "Black." As stated in the *Census Dictionary*, "the comparability of ethnic origin data has been affected by several factors including changes in the question wording, format, examples, instructions and data processing, as well as by the social environment[5] at the time of the census."[6] For example, in 1981 respondents could indicate they were of "Black ethnic origin," but Black was not listed on the census questionnaire until 1986, upon recommendation.[7] Since then there have been constant changes to how it has been captured.

PARTNERSHIPS FOR CHANGE

Blacks have faced and continue to face racism, which has negatively affected their experiences and limited their presence in Canada. Anti-Black racism in planning, land use, and real estate is perpetuated through the historical and contemporary segregation, displacement, and dispersion of Black communities, the erasure of Black spatial histories, and ongoing policies producing and reproducing spatial inequities. This has been entrenched through racial zoning to create racially segregated areas, racially informed comprehensive planning, restrictive covenants, segregation of schools, public services, limitations in movement through curfews and barring against use of spaces, and urban renewal.

Against this backdrop, initially ULI Toronto sought to identify how anti-Black racism has impacted access to housing and ability to establish a permanent geographic presence by

- Defining and describing the problems/challenges;

- Developing and identifying holistic possible solutions, including, but not limited to, housing and infrastructure policy, real estate and financial practices, zoning rules; and

- Working to implement those solutions across political, industry, and community domains.

PROJECT APPROACH

The ULI Toronto research team developed an initial research agenda, which was then presented to a Leadership Committee for feedback. The Leadership Committee was composed of representatives from the real estate community; the public sector; the private sector and community organizations with expertise in urban planning, research/data analysis, social equity, and racial justice. From the Leadership Committee, the team established two primary subcommittees, a quantitative committee that focused on statistics and data analysis and a qualitative committee that played a key role in advising on the community engagement process and providing feedback on the language and terminology. Discussions about a community engagement committee took place, but the timing of the community workshops made it difficult to involve this committee in a timely manner, and the research team carried out the engagements.

The team's approach included use of both quantitative and qualitative data. For quantitative data, the team has drawn from Statistics Canada, archival records of historical census data, or other quantitative data from other sources.
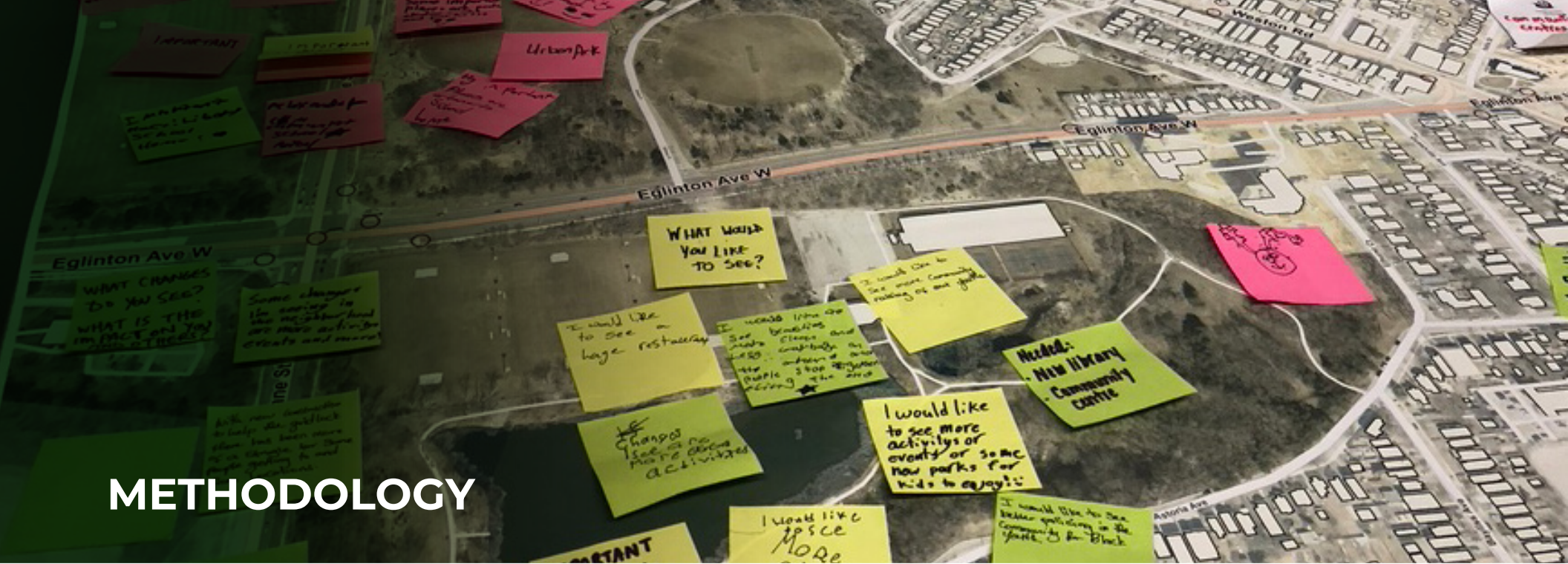
METHODOLOGY

The ULI Toronto research team sought to understand the larger context and then focus on several neighborhoods to gain insight into the specific dynamics. Recognizing the importance of learning about the historical to help better understand the present context, the team's understanding of the present context started with a broad historical outlook before focusing on the local context.

Data Gathering

To explore this, the research team sought to gather information on historical and contemporary data on the Black population including the following: Black settlement, historical census data on race to understand the presence of Black people, and locations of where Black people live now.

- At the regional level, to demonstrate the early presence of Blacks
  - Historical data on race
  - Waves of Black settlement

- At the municipal level, to understand the distribution of Blacks
  - Black population distribution
  - Drivers of displacement
  - Housing tenure data on Black households

- At the neighborhood level, to understand local dynamics that may affect displacement and the experiences and perspectives of Black individuals
  - Development applications
  - Community counter-mapping workshops

The qualitative data committee led the development of a "drivers of displacement" list, which identified different factors that may cause or contribute to Black displacement. This list was used alongside the neighborhood selection chart to identify potential neighborhoods of focus. The criteria used to identify neighborhoods included geography, timing, reason and trends of settlement, density of Black population, demographic trends, type of district, and community/religious institutions. Drivers of displacement include environmental pollution, racial violence, jobs and economic opportunities, planning laws and policies (including revitalization and transit-oriented development), housing and real estate market.

The research team then prioritized neighborhoods within the city of Toronto that had a high Black population density, those which were experiencing significant development or revitalization, those located in a transit-oriented development area, and those that were already receiving attention and participating in conversations of displacement because of development pressures and transit investment.

Once the research team had identified potential neighborhoods of focus, it began to reach out to individuals and organizations who lived and/or worked in these locations to talk with them about the ULI Toronto project. The intent was to identify a few organizations who would be interested in partnering with us to cohost workshops with Black residents in their neighborhoods. After discussions with individuals connected to three locations—Jane and Finch, Little Jamaica, and Mount Dennis—the research team decided to focus on one neighborhood, Mount Dennis.

Developing a Tool for Counter-Mapping Workshops

Another strategy used to fill the gaps present in Canadian data sets is community-driven participatory data collection in the form of counter-mapping workshops. Counter mapping is a cartographic practice that challenges dominant narratives by rethinking how to map in a way that gives agency to different perspectives of space. It also allows marginalized voices to communicate the stories and reveal the histories of their land. Gathering and presenting the knowledge and lived experiences of marginalized people as legitimate and valuable research redirects the power around place-based knowledge back to community.

At the counter-mapping workshops, the team presented community groups with a map of the neighborhood and asked the following questions to prompt them to engage and tell their stories about their experiences:

1. What are some places in your neighborhood that you consider a pillar of your community?

2. What are some major changes that you remember happening in your neighborhood? (positive or negative)

3. How have these changes impacted your daily routines, work, or life?

Building a Local Partnership

In addition to other characteristics, Mount Dennis was selected because of the presence of a local nonprofit community-based organization, Learning Enrichment Foundation (LEF), that was leading the development of a housing project and had a commitment to engage with the community in the development process. Moreover, one of the team members had been working closely with this organization, which gave greater insight into LEF's work and provided a foundation of trust. Trust building was a key step in the neighborhood engagement. This was achieved through work with LEF, which has been building trust in the community by engaging the local community over a two-year period in its development application for a new housing building.

After selecting a neighborhood of focus, Mount Dennis, and confirming a local partner, LEF, the team's next step was to develop a joint agenda for engaging the local Black community. The purpose of this engagement agenda was to develop an understanding of the neighborhood from the perspective of Black residents who lived, worked, or frequented Mount Dennis.

The Mount Dennis project team looking over a proposed plan for the area.

Implementing a Joint Black Community Engagement Agenda

The joint community engagement agenda involved three types of activities that were theme based or geographically focused. The theme-based activities involved counter-mapping workshops with organizations working in the community and those focused on serving the Black population and concerned with the local impacts of anti-Black racism. The geographic-focused sessions included counter-mapping workshops with local organizations or initiatives and counter-mapping workshops for the wider community, with an emphasis on engaging Black individuals.

The research team worked with LEF to reach out to organizations in LEF's network and invite them to participate in a counter-mapping workshop. Team members also leveraged personal and professional networks of people who lived, worked, or frequented Mount Dennis to invite them to a "test" workshop. The team then worked with LEF to cohost a workshop at LEF's facility, and LEF introduced the team to a local network. The research team reached out directly to local Black-serving organizations or initiatives in or near to Mount Dennis and a local business, inviting them to cohost workshops.

For outreach, the team primarily relied on email, but once it had confirmed a workshop cohost, the team developed outreach materials with a map of Mount Dennis (in poster format) that could be used to promote the workshop, either by printing or posting on social media. The research team also promoted public workshops on its social media and through Black Planning Project.

Virtual sessions were held over Zoom and a Miro Board provided a virtual map of the neighborhood and was used to capture feedback from participants (see Counter Mapping Workshop Results). In-person sessions used a printout of the Miro Board maps and different colors of sticky notes to capture participant feedback.

This was the most dynamic part of the project, involving the seven following community-mapping workshops, two with organizations and five open to the public in partnership with a local organizational partner and locally based initiatives:

1. Friends and Family workshop (virtual), October 18, 2022

2. Workshops with local organizations

   a. Organizations or city of Toronto divisions/offices focused on serving Black populations and addressing anti-Black racism (virtual)

   b. Neighborhood Cluster of Organizations (virtual)

3. Individual local organizations or initiatives

   a. Horn of Africa Seniors Association of Ontario Annual General Meeting (in person), December 14, 2022

   b. UrbanArts WinterFest (in person), December 16, 2022

4. Workshops open to the wider public

   a. Supercoffee counter-mapping workshops[8] (in person), November 16, 2022

   b. LEF counter-mapping workshop (in person), November 16, 2022
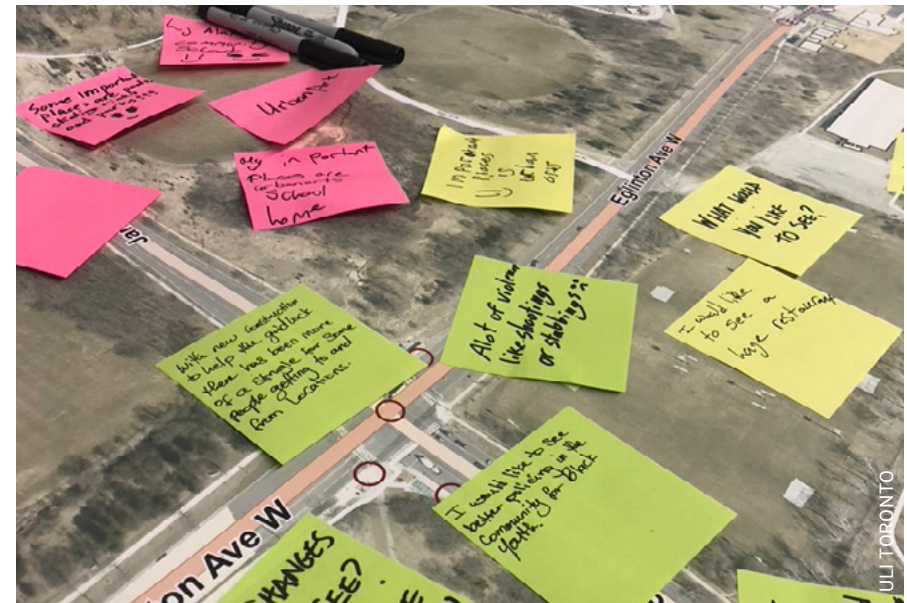
UrbanArts counter-mapping session.


Supercoffee counter-mapping session.

Creating a Virtual Presence

The team created a digital map as another means to engage with the community, particularly younger individuals or who did not have the capacity or flexibility to attend sessions in person.

This map was built on the foundation established by Bria Hamilton, a recent master's graduate whose research focused on neighborhood mapping in Jane and Finch. She developed a GIS-based map, Mount Dennis Counter Cartographies, that could be used virtually or in person to collect demographic

data and capture ideas from research participants. Hamilton was hired to create a similar map for the Mount Dennis neighborhood that closely resembled the counter-mapping visuals and sought to capture demographic information, length of connection to the neighborhood, housing status, perceptions, and observations about the community in line with the counter-mapping workshop.
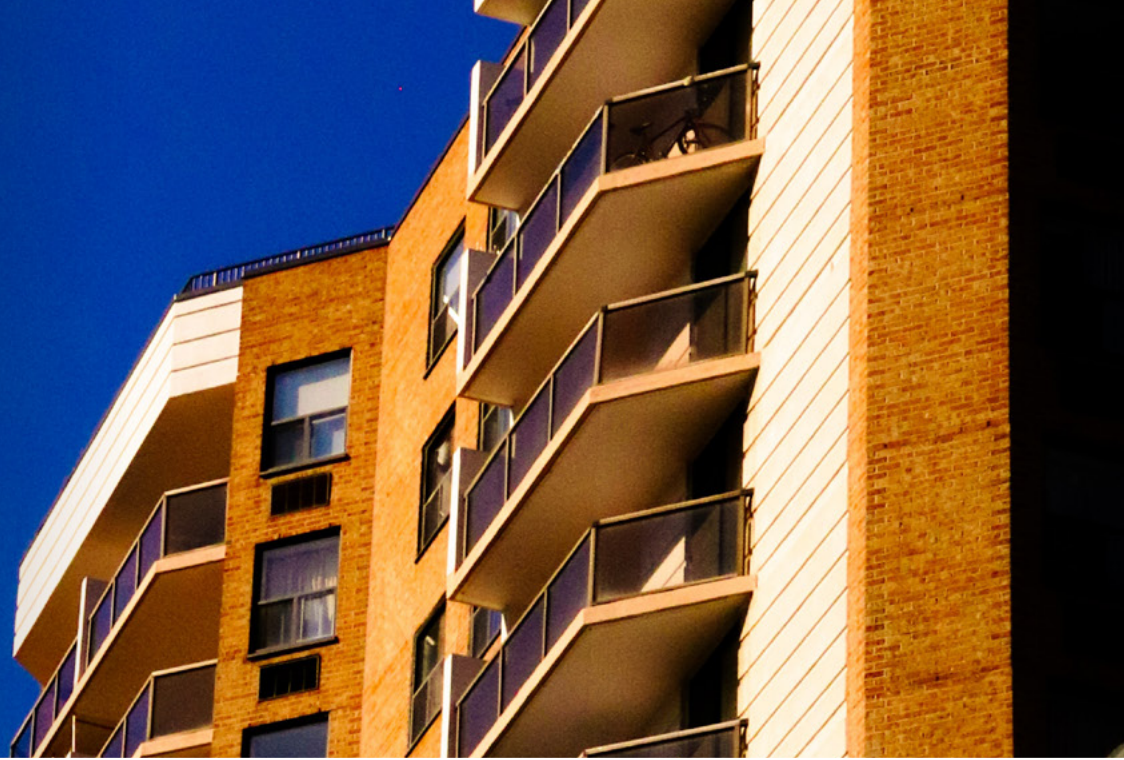
Although the digital map was not used in the community counter-mapping workshops, the intent is that it will remain a key output of this project and available for future use by community members and organizations in Mount Dennis.
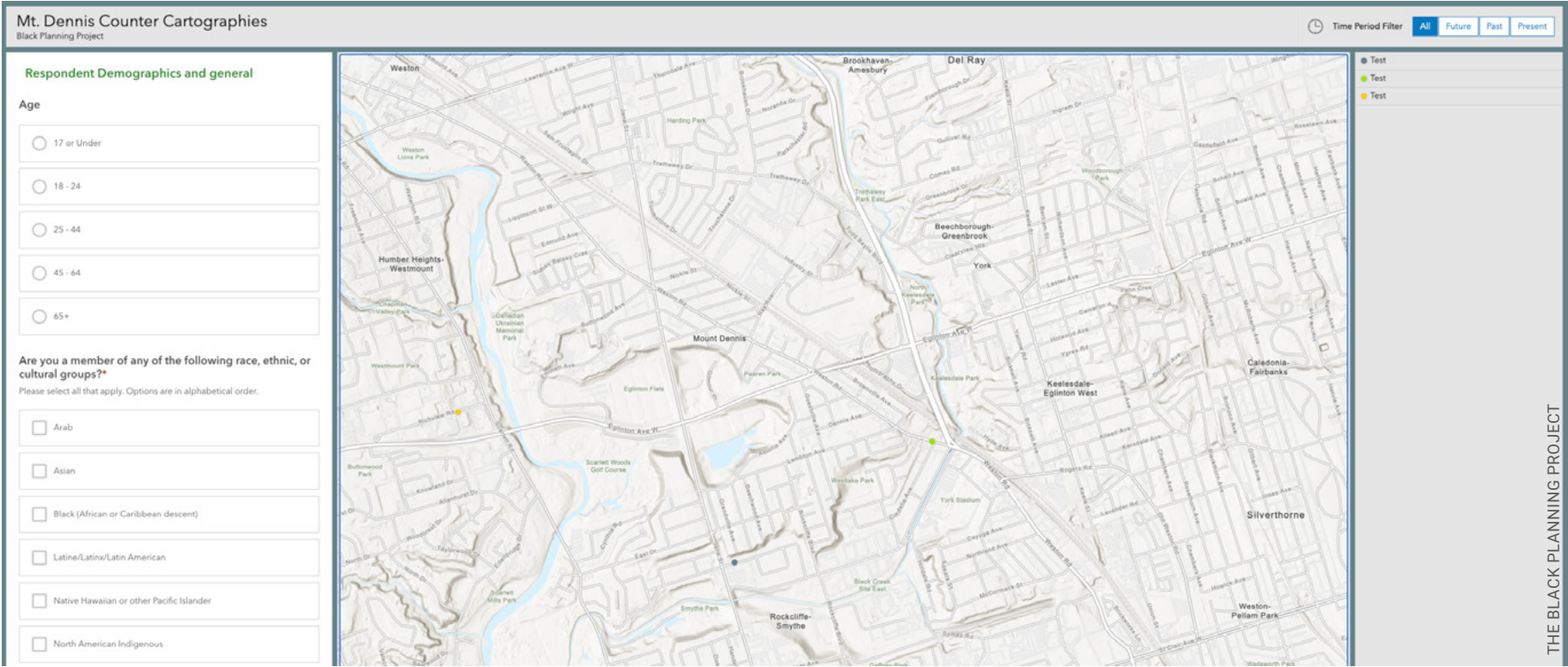
Mount Dennis counter cartographies.

ACTION AGENDA FOR CHANGE IN REAL ESTATE

The following sections outline a series of practice and policy recommendations to redress racial inequities and promote positive outcomes for Black Torontonians who live in transit-oriented development and gentrifying geographies. These actions can be applied more broadly to racialized and other marginalized communities experiencing similar challenges.

Changes in Real Estate Practice

Internal to Real Estate Practice

1. Learn about the community at the onset of the development process to understand people and the community.

   a. Learn through background research. This can include reviewing demographic statistical research, reading reports issued by local organizations and governments.

   b. Learn through becoming involved with the community.

2. Engage more robustly with and build relationships in the community to develop an understanding of key local priorities, interests, challenges, and desires.

a. Go into the community and spend time participating in local events, meetings, and initiatives.

b. Build relationships with people who live in the community through participating in events and hosting engagement activities to learn about local interests, challenges, and desires.

c. Build with community-based or nonprofit organizations and community groups, both formal and informal, institutions, government services, and programs active in the community.

3. Build partnerships with community-based organizations, nonprofit organizations, and community groups, both formal and informal.

   a. Recognize existing nonprofit and community-based forums, such as Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy Neighbourhood Clusters, as a point of contact for early consultation.

4. Share decision-making with local organizations and people who live in the community.

   a. Share information about the development in the early phase.

   b. Create space for resident voices throughout the development process.

   c. Use community-based tools and processes such as counter mapping and community-based design to increase the input from residents who could be affected.

5. Invest in community, in coordination with local partners, according to community priorities.

   a. Support events and engagement activities throughout the development process.

   b. Allocate funds for community-led activities.

   c. Make buildings available for community groups and organizations to use while waiting to redevelop, instead of boarding them up.

   d. Create local hiring programs for youth and other priority groups connected to the development.

   e. Develop spaces that respond to priorities identified through engagement and decision-making.

6. Identify and showcase precedent examples of how Canadian developers integrate community development and center community in real estate development.

7. Identify and showcase precedent examples of how Canadian developers and community organizations can work together.

External to Real Estate Practice

8. Coordinate with local nonprofits to create opportunities for nonprofits and developers to identify, share and create racially inclusive real estate practices.

9. Bring together nonprofits and developers to integrate more racially inclusive processes and those that are more responsive to and center community needs and interests.

10. Build capacity of the nonprofit/community sector to participate in and lead real estate development.

11. Support nonprofits to work with the community to inform inclusive development.

Changes in Policy

Municipal

12. Revamp City Planning to operate on a neighborhood basis rather than a project basis.

13. Coordinate across city divisions, with leadership of the city of Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism unit, to move forward development applications with a racial equity lens, focusing on inclusion and community engagement.

14. Build on the Little Jamaica Cultural Districts Program, modifying as required.

15. Modify Development Planning instruments.
    a. Revise secondary plan to include a requirement for a Community Development Plan and an anti-displacement strategy.
    a. Expand and modify the neighborhood-based/revitalization planning framework used for Toronto Community Housing Corporation public housing revitalization.

16. Scale up seniors single-family-home supports and incentives.

17. Allocate publicly owned lands for land trusts (collective and non-market ownership) and affordable housing to Black-led housing organizations.

18. Develop an anti-displacement strategy, targeted to Black households, with leadership of the city of Toronto's Confronting Anti-Black Racism unit.

Provincial

19. Identify equitable transit planning measures and create a framework for equitable transit planning.

20. Support the Right to Housing for all alongside the municipal and federal government.

21. Develop a new Affordable Housing Fund that is geographically targeted.

Federal

22. Collect race-based data on a consistent basis.

23. Review historical race-based data and create consistency with data currently available.

24. Develop a new Affordable Housing Fund that is geographically targeted.

Coordination across All Levels of Government

25. Create a framework for equitable transit planning.

26. Retain and preserve existing rental housing.

27. Develop a new Affordable Housing Fund that is geographically targeted in coordination with the Community Housing Transformation Centre.

Aerial view of Toronto skyline.

CONCLUSION AND NEXT STEPS

Summary of Outcomes

In this project, to understand the present-day experiences of Black individuals and families living in the city of Toronto, the ULI Toronto research team used a community-based approach. How are planning and real estate development decisions affecting residents? What are those experiences, and how do residents perceive planning and real estate development changes? The team's initial intent was to take a broad approach and engage with several communities, but early on the team realized that it needed to take a more in-depth approach to truly understand the neighborhood dynamics and decided to focus on one neighborhood.

The team was successful in building a local partnership with a local organization and collaborating with two other groups and a business to carry out workshops in the community. As the project developed, the team included the following:

- Potential drivers of Black displacement list;

- A Black settlement selection chart to assist in selecting a neighborhood;

- Community counter-mapping workshops; and

- ArcGIS counter-mapping website.

Results

The six community counter-mapping workshops resulted in learning from a wide range of people in the Mount Dennis community, from children to adults to seniors, and from organizations and institutions that work in the community or serving Black populations and addressing anti-Black racism. From them the team learned about their experiences, what was important to them, and what they had concerns about and what they dreamt about for their neighborhood.

Participants identified important spaces in Mount Dennis, including places of worship, community service organizations, businesses, and outdoor spaces. They articulated a desire to be more informed of and involved in real estate development processes and the opportunity to share their visions of what benefits could be actualized by changes brought about through real estate development as well as their needs. "Talk with us," they insisted. "Meet with us, and learn about our needs and desires and share information with us about development plans." They shared their visions of what benefits could stem from more investment in parks and skate parks for kids, new community spaces, as well as affordable spaces—for living (residential) and for making a living (businesses). In short, the team heard: "Take time to talk with us and get to know us and understand what we need, what we desire, and work with us to create benefits for our community."

Learnings

Overall, the team's key learnings about racially inclusive development are that it requires the following:

- Strong community engagement—targeted to involve the populations most affected by development and at risk of displacement—in ways that are equitable and inclusive;

- Measures for anti-displacement to allow people and businesses to stay and thrive in place in the community through preservation of and creation of affordable residential, commercial, and retail spaces;

- Building local partnerships with organizations, government, and businesses;

- Coordination within government among divisions, across different jurisdictions, and between developer and local organizations active in the community working on social and economic development;

- Strategic advice from experts with racial equity, inclusive process design, and community engagement experience and expertise, particularly in a real estate development context; and

- Sufficient time to build relationships and learn about the community.

Next Steps

ULI Toronto's next steps involve presenting the approach, method, and results to several audiences, including our community partner, LEF, and each of the cohost organizations, either through a joint community event or individual meetings.

Following the report to the community, ULI Toronto will be hosting an initial workshop with ULI members to share these results and receive feedback and will use this to provide a tour at the ULI Spring meeting.

ULI Toronto will also provide a presentation to a global Canadian planning firm and a local foundation to identify ways to move forward on recommendations.

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1. The term "Black" encompasses this diversity and is used to refer to individuals of African descent, Canadians of African descent, African Black Caribbean, and/or African Canadians. This understanding of Black is drawn from the self-determined terminology defined through the creation of the 2019 *Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism* (City of Toronto, 2019).

2. Statistics Canada, 2020.

3. Ontario Real Estate Association, 2022.

4. Mohamud, J., 2020.

5. The *Census Dictionary* states "the measurement of ethnicity is affected by changes in the social environment in which the questions are asked, and changes in the respondent's understanding or views about the topic. Awareness of family background or length of time since immigration can affect responses to the ethnic origin question, as can confusion with other concepts such as citizenship, nationality, language or cultural identity. Ethnic origin response patterns may be influenced by both social and personal considerations. The choices that respondents make can affect ethnic origin counts and have an impact on the comparability of data between censuses." (Statistics Canada, 2003, p.17).

6. Statistics Canada, 2003, p.16.

7. The Special Committee on the Participation of Visible Minorities in Canadian Society's *Equality Now!* report and the Abella Commission of Inquiry on Equality in Employment made this recommendation in 1986. (Statistics Canada, 2003).

8. Supercoffee is a local, independently owned coffee shop. Although it is not Black-owned, it was recommended by several participants of the Friends and Family workshop and recognized by many community members as a "community hub and gathering place" and an important third place that is welcoming to all community members.

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