

# Webinar

## ULI Toronto: Past Meets Future: How Black History is Energizing the Future of City Building in Toronto

Date: January 31, 2024

00:00:06 --> 00:00:07: Hello everyone.

00:00:07 --> 00:00:10: Good afternoon and welcome to today's program.

00:00:10 --> 00:00:13: As persons start to trickle in, we're going to play

00:00:13 --> 00:00:14: our membership video.

00:00:30 --> 00:00:34: Having the ability to exchange stories, exchange ideas and

00:00:34 --> 00:00:38: really sort of find mentors in the industry via ULI

00:00:38 --> 00:00:40: was a huge plus for me.

00:00:40 --> 00:00:42: So one of the things that I first started doing

00:00:42 --> 00:00:44: with ULI in terms of active engagement was with their

00:00:44 --> 00:00:45: urban plan program.

00:00:46 --> 00:00:49: And for me, that's they basically go into schools and

00:00:49 --> 00:00:51: work with young people in junior high and high school.

00:00:51 --> 00:00:54: One of the great things about ULI is that it

00:00:54 --> 00:00:57: provides a great platform for public sector and private sector

00:00:57 --> 00:00:58: interests to meet.

00:00:58 --> 00:01:01: But it's an opportunity to connect with a variety of

00:01:01 --> 00:01:03: people from a variety of different disciplines.

00:01:03 --> 00:01:05: So I work in real estate development, but it's useful

00:01:06 --> 00:01:08: and important to get to know people in other aspects

00:01:08 --> 00:01:09: of city building.

00:01:09 --> 00:01:10: Opportunity.

00:01:10 --> 00:01:11: Get recognition.

00:01:11 --> 00:01:14: The opportunity to participate in my community and give back

00:01:15 --> 00:01:17: in a way all of those things have enhanced my

00:01:18 --> 00:01:21: career and I think enhance what I'm able to offer

00:01:21 --> 00:01:22: the industry and.

00:01:22 --> 00:01:25: I'm really excited to be part of ULI Toronto and

00:01:25 --> 00:01:30: really advancing my leadership skills and fostering my connections and

00:01:30 --> 00:01:34: really just advancing my mission for city building.

00:01:34 --> 00:01:37: As a young professional new to the province and I

00:01:37 --> 00:01:41: found ULI and other kind of similar organizations really helpful

00:01:41 --> 00:01:44: in terms of no bridging connections and networking.

00:01:44 --> 00:01:45: It's an opportunity.

00:01:45 --> 00:01:49: To to connect with people who have questions, who are,

00:01:49 --> 00:01:53: who have not quite figured out how to do things.

00:01:53 --> 00:01:55: And I liked how hands on you could be as

00:01:55 --> 00:01:55: a member.

00:01:55 --> 00:01:57: You could get involved immediately.

00:01:57 --> 00:01:58: You can volunteer.

00:01:58 --> 00:02:02: For me, ULI is one of the greatest organizations in

00:02:02 --> 00:02:05: the world and certainly in Toronto, to connect, to learn

00:02:05 --> 00:02:09: and to become a part of an organization that really

00:02:09 --> 00:02:11: values its people and its members.

00:02:14 --> 00:02:18: ULI Toronto's membership video is your invitation to get more

00:02:18 --> 00:02:22: involved with one of the world's largest and most active

00:02:22 --> 00:02:23: ULI Chapter.

00:02:23 --> 00:02:25: A few notes to our ULI members or those who

00:02:26 --> 00:02:27: are are not yet members.

00:02:27 --> 00:02:31: You can access Uli's network through the Global Membership Directory.

00:02:31 --> 00:02:35: There are exciting engagement opportunities on local ULI committees.

00:02:35 --> 00:02:39: Through Navigator and our annual window to join our committees.

00:02:39 --> 00:02:43: You can access upcoming and past event attendee list and

00:02:43 --> 00:02:47: you can access unbelievable wealth of local and global ULI

00:02:47 --> 00:02:51: resources, archives, case studies, past webinars and more through the

00:02:51 --> 00:02:52: Knowledge Finder.

00:02:52 --> 00:02:55: We will provide links on that in our chat and

00:02:55 --> 00:02:57: for you to learn more about the benefits.

00:02:58 --> 00:02:59: Once again.

00:02:59 --> 00:03:00: Good afternoon everyone.

00:03:00 --> 00:03:03: My name is Crystal Gones, Cibron Manager, ULI Toronto.

00:03:03 --> 00:03:07: I'm pleased to be hosting today's session in partnership with

00:03:07 --> 00:03:09: Beta Past Me's Future.

00:03:09 --> 00:03:12: How Black History is energizing the future of city building

00:03:12 --> 00:03:13: in Toronto.

00:03:13 --> 00:03:16: Before we get into this, as always we will begin  
00:03:16 --> 00:03:17: with the land acknowledgement.  
00:03:18 --> 00:03:22: As a Toronto region based organization, we acknowledge the  
land  
00:03:22 --> 00:03:26: we are meeting on virtually is the traditional territory of  
00:03:26 --> 00:03:31: many nations including the Mississaugas of the Credit, the  
Nashua,  
00:03:31 --> 00:03:35: Nashuabit, the Chippewa, the Huttness, Shoni and Wendad  
people and  
00:03:35 --> 00:03:38: is now meant home to many diverse First Nation Inuit  
00:03:39 --> 00:03:40: and Matty people.  
00:03:40 --> 00:03:43: We also acknowledge that Toronto is covered by Treaty 13  
00:03:43 --> 00:03:45: with the Mississaugas of the credit.  
00:03:46 --> 00:03:47: We are all treaty people.  
00:03:47 --> 00:03:50: Many of us have come here as settlers, immigrants and  
00:03:50 --> 00:03:51: newcomers.  
00:03:51 --> 00:03:54: In this generation or generations past.  
00:03:54 --> 00:03:59: Uli stands in solidarity with Indigenous communities,  
demanding action and  
00:03:59 --> 00:04:03: accountability for the ongoing legacy of the residential school  
system.  
00:04:04 --> 00:04:07: We'd like to also acknowledge and honour those who came  
00:04:07 --> 00:04:11: here involuntarily, particularly descendants of those who  
were brought here  
00:04:11 --> 00:04:12: through enslavement.  
00:04:12 --> 00:04:16: To better understand the meaning behind this at Land  
Acknowledgement,  
00:04:16 --> 00:04:19: ULI recommends 4 programs that you can find on our  
00:04:19 --> 00:04:21: ULI Toronto website page.  
00:04:21 --> 00:04:23: We have also included a link in the chat to  
00:04:23 --> 00:04:25: some of our Black History resources.  
00:04:25 --> 00:04:28: These resources provide a wealth of information.  
00:04:28 --> 00:04:29: Please check it out.  
00:04:30 --> 00:04:31: A couple of additional notes.  
00:04:32 --> 00:04:35: In March, Ulai Toronto will be convening a 2 1/2  
00:04:35 --> 00:04:40: day technical advisory panel for the City of Toronto's  
Confronting  
00:04:40 --> 00:04:46: Anti Black Black Racism CBACABR unit, generously  
supported financially by  
00:04:46 --> 00:04:47: CP Planning.  
00:04:47 --> 00:04:50: A public report will be made later this spring, and  
00:04:50 --> 00:04:54: this spring our Truth and Reconciliation Industry cohort will  
wrap  
00:04:55 --> 00:04:56: up our initial workshop series.

00:04:57 --> 00:04:59: And we'll be announcing next steps this spring.  
00:04:59 --> 00:05:02: Stay tuned for opportunities to get involved.  
00:05:03 --> 00:05:05: Today's event and all of the ULI programming would not  
00:05:05 --> 00:05:08: be possible without the support of our annual sponsors.  
00:05:09 --> 00:05:11: I would like to thank all our sponsors for their  
00:05:11 --> 00:05:11: support.  
00:05:12 --> 00:05:15: Now more than ever, ULI to Honor relies on the  
00:05:15 --> 00:05:18: support of sponsors to put on high quality programs and  
00:05:18 --> 00:05:21: to drive our mission to shape the future of the  
00:05:21 --> 00:05:25: built environment for transformative impact in communities  
worldwide.  
00:05:26 --> 00:05:28: To all of our sponsors, we say thank you.  
00:05:29 --> 00:05:33: We have today opened up the chat so participants can  
00:05:33 --> 00:05:37: engage in the conversation and be actively involved in the  
00:05:37 --> 00:05:38: chat.  
00:05:38 --> 00:05:40: So feel free to put your comments or start a  
00:05:40 --> 00:05:41: discussion in the chat.  
00:05:42 --> 00:05:44: We're happy to have that as an add on today.  
00:05:44 --> 00:05:48: It's now my pleasure to invite Camille Mitchell, Associate  
from  
00:05:48 --> 00:05:51: SVN Architects and Planners and who is also the Chair  
00:05:51 --> 00:05:53: of Beta who will be our moderator today.  
00:05:53 --> 00:05:56: Welcome Camille, and please feel free to take it away  
00:05:56 --> 00:05:56: all.  
00:05:57 --> 00:05:57: Right.  
00:05:57 --> 00:05:58: Thank you, Crystal.  
00:05:59 --> 00:06:02: So again, my name is Camille Mitchell, an architect with  
00:06:02 --> 00:06:05: SVN Architects and Planners and also the current chair of  
00:06:05 --> 00:06:08: Black Architects and Interior Designers Association.  
00:06:08 --> 00:06:10: So the current motto of beta is to build up  
00:06:11 --> 00:06:12: black features and design.  
00:06:12 --> 00:06:16: And our and our currently our organization stands on its  
00:06:16 --> 00:06:20: pillars of advocacy, mentorship, networking and outreach.  
00:06:20 --> 00:06:24: And this is done through a series of of innovations  
00:06:25 --> 00:06:29: and innovations and programs that are Co led by design  
00:06:29 --> 00:06:35: professionals, colleagues, colleges, universities and  
members of the community.  
00:06:36 --> 00:06:39: And our current interest is to educate, inspire members of  
00:06:39 --> 00:06:42: the black community to help build a pipeline for the  
00:06:42 --> 00:06:45: next generation of Black professional designers.  
00:06:45 --> 00:06:48: And again, thank you you all I for reaching out  
00:06:48 --> 00:06:51: to beta to be to host this panel and discussion  
00:06:51 --> 00:06:54: and collaboration between the two organizations.

00:06:56 --> 00:06:59: So today there's a flourishing flourishing of black history study

00:07:00 --> 00:07:04: and discovery in Ontario is revealing deep and systematic challenges

00:07:04 --> 00:07:08: that have impacted generations of black communities in Toronto and

00:07:08 --> 00:07:09: across Southern Ontario.

00:07:10 --> 00:07:14: From this understanding is emerging a broad spectrum of approaches

00:07:14 --> 00:07:18: and innovations in city building driven by black professionals and

00:07:18 --> 00:07:22: the professional real estate and development community.

00:07:22 --> 00:07:24: So at this point, I'm going to turn to each

00:07:25 --> 00:07:28: of our panelists individually and give them a time to

00:07:28 --> 00:07:32: introduce themselves and just talk about how they're approaching their

00:07:32 --> 00:07:33: experience.

00:07:34 --> 00:07:39: So first I would like to bring Doctor Michael Ochi, Architect with ERE Architects.

00:07:39 --> 00:07:42: Hello Michael.

00:07:42 --> 00:07:42: Hello Michael.

00:07:45 --> 00:07:46: We can't hear you, Michael.

00:07:49 --> 00:07:50: Hi, Camille.

00:07:51 --> 00:07:53: It's a great privilege to be here today.

00:07:55 --> 00:08:00: So I'm an heritage architect at ERA Architects, and for those who perhaps aren't familiar with ERA, we're a multidisciplinary

00:08:00 --> 00:08:07: firm and we are very much involved with sort of making assessments of heritage value and understand what is significant

00:08:07 --> 00:08:11: and why.

00:08:11 --> 00:08:18: So we're not simply just tasked with preserving buildings, but understanding how they can be understood in the contemporary context.

00:08:18 --> 00:08:19: And so a lot of our work involves not just

00:08:19 --> 00:08:23: kind of like the the fixing and repair of buildings, but it's it's largely steeped in making them relevant for the for the communities of today.

00:08:23 --> 00:08:28: Can you tell us how briefly how ERA got involved with or the overview of interpreting Slavery, Trauma and Heritage

00:08:28 --> 00:08:32: Research initiative at ERA Architects?

00:08:32 --> 00:08:36: Yeah, absolutely.

00:08:36 --> 00:08:41: So it really stemmed from sort of a a research

00:08:41 --> 00:08:43: initiative that was having an elsewhere that was looking at

00:08:45 --> 00:08:49:

00:08:49 --> 00:08:54:

00:08:54 --> 00:08:57:

00:08:58 --> 00:08:59:

00:08:59 --> 00:09:03:

00:09:03 --> 00:09:09:

00:09:09 --> 00:09:15: the connection between country the the creation of country homes

00:09:15 --> 00:09:16: and and slavery.

00:09:16 --> 00:09:21: So the wealth that was accumulated by slavery was was

00:09:22 --> 00:09:27: used to create these like elaborate homes which you know

00:09:27 --> 00:09:32: are very much seen as the embodiment of taste and

00:09:32 --> 00:09:37: the sort of values and principles of the day.

00:09:38 --> 00:09:41: But that connection back to the source of wealth isn't

00:09:41 --> 00:09:44: isn't necessarily known and in in the age that we

00:09:45 --> 00:09:48: live in now that that that those types of connections

00:09:48 --> 00:09:51: are are really looked at through a critical lens.

00:09:52 --> 00:09:56: And so we started to sort of explore and have

00:09:56 --> 00:10:01: conversations within our office how we can better understand those

00:10:01 --> 00:10:04: connections within the Canadian context.

00:10:04 --> 00:10:09: And we're very much interested in how this history can

00:10:09 --> 00:10:13: be become more of a shared heritage more broadly.

00:10:14 --> 00:10:17: And but at the same time we're we we're also

00:10:17 --> 00:10:22: very much aware of the the level of sensitivity around

00:10:22 --> 00:10:27: this this history and how it particularly impacts those who

00:10:27 --> 00:10:32: have experienced trauma in the past which sort of connects

00:10:32 --> 00:10:35: to the trauma of of slavery.

00:10:37 --> 00:10:41: So we're very much interested in in these connections between,

00:10:41 --> 00:10:44: you know, this is the specifics of of this thread

00:10:44 --> 00:10:48: of history and and its relevance to contemporary society.

00:10:49 --> 00:10:52: OK, so and why is it important to distinguish between

00:10:52 --> 00:10:56: focusing on successes versus just acknowledging how a nation failed

00:10:56 --> 00:10:59: to provide justice or marking experience trauma?

00:11:00 --> 00:11:00: Yeah.

00:11:00 --> 00:11:04: So it really gives us a fuller understanding of of

00:11:04 --> 00:11:08: history and allows us to really come to terms with

00:11:08 --> 00:11:11: it in, in a way that's relevant today.

00:11:12 --> 00:11:18: It gives us different perspectives that ultimately help to serve

00:11:18 --> 00:11:21: the the, the today's society.

00:11:21 --> 00:11:26: And it also allows us to explore these these parallel

00:11:26 --> 00:11:31: stories, let's say, you know, between what happened in in

00:11:32 --> 00:11:36: Canada and the United States of course, and then the

00:11:36 --> 00:11:41: the Caribbean and and the African and European context.

00:11:42 --> 00:11:46: So it really speaks to the diversity of of of

00:11:47 --> 00:11:48: of today's Toronto.

00:11:49 --> 00:11:49: Really.

00:11:50 --> 00:11:50: OK.

00:11:50 --> 00:11:51: Thank you, Michael.

00:11:51 --> 00:11:53: I'd like to turn now to Robert Walter Joseph, a

00:11:53 --> 00:11:56: senior planner with Gladly Planning and Associates.

00:11:56 --> 00:11:58: Robert, you want to tell us about yourself?

00:11:58 --> 00:11:59: Absolutely, yeah.

00:11:59 --> 00:12:03: So I am actually now a principal with Gladly Planning

00:12:03 --> 00:12:07: Associates and Gladly Planning Associates is a full service

00:12:07 --> 00:12:07: firm.

00:12:07 --> 00:12:11: We do large scale area plans as well as work

00:12:12 --> 00:12:17: for for profit, non profit housing as well as other

00:12:17 --> 00:12:18: developers.

00:12:19 --> 00:12:23: Yeah, this is, yeah, this is yeah the work that

00:12:23 --> 00:12:24: we do.

00:12:24 --> 00:12:24: Sorry.

00:12:26 --> 00:12:29: OK, Mount Dennis is a neighbourhood in Toronto that is

00:12:29 --> 00:12:32: poised for growth with the soon to be open Eglinton

00:12:32 --> 00:12:35: Crosstown Subway with which is sure to help revitalize this

00:12:35 --> 00:12:35: area.

00:12:36 --> 00:12:40: This area is a class example of Toronto's diversity and

00:12:40 --> 00:12:45: a large a large landing spot for immigrants, especially of

00:12:45 --> 00:12:48: Caribbean and African descent.

00:12:48 --> 00:12:50: How do you get involved with the Mount Dennis area?

00:12:51 --> 00:12:55: Yeah, the Mount Dennis neighbourhood is actually I think

00:12:55 --> 00:12:58: one

00:12:58 --> 00:13:00: that is representative of a lot of changes that are

00:13:00 --> 00:13:04: happening in Toronto.

00:13:04 --> 00:13:09: The Eglinton Crosstown on Mount Dennis station, you know

00:13:09 --> 00:13:10: our

00:13:11 --> 00:13:15: representative of the rapid transit expansion that we're

00:13:15 --> 00:13:19: seeing all

00:13:19 --> 00:13:24: over the city.

00:13:24 --> 00:13:29: My involvement and and the involvement of my firm in

00:13:29 --> 00:13:32: in Mount Dennis really began in about 2021 in our

00:13:32 --> 00:13:35: work with the Learning Enrichment Foundation and we began

00:13:35 --> 00:13:38: working

00:13:38 --> 00:13:41: with LEF in their mixed-use affordable housing development

00:13:41 --> 00:13:44: on Weston

00:13:44 --> 00:13:47: Rd.

00:13:47 --> 00:13:50: And as part of that project, it was, you know,

00:13:50 --> 00:13:53: very collaborative with the community.

00:13:53 --> 00:13:56: There was a lot of consultation that took place well

00:13:38 --> 00:13:41: before any any sort of vision for the development happened.

00:13:41 --> 00:13:44: And so as part of that, we began hearing from

00:13:44 --> 00:13:47: the community in terms of some of the concerns that

00:13:47 --> 00:13:48: the community had.

00:13:48 --> 00:13:50: What are their current concerns with the mountains

community?

00:13:51 --> 00:13:51: Yeah.

00:13:51 --> 00:13:55: So some of the concerns that we're hearing through our

00:13:55 --> 00:13:58: own engagement, but then also through the secondary plan

that

00:13:58 --> 00:14:02: was also taking place at the time was affordability and

00:14:02 --> 00:14:02: displacement.

00:14:03 --> 00:14:08: There's you know significant concern about displacement risk

in the

00:14:08 --> 00:14:09: community.

00:14:09 --> 00:14:13: A lot of community members were receiving you know rent

00:14:13 --> 00:14:16: supplements and and other types of supports and and they

00:14:16 --> 00:14:20: were very concerned that they were precariously housed and

that

00:14:20 --> 00:14:23: part of the changes that would take place in the

00:14:23 --> 00:14:26: community would would would see them leaving the

community as

00:14:26 --> 00:14:26: well.

00:14:28 --> 00:14:31: So yeah that was something of of of concern that

00:14:31 --> 00:14:33: was coming up time and again every time we we

00:14:33 --> 00:14:35: spoke to the community.

00:14:36 --> 00:14:38: I'd say also just the community.

00:14:39 --> 00:14:43: Yeah, through each consultation that that we conducted and

then

00:14:43 --> 00:14:47: every sort of city consultation that we listened into as

00:14:47 --> 00:14:51: well, the community wasn't opposed to change or or

development.

00:14:52 --> 00:14:54: You know, the transit investment was something that

everyone is

00:14:54 --> 00:14:55: really quite excited about.

00:14:56 --> 00:15:00: Having new construction in the neighbourhood was also

something that

00:15:00 --> 00:15:02: was quite exciting, having new neighbours.

00:15:03 --> 00:15:07: This was, you know, a potential opportunity for revitalization

in

00:15:07 --> 00:15:07: the community.

00:15:08 --> 00:15:12: But you know, there really is no point to reinvigorating

00:15:12 --> 00:15:15: the community if it also means that that you have

00:15:15 --> 00:15:17: to leave as as part of that.



00:15:17 --> 00:15:20: So community members really just wanted to see their place  
00:15:21 --> 00:15:24: in the future, changes that were happening in the community  
00:15:24 --> 00:15:24: as well.  
00:15:25 --> 00:15:25: All right.  
00:15:26 --> 00:15:26: Thank you, Robert.  
00:15:27 --> 00:15:30: There's a huge gap in the kinds of city services  
00:15:30 --> 00:15:33: that are made accessible to racialized communities.  
00:15:33 --> 00:15:37: In the city of Toronto right now, black communities face  
00:15:37 --> 00:15:43: the most inequal inequality in and allocation of publicly  
available  
00:15:43 --> 00:15:44: resources.  
00:15:44 --> 00:15:47: And now I turn to Jamila Mohammad, a housing policy  
00:15:47 --> 00:15:49: planner with the City of Toronto.  
00:15:49 --> 00:15:50: I'm Jamila.  
00:15:50 --> 00:15:51: Would you like to say anything about yourself?  
00:15:53 --> 00:15:56: Thanks Camille and thanks Uli for hosting this really  
important  
00:15:56 --> 00:15:57: discussion.  
00:15:57 --> 00:15:58: Just a bit about myself.  
00:15:58 --> 00:16:00: I'm a registered professional planner.  
00:16:00 --> 00:16:02: I'm based in Toronto, Toronto.  
00:16:03 --> 00:16:06: I'm currently working with the City of Toronto Strategic  
Initiatives  
00:16:07 --> 00:16:09: Policy and Analysis team as a housing policy planner.  
00:16:10 --> 00:16:12: I have a lot a few years of experience in  
00:16:12 --> 00:16:16: the private sector doing some really interesting projects  
related to  
00:16:16 --> 00:16:19: large scale redevelopments and campus planning, which I  
really enjoyed.  
00:16:20 --> 00:16:22: The size that you'll be seeing in the background are  
00:16:22 --> 00:16:25: part of an initiative that I'm hoping to talk about  
00:16:25 --> 00:16:27: today, which is the Somali Centre for Culture and Recreation  
00:16:28 --> 00:16:28: Soccer.  
00:16:29 --> 00:16:31: But yeah, this is a bit about me.  
00:16:33 --> 00:16:36: And your interests as a planner are centered around histories  
00:16:36 --> 00:16:39: of cities, particularly the ways in which urban planning  
policies  
00:16:39 --> 00:16:42: and practices guide growth and development in cities.  
00:16:43 --> 00:16:46: So what has that meant for black life across time  
00:16:46 --> 00:16:47: and space?  
00:16:49 --> 00:16:50: I think that's a really interesting question.  
00:16:50 --> 00:16:53: I think the the part that interests me the most  
00:16:53 --> 00:16:55: about planning history is as we think about what it

00:16:55 --> 00:16:58: has meant for black life, from the early days of  
00:16:58 --> 00:17:00: black settlement in this country to the present time is  
00:17:01 --> 00:17:02: that black life is really dynamic.  
00:17:03 --> 00:17:06: And the impacts of urban planning are often framed in  
00:17:06 --> 00:17:09: thinking through the challenges and the deficits that have  
been  
00:17:09 --> 00:17:11: created in our community.  
00:17:11 --> 00:17:15: So processes of urban renewal, racial covenants, formal and  
informal  
00:17:15 --> 00:17:19: processes of racialized segregation, which have continued  
impacts on our  
00:17:19 --> 00:17:20: communities today.  
00:17:21 --> 00:17:24: And I also think that part of what is interesting  
00:17:24 --> 00:17:27: and really hasn't been discussed enough is the histories of  
00:17:27 --> 00:17:31: like black resistance and innovation and and and  
collaboration that  
00:17:31 --> 00:17:35: have also brought forward really dynamic ways of  
understanding city  
00:17:35 --> 00:17:37: planning from a black perspective.  
00:17:37 --> 00:17:40: And ways of also thinking about how we can implement  
00:17:40 --> 00:17:43: some of these strategies and tools to not only support  
00:17:43 --> 00:17:46: black communities, but really create more just and equitable  
cities  
00:17:46 --> 00:17:49: for all Torontonians or all members of the community.  
00:17:50 --> 00:17:52: What is play space?  
00:17:52 --> 00:17:54: Racial inequity in the built environment.  
00:17:56 --> 00:18:00: So play space equity, inequity, really you can think about  
00:18:00 --> 00:18:04: it as thinking through the geographical or like the spatial  
00:18:04 --> 00:18:06: ish lens that applies to racial inequities.  
00:18:07 --> 00:18:09: So to give an example, in Toronto it's often described  
00:18:10 --> 00:18:13: as a city that is racially and an economically segregated.  
00:18:13 --> 00:18:16: And the reason being that there's a high concentration of  
00:18:16 --> 00:18:20: visible minorities in low income neighborhoods where white  
residents are,  
00:18:20 --> 00:18:23: you know, concentrated in more dominant high income areas  
in  
00:18:23 --> 00:18:26: numbers far higher than their shared share of the population.  
00:18:27 --> 00:18:30: Another example is that there's substantial gaps in public  
investments  
00:18:30 --> 00:18:34: and social infrastructure in predominantly black  
neighbourhoods and that leads  
00:18:34 --> 00:18:37: to a deficit of cultural and recreational centres.  
00:18:37 --> 00:18:39: And then another like example.  
00:18:39 --> 00:18:43: That's really important thinking through the current culture,

the current

**00:18:43 --> 00:18:46:** crisis in the climate is that, you know, Toronto's racialized

**00:18:46 --> 00:18:49:** neighborhoods also have a far higher, far, far lower number

**00:18:49 --> 00:18:51:** of urban forests and urban trees.

**00:18:51 --> 00:18:53:** And So what does that mean when we're thinking about

**00:18:53 --> 00:18:56:** as summers get hotter in these communities and people are

**00:18:56 --> 00:18:58:** seeking, you know, respite from the sun and the heat

**00:18:58 --> 00:19:00:** and all the other climatic effects.

**00:19:00 --> 00:19:03:** So these are examples of how space and race really

**00:19:03 --> 00:19:06:** works together, and we can start to think around the

**00:19:06 --> 00:19:10:** inequities, but also finding ways to respond through equitable solutions.

**00:19:11 --> 00:19:11:** Thank you, Jamila.

**00:19:12 --> 00:19:14:** I'd like to bring Tura cousin Wilson into the discussion.

**00:19:14 --> 00:19:17:** He's a Principal Architect with Studio of Contemporary Architecture.

**00:19:17 --> 00:19:18:** Hello, Tura.

**00:19:20 --> 00:19:21:** You tell us about yourself.

**00:19:24 --> 00:19:25:** You're on mute.

**00:19:25 --> 00:19:25:** You're on mute.

**00:19:29 --> 00:19:30:** Sorry about that.

**00:19:30 --> 00:19:32:** As Camille said, my name is Tura Cousins Wilson.

**00:19:32 --> 00:19:35:** I'm an architect, Co founder and principal of Silca Studio

**00:19:35 --> 00:19:37:** Contemporary Architecture.

**00:19:38 --> 00:19:41:** As the name suggests, I think twofold.

**00:19:41 --> 00:19:46:** I'm interested, I think in the black community and particularly

**00:19:46 --> 00:19:51:** often, you know, both myself and studio partner have roots

**00:19:52 --> 00:19:53:** in in the Caribbean.

**00:19:54 --> 00:19:57:** So an interest in, you know, the West Indies and

**00:19:57 --> 00:20:01:** black populations within Canada and diaspora abroad and then, you

**00:20:01 --> 00:20:04:** know, thinking of there's a bit of a play I'm

**00:20:04 --> 00:20:08:** worth, but also I think an interest from simply contemporary

**00:20:08 --> 00:20:09:** condition.

**00:20:09 --> 00:20:13:** Of what's affecting, you know, cities and architecture today from

**00:20:13 --> 00:20:16:** the politics around the built environment.

**00:20:18 --> 00:20:22:** Silco was invited to the architects Against Housing Alienation as

**00:20:22 --> 00:20:27:** a contributing architect, representing Canada at the 18th International Architecture

**00:20:27 --> 00:20:30:** Exhibition at the Venice Biennale.

**00:20:31 --> 00:20:35:** So what was the outcome of working with local activists

00:20:35 --> 00:20:37: and advocates to get to this point?

00:20:38 --> 00:20:41: So that exhibition was an extension of our work with

00:20:41 --> 00:20:46: various community groups, in particular CP Planning, Budo for Black

00:20:46 --> 00:20:51: Urbanism, Black Urbanism Toronto, and Keel Eggington, residents of ongoing

00:20:51 --> 00:20:54: work within the Little Jamaica community.

00:20:54 --> 00:20:55: Those aren't familiar.

00:20:56 --> 00:21:00: Speaking of Eggington W, just West of the Allen Rd.

00:21:00 --> 00:21:06: In Eggington, and it was looking at affordable housing solutions.

00:21:06 --> 00:21:09: The theme around the overall exhibition was 10 teams across

00:21:09 --> 00:21:14: Canada exploring affordable housing solutions in their community and our

00:21:14 --> 00:21:17: team in collaboration with CP Planning and Keel Edmonton residents

00:21:18 --> 00:21:20: focused in on the little Jamaica community.

00:21:21 --> 00:21:24: And one of the key things was the importance of

00:21:24 --> 00:21:25: affordable housing.

00:21:25 --> 00:21:29: But in association, especially in culturally distinct neighbourhoods like Will

00:21:29 --> 00:21:32: Jamaica, that the importance of a holistic approach.

00:21:32 --> 00:21:36: So not just affordable housing, but also affordable cultural spaces,

00:21:36 --> 00:21:39: retail spaces and employment opportunities.

00:21:41 --> 00:21:44: OK, because you also taught a course that you have

00:21:44 --> 00:21:48: at UFT Daniel School of Architecture about mixed-use in housing,

00:21:48 --> 00:21:51: as this applies to not just providing housing for like

00:21:51 --> 00:21:54: black communities, but other amenities as well.

00:21:54 --> 00:21:54: Right.

00:21:55 --> 00:21:56: So I think, yeah, it's a good point.

00:21:56 --> 00:21:59: So I think an interest of ours and it's similar

00:21:59 --> 00:22:01: to what to Miller was saying.

00:22:02 --> 00:22:05: I think sometimes a lot of our work is very

00:22:05 --> 00:22:10: culturally specific, but it's it's touching on broader issues

00:22:10 --> 00:22:14: of zoning planning beyond just the the black community.

00:22:14 --> 00:22:17: I think it's in a way, you know speaking the

00:22:17 --> 00:22:21: work we're doing in Little Jamaica I think was you

00:22:21 --> 00:22:25: know questioning some of the zoning policies of say exclusive

00:22:25 --> 00:22:28: zoning where if you look on Edmonton West, a lot

00:22:28 --> 00:22:32: of the plan is to focus on development of Edmonton

00:22:32 --> 00:22:36: where that is really the cultural hub of many businesses  
00:22:36 --> 00:22:39: in the West Indian and black community.  
00:22:39 --> 00:22:43: And so as you know, questioning approaches to exclusionary zoning,  
00:22:43 --> 00:22:47: those who aren't familiar it's you know, limiting you know,  
00:22:47 --> 00:22:49: types of housing to certain parts of the city or  
00:22:49 --> 00:22:53: certain districts or limiting density to certain areas.  
00:22:54 --> 00:22:58: So the little what we're doing in Little Jamaica was  
00:22:58 --> 00:23:03: now questioning approaches to zoning that create a certain type  
00:23:03 --> 00:23:07: of built form in the city that in many cases  
00:23:07 --> 00:23:12: put pressure on displacement for small fine grained retail and  
00:23:12 --> 00:23:13: existing housing.  
00:23:14 --> 00:23:15: So you know I think one of the questions we  
00:23:15 --> 00:23:17: asked we posed and it was exhibition.  
00:23:17 --> 00:23:20: So it was it was speculative in its nature was  
00:23:20 --> 00:23:24: you know if we allow laneway housing, why not laneway  
00:23:24 --> 00:23:28: Barber shops or retail cafes, auto mechanics etcetera.  
00:23:28 --> 00:23:31: You know, thinking if a Barber, why does a Barber  
00:23:31 --> 00:23:34: who say, works largely based on word of mouth and  
00:23:34 --> 00:23:38: their clientele, Do they need to have the foot traffic  
00:23:38 --> 00:23:41: of a a certain type of business or do they  
00:23:41 --> 00:23:44: need to pay the Main Street, expensive Main St.  
00:23:44 --> 00:23:47: leases that another business might need to face, You know,  
00:23:47 --> 00:23:48: questions around that?  
00:23:49 --> 00:23:49: OK.  
00:23:49 --> 00:23:50: Thanks, Tara.  
00:23:50 --> 00:23:52: I'd like to invite all our panelists back to the  
00:23:52 --> 00:23:53: screen and mics off.  
00:23:54 --> 00:23:56: Also I wanted to note all our panellists are involved  
00:23:56 --> 00:23:59: in numerous things, so Alex has been dropping links to  
00:23:59 --> 00:24:01: their BIOS and more information about them.  
00:24:01 --> 00:24:04: So I encourage the audience to reach out to them  
00:24:04 --> 00:24:09: individually if you have any additional questions or do Google  
00:24:09 --> 00:24:13: search of information and projects that they've been involved  
00:24:13 --> 00:24:14: with  
00:24:13 --> 00:24:14: so far.  
00:24:14 --> 00:24:17: Our group discussion with the topic of re energizing city  
00:24:18 --> 00:24:18: building.  
00:24:18 --> 00:24:22: So our try to break the discussion into significant ways  
00:24:22 --> 00:24:25: of how black history can energize the future of city  
00:24:25 --> 00:24:26: building.  
00:24:26 --> 00:24:31: So with regards to recognition of contributions, what are the

00:24:31 --> 00:24:32: key black history?

00:24:32 --> 00:24:35: What are key black history points that are relevant to

00:24:35 --> 00:24:37: your work today?

00:24:37 --> 00:24:37: And.

00:24:38 --> 00:24:39: It can be Canadian.

00:24:39 --> 00:24:41: Black history is not necessary, just points.

00:24:43 --> 00:24:44: I'll go to you, Robert.

00:24:45 --> 00:24:49: Yeah, I think something that's been quite interesting to me

00:24:49 --> 00:24:53: is, is I've been working, I've worked with the ULI

00:24:53 --> 00:24:59: as part of the understanding historical black settlement and displacement

00:24:59 --> 00:25:01: in Southwestern Ontario.

00:25:02 --> 00:25:06: And as part of that, we researched communities of historical

00:25:06 --> 00:25:11: settlement, past experiences of of of displacement and erasure.

00:25:13 --> 00:25:15: But really as part of that it was sort of

00:25:16 --> 00:25:20: uncovering this type of conversation that that used to take

00:25:20 --> 00:25:24: place where you know any discussion of a black community

00:25:24 --> 00:25:28: or potential risk of displacement to a black community in

00:25:28 --> 00:25:32: Canada sometimes shut down with well, you know we're not

00:25:32 --> 00:25:36: the United States or we don't have the same problems

00:25:36 --> 00:25:38: as as as they have South of the border.

00:25:39 --> 00:25:42: And as part of that project we sort of uncovered

00:25:42 --> 00:25:45: this where we're working with this idea of the North

00:25:45 --> 00:25:49: Star myth about understanding how Canadians see black history is

00:25:49 --> 00:25:53: really being that end point of the Underground Railroad as

00:25:53 --> 00:25:56: being the the the point of of of refuge for

00:25:56 --> 00:25:58: for previously enslaved people.

00:25:58 --> 00:26:03: And then not fully understanding the histories that have taken

00:26:03 --> 00:26:07: place after that of, you know, the displacement of some

00:26:08 --> 00:26:12: of those communities of previously enslaved people back to the

00:26:12 --> 00:26:16: US or or histories of, you know, regulations that were

00:26:17 --> 00:26:21: put in place to prevent new black arrivals after, you

00:26:21 --> 00:26:23: know, 1910 in in Canada.

00:26:23 --> 00:26:26: And so as part of that, you know we sort

00:26:26 --> 00:26:31: of look at the absence of predominantly black neighbourhoods as

00:26:31 --> 00:26:35: you know the signs that we actually don't have issues

00:26:35 --> 00:26:40: or or or problems without recognising you know our past

00:26:40 --> 00:26:45: histories that have contributed to to the those historical patterns

00:26:45 --> 00:26:47: of of displacement.

00:26:49 --> 00:26:51: Yeah, 'cause I often believe, as you were saying, the

00:26:51 --> 00:26:53: North the the myth of the.

00:26:53 --> 00:26:54: North Star myth.

00:26:54 --> 00:26:57: Yeah, because I often see like we are also, I

00:26:57 --> 00:27:01: think historically we're told that slaves escape to Canada, but

00:27:01 --> 00:27:02: then what?

00:27:03 --> 00:27:06: And then if you look at our history, there's displacement,

00:27:06 --> 00:27:09: but not there's a lack of education to even ourselves

00:27:09 --> 00:27:12: of what happened in this country and what's currently

00:27:12 --> 00:27:13: happening

00:27:12 --> 00:27:13: in this country.

00:27:13 --> 00:27:15: So I think I often say if we don't talk

00:27:15 --> 00:27:16: about it, there's no problem.

00:27:17 --> 00:27:20: And that's leads to the myth of like Canada being

00:27:20 --> 00:27:23: a better country or resolving issues.

00:27:23 --> 00:27:26: It's just that it's it's just not in our education,

00:27:26 --> 00:27:28: It's not even in our discussion or platforms.

00:27:32 --> 00:27:34: Sorry, I don't know if Michael, you were saying something.

00:27:38 --> 00:27:39: I wasn't saying anything.

00:27:39 --> 00:27:39: Oh, that's fine.

00:27:40 --> 00:27:44: But totally agree, like all of these, these stories of

00:27:44 --> 00:27:49: displacement and erasure are are definitely the starting point

00:27:49 --> 00:27:52: for

00:27:49 --> 00:27:52: well, like our ideas and conversations.

00:27:52 --> 00:27:56: You know, how how do you have that fuller story

00:27:56 --> 00:28:00: and understand kind of that that perspective, when the sort

00:28:00 --> 00:28:04: of counterpoint often is that we are not the United

00:28:04 --> 00:28:04: States?

00:28:07 --> 00:28:08: I can just add to that point.

00:28:08 --> 00:28:11: I think that part of the work that has to

00:28:11 --> 00:28:14: happen is really for us as you know Canadian based

00:28:14 --> 00:28:17: planners to really start to think about how we can

00:28:17 --> 00:28:20: start to re examine this history of planning or architecture

00:28:20 --> 00:28:21: or design.

00:28:21 --> 00:28:24: And really trying to make sure that when we're doing

00:28:24 --> 00:28:28: this examination that we're actually engaging in like a

00:28:28 --> 00:28:32: process

00:28:28 --> 00:28:32: of actually actively remembering with the intent of taking the

00:28:32 --> 00:28:35: lessons that we've learned and applying that to feature city

00:28:35 --> 00:28:37: building and initiatives.

00:28:38 --> 00:28:40: A lot of the stories that, you know, Robert, Robert

00:28:40 --> 00:28:44: is pointing to these black settlements that have existed have

00:28:44 --> 00:28:46: a lot of story, have a lot of history in

00:28:46 --> 00:28:49: terms of how buildings were actually built, like the materials,

00:28:49 --> 00:28:52: how the land was like, you know, plowed and how,

00:28:52 --> 00:28:55: how communities were sighting these buildings in relation to each other.

00:28:55 --> 00:28:55: other.

00:28:56 --> 00:28:58: Where were the places where people were convening?

00:28:59 --> 00:29:01: How do you create these communities that have also been

00:29:02 --> 00:29:05: providing these specific types of amenities to support communities, where

00:29:05 --> 00:29:09: parents can support each other, relatives can support each other?

00:29:09 --> 00:29:11: But also, I think that for a very long time,

00:29:11 --> 00:29:15: the burden of uncovering this amazing history and grappling with

00:29:15 --> 00:29:18: the complexities of the, the difficult part of, you know,

00:29:18 --> 00:29:21: realizing enslavement and the horrors that it has led to

00:29:21 --> 00:29:23: and its legacy has been put on black planners and

00:29:23 --> 00:29:25: architects and designers.

00:29:25 --> 00:29:28: And I think that having these conversations on a platform

00:29:28 --> 00:29:30: like you and I really brings everybody else into the

00:29:30 --> 00:29:33: fold and puts forward the challenge that this is not

00:29:33 --> 00:29:33: just on us.

00:29:33 --> 00:29:36: We're all together if we really want to achieve this,

00:29:36 --> 00:29:39: you know, city that is caring or these communities that

00:29:39 --> 00:29:41: are going to be more just and equitable.

00:29:45 --> 00:29:49: So in a means to address inequities, how can municipal

00:29:49 --> 00:29:53: governments ensure that developments can prioritize the needs and aspirations

00:29:53 --> 00:29:54: of black communities?

00:29:56 --> 00:29:58: I know Jamil, you're working with the city, so I'm

00:29:58 --> 00:29:59: not sure if it's on you.

00:30:00 --> 00:30:03: Yeah, no, definitely not a spokesperson for the city today.

00:30:03 --> 00:30:06: You know, it's just, I just only started a couple

00:30:06 --> 00:30:09: weeks ago, but I think it would be well positioned

00:30:09 --> 00:30:09: to do that.

00:30:10 --> 00:30:11: But I think that even we can broaden that.

00:30:11 --> 00:30:12: Scope, yeah.

00:30:12 --> 00:30:13: It's not just unique to municipal.

00:30:14 --> 00:30:15: Exactly.

00:30:16 --> 00:30:18: So you know, one of the things that I'm very

00:30:18 --> 00:30:21: interested about and then just going back to the Somali

00:30:21 --> 00:30:23: Center project is this is a project that you know,



00:30:23 --> 00:30:26: I think that all levels of government can get behind  
00:30:26 --> 00:30:29: because it is speaking to like a 40 year history  
00:30:29 --> 00:30:32: of the Somali community advocating for a space where  
people  
00:30:32 --> 00:30:34: can have access to cultural recreational services.  
00:30:35 --> 00:30:38: The community is, you know, Toronto has the largest Somali  
00:30:38 --> 00:30:42: community, one of the largest black communities in Canada  
contributed  
00:30:42 --> 00:30:44: many ways to the dynamic culture of this place.  
00:30:44 --> 00:30:48: How can governments understand that there is gaps in the  
00:30:48 --> 00:30:52: actual number of black LED social infrastructure in this in  
00:30:52 --> 00:30:56: this country across all parts of it and you have  
00:30:56 --> 00:30:59: a project here led by the community willing to take  
00:30:59 --> 00:30:59: it on.  
00:31:00 --> 00:31:03: I think that this isn't a great opportunity for government  
00:31:03 --> 00:31:05: and private sector also to get behind such an idea,  
00:31:05 --> 00:31:08: support these young people volunteering to address address  
a major  
00:31:08 --> 00:31:09: city building gap.  
00:31:10 --> 00:31:14: And with the with the Somali Center, you said it's  
00:31:14 --> 00:31:18: 40 years of of building that relationship with the city.  
00:31:19 --> 00:31:22: Is there like like there's so many other because the  
00:31:22 --> 00:31:25: diaspora and the diversity of it, there's so many other  
00:31:25 --> 00:31:28: communities that don't have 40 years to work with the  
00:31:28 --> 00:31:31: city and work with different municipal lenses.  
00:31:32 --> 00:31:34: Is there a different approach?  
00:31:34 --> 00:31:38: And it's not like like tomorrow, but is it about  
00:31:38 --> 00:31:39: getting on board?  
00:31:39 --> 00:31:43: Is there tips on how to make more centers quicker  
00:31:43 --> 00:31:44: in this?  
00:31:44 --> 00:31:46: Yes, I think that's a great question.  
00:31:46 --> 00:31:49: I think even just, you know, talking also about provincial  
00:31:49 --> 00:31:52: and federal governments as well, the community, you know,  
the  
00:31:52 --> 00:31:54: Somalis through time of sorts of living.  
00:31:54 --> 00:31:57: Canada in the 70s, eighties as immigrants and then the  
00:31:57 --> 00:32:01: 90s had a large refugee population that that came here  
00:32:01 --> 00:32:02: due to the civil war.  
00:32:02 --> 00:32:05: And in that time, members of the community have been  
00:32:05 --> 00:32:09: advocating for a center in different ways through different  
coalitions  
00:32:09 --> 00:32:10: and collaborations.  
00:32:10 --> 00:32:13: What I think is unique about this opportunity right now

00:32:13 --> 00:32:16: is that you have that intergenerational connection from the folks

00:32:16 --> 00:32:18: early on to the younger people who are really seeing

00:32:18 --> 00:32:21: the deficits in their communities today and seeing the correlation

00:32:21 --> 00:32:24: between the benefits of having a Community Center, a library

00:32:24 --> 00:32:27: or other social infrastructure in their neighborhoods and not having

00:32:27 --> 00:32:28: to commute far away.

00:32:29 --> 00:32:31: So I think that there is that connection.

00:32:31 --> 00:32:33: So making sure, I think you know, a very common

00:32:34 --> 00:32:37: practice in black planning and urbanism is having intergenerational dialogue

00:32:37 --> 00:32:40: and making sure that we're connecting the past to the

00:32:40 --> 00:32:40: future.

00:32:41 --> 00:32:44: I think that you know the the community is also

00:32:44 --> 00:32:48: doing a lot of activism, sorry, not advocacy and engagement, community engagement.

00:32:48 --> 00:32:50: They're doing a series of citywide public engagements with the

00:32:50 --> 00:32:54: community members.

00:32:54 --> 00:32:55: They're engaging key stakeholders, business owners.

00:32:55 --> 00:32:57: So there's like this very multi prong approach to this

00:32:58 --> 00:33:00: work and it's it's something that I think it's continuously

00:33:01 --> 00:33:04: happening.

00:33:04 --> 00:33:06: We're learning also from or the Somali center is also

00:33:06 --> 00:33:09: learning from other cultural centers who've existed.

00:33:09 --> 00:33:11: We have the Japanese center, we have the amazing work

00:33:11 --> 00:33:12: the Tamil community is doing.

00:33:13 --> 00:33:15: And so it's always a a matter of like building

00:33:15 --> 00:33:17: coalitions also outside of your community.

00:33:17 --> 00:33:19: But there's lots of lessons I think that the the

00:33:19 --> 00:33:21: team members can share and you can always connect with

00:33:21 --> 00:33:22: them through their website.

00:33:23 --> 00:33:25: And Tura, you worked on the the Wild Seed Center

00:33:25 --> 00:33:26: for Art and Activism.

00:33:27 --> 00:33:31: How was that working with the community and getting like

00:33:31 --> 00:33:36: through design, getting their visions and understandings like designed as

00:33:36 --> 00:33:37: a centre.

00:33:37 --> 00:33:37: Does that make sense?

00:33:39 --> 00:33:41: Yeah, it's a good question.

00:33:41 --> 00:33:42: So and I think it kind of relates to I

00:33:42 --> 00:33:44: think some of the stuff what I want to mention  
00:33:44 --> 00:33:45: with the last question.  
00:33:45 --> 00:33:50: So a lot of our projects are community organizations and  
00:33:50 --> 00:33:54: in case you mentioned Wild Seed, an organization named  
after  
00:33:54 --> 00:33:56: Octavia Butler novel.  
00:33:57 --> 00:34:01: And I think questions on black futurism, what is black  
00:34:01 --> 00:34:05: in design or representation in kind of built form or  
00:34:05 --> 00:34:06: or visuals.  
00:34:07 --> 00:34:10: A lot of and sort of I think heritage becomes  
00:34:10 --> 00:34:13: kind of this, this question of you know what do  
00:34:13 --> 00:34:14: we prioritize.  
00:34:14 --> 00:34:17: So you know, a few of our projects have been  
00:34:17 --> 00:34:23: in Victorian era buildings in the black community is  
repurposing  
00:34:23 --> 00:34:26: an an older house and it sort of comes to  
00:34:26 --> 00:34:31: questions of what what do organizations prioritize from a  
general  
00:34:31 --> 00:34:33: policy collective.  
00:34:33 --> 00:34:34: You know, people sort of say, you know restore the  
00:34:34 --> 00:34:35: house.  
00:34:35 --> 00:34:39: Sometimes we're finding or restore say a brick facade or  
00:34:40 --> 00:34:41: mandated to restore.  
00:34:41 --> 00:34:44: So I'm not speaking specifically of of what I'll see  
00:34:44 --> 00:34:44: here.  
00:34:44 --> 00:34:48: So the question sometimes that ultimately means you know  
funds  
00:34:48 --> 00:34:53: coming out from whether a community organizations  
programming or reduction  
00:34:53 --> 00:34:57: space to restore facade which I think might be questionable  
00:34:57 --> 00:34:59: of what we deem worth restoring.  
00:34:59 --> 00:35:03: So I think we're often find questioning that in part  
00:35:03 --> 00:35:04: of our process.  
00:35:06 --> 00:35:09: One thing I think that I'm getting a bit to  
00:35:09 --> 00:35:12: the last question because I want to jump in, I  
00:35:12 --> 00:35:16: think we've been actively encouraging for sorry is architects,  
planners  
00:35:16 --> 00:35:18: coming to the table sooner.  
00:35:18 --> 00:35:21: But also some like the work in little Jamaica that  
00:35:21 --> 00:35:24: was really started not from a top down approach.  
00:35:24 --> 00:35:29: It was community groups like Pluto sort of saying hey  
00:35:29 --> 00:35:33: Metrolinks, we're we're being excluded here.  
00:35:33 --> 00:35:36: We feel that, you know, our needs aren't listened to

00:35:36 --> 00:35:40: and it's a conversation with the black community, in particular  
00:35:40 --> 00:35:40: business owners.  
00:35:41 --> 00:35:45: But I understand, you know what troubles that they've been  
00:35:45 --> 00:35:49: facing with broader displacement from the Edlington  
Connects, the new  
00:35:50 --> 00:35:53: transit line, a new LRT line in addition to then  
00:35:53 --> 00:35:53: COVID.  
00:35:53 --> 00:35:56: And, you know, a role that I see Architects of  
00:35:56 --> 00:36:01: Planets placing is sometimes distilling that information where  
we have  
00:36:01 --> 00:36:03: a lot of community groups approach us.  
00:36:04 --> 00:36:09: They know their community really well, but not necessarily  
know  
00:36:09 --> 00:36:13: architectural and planning like lingo of you know what these  
00:36:13 --> 00:36:18: terms mean, what are setbacks, what are these zoning  
policies,  
00:36:18 --> 00:36:22: GFA Heights, what's sort of limiting their community That's  
we  
00:36:22 --> 00:36:25: can then help speak to, which is a lot of  
00:36:25 --> 00:36:29: what we've been doing at both the urban scale but  
00:36:29 --> 00:36:33: in particular projects whether if it's wild seed or ban  
00:36:33 --> 00:36:38: understanding, you know what isn't community needs, what  
does that  
00:36:38 --> 00:36:42: mean from the perspective to actually policy like code or  
00:36:43 --> 00:36:44: rezoning, et cetera, OK.  
00:36:46 --> 00:36:47: With regards.  
00:36:47 --> 00:36:50: I want to actually just just get back to to  
00:36:50 --> 00:36:54: Mount Dennis briefly as well because you mentioned, you  
know,  
00:36:54 --> 00:36:57: what can cities do or what can municipalities do.  
00:36:58 --> 00:37:01: And part of you know in hearing from the community  
00:37:01 --> 00:37:05: part of what the Learning Enrichment Foundation did was  
advocating  
00:37:05 --> 00:37:08: for a Community for All action plan which was endorsed  
00:37:09 --> 00:37:12: by the local councillor and and is something that is  
00:37:12 --> 00:37:13: now under development.  
00:37:14 --> 00:37:17: But through that process there are a bunch of things  
00:37:18 --> 00:37:22: that weren't really properly addressed through you know your  
standard  
00:37:22 --> 00:37:26: secondary plan process and talking to the community about  
built  
00:37:26 --> 00:37:30: form, heights, densities, you know FSI and setbacks and and  
00:37:30 --> 00:37:31: and those things.  
00:37:31 --> 00:37:34: This community was not one that was opposed to change.

00:37:34 --> 00:37:38: And so largely, you know, different heights, different densities were

00:37:38 --> 00:37:40: were were welcomed.

00:37:40 --> 00:37:43: But a lot of what the conversation could have been

00:37:43 --> 00:37:48: around was about, you know, anti displacement strategies about ensuring

00:37:49 --> 00:37:52: new affordable housing would be would be developed.

00:37:52 --> 00:37:56: And that wasn't something that was really possible through only

00:37:56 --> 00:37:59: dealing with one division of the city, through only dealing

00:37:59 --> 00:38:01: with community planning.

00:38:01 --> 00:38:04: And so part of this process will be or or

00:38:04 --> 00:38:09: should be about bringing the entire city to the community.

00:38:10 --> 00:38:12: And so you know, where the community has an interest

00:38:12 --> 00:38:16: in a conversation, the correct stakeholders should be there in

00:38:16 --> 00:38:19: order to have that conversation as opposed to telling the

00:38:19 --> 00:38:22: community that, well, this isn't really what what we're talking

00:38:23 --> 00:38:26: about right now because there really is no other opportunity

00:38:26 --> 00:38:29: to talk about future change in a community except during

00:38:29 --> 00:38:30: times like this.

00:38:30 --> 00:38:33: So, so that's something that the Learning Enrichment Foundation is

00:38:33 --> 00:38:34: going through.

00:38:34 --> 00:38:35: They're going through that now.

00:38:35 --> 00:38:39: I think a, a subsequent report will be brought forward

00:38:39 --> 00:38:39: in in March.

00:38:39 --> 00:38:40: It'll be something to watch.

00:38:40 --> 00:38:43: And I I think it is honestly one of the

00:38:43 --> 00:38:47: most interesting parts of one of the most interesting innovations

00:38:47 --> 00:38:50: in planning currently in in Toronto.

00:38:51 --> 00:38:52: Thank you, Robert.

00:38:52 --> 00:38:56: With regards to stakeholders at the table, because we're here

00:38:56 --> 00:39:00: on this panel, but the reality is, is that there's

00:39:00 --> 00:39:04: a lack of representation in planning and architecture as black

00:39:04 --> 00:39:05: professionals.

00:39:05 --> 00:39:09: So this UL, this ULI session is being monitored by

00:39:09 --> 00:39:12: designers across the country, province.

00:39:13 --> 00:39:16: So with regards to architecture, I'm going to put this

00:39:16 --> 00:39:17: to you Michael.

00:39:18 --> 00:39:22: What considerations should architects or interior designers keep in mind

00:39:22 --> 00:39:25: when designing spaces for diverse black populations with

varying cultural  
00:39:25 --> 00:39:27: backgrounds and experiences?  
00:39:29 --> 00:39:29: Yeah.  
00:39:29 --> 00:39:33: So I'm also picking up on the chat as well.  
00:39:33 --> 00:39:36: And one of the things that you know is very  
00:39:36 --> 00:39:40: interesting like we've we've talked a lot about affordability  
and  
00:39:41 --> 00:39:44: you know architecture is this kind of like emergence of  
00:39:44 --> 00:39:45: the new.  
00:39:45 --> 00:39:49: But we also need to have have our value system  
00:39:49 --> 00:39:53: aligned with preserving affordability.  
00:39:53 --> 00:39:57: And you know architecture very much is about the  
management  
00:39:57 --> 00:40:01: of you know the assets that we have that you  
00:40:01 --> 00:40:03: know that currently exists.  
00:40:03 --> 00:40:06: So, you know, I think a lot of the dialogue  
00:40:06 --> 00:40:11: is about understanding and helping people through  
understanding what they  
00:40:11 --> 00:40:13: already have, I think.  
00:40:14 --> 00:40:17: I think it's very easy to be captivated by the  
00:40:17 --> 00:40:20: image of the new tower, you know, the new park,  
00:40:20 --> 00:40:22: the new, the new community centre.  
00:40:23 --> 00:40:26: And it's it's perhaps more difficult to kind of work  
00:40:26 --> 00:40:30: with people to to to fully understand and appreciate what  
00:40:30 --> 00:40:32: they, what they already have.  
00:40:32 --> 00:40:35: And that that's, you know, that's a big part of  
00:40:35 --> 00:40:40: preserving, you know, affordable assets and you know, the  
overlap  
00:40:40 --> 00:40:42: with decarbonisation.  
00:40:44 --> 00:40:45: Yes, I understand that.  
00:40:45 --> 00:40:48: But if But whose responsibility is it to talk to  
00:40:48 --> 00:40:50: help them understand that?  
00:40:50 --> 00:40:53: Like to understand the history and understand the context.  
00:40:53 --> 00:40:56: Like as perfect if if if there's like for instance  
00:40:56 --> 00:40:58: if there's not a seat at the table or like  
00:40:59 --> 00:41:01: a black planner or black architect.  
00:41:01 --> 00:41:04: How do we help our colleagues design spaces and other  
00:41:05 --> 00:41:07: parts or just for different projects for?  
00:41:08 --> 00:41:09: Sure, yeah.  
00:41:09 --> 00:41:10: I mean, it can't be there.  
00:41:10 --> 00:41:11: Yeah, I, I.  
00:41:11 --> 00:41:14: And I think that's that's at the heart of representation  
00:41:14 --> 00:41:15: in professions, right.

00:41:16 --> 00:41:22: Like I I think it's great to have community voices.

00:41:22 --> 00:41:25: But then, you know I'm a huge advocate for you

00:41:25 --> 00:41:29: know the type of work that ULI does where professionals

00:41:30 --> 00:41:33: come together and we're able to kind of fill in

00:41:33 --> 00:41:37: the knowledge gaps that others others have and and work

00:41:37 --> 00:41:40: together and lift each other up to to kind of

00:41:40 --> 00:41:42: get to an approach.

00:41:42 --> 00:41:45: So you know having professionals that are are able to

00:41:45 --> 00:41:49: represent communities I think I think is essential and it

00:41:49 --> 00:41:52: you know, really speaks to the work that groups like

00:41:52 --> 00:41:52: beta.

00:41:54 --> 00:41:57: It really speaks to the to the work of of

00:41:57 --> 00:41:58: groups like Beta.

00:41:59 --> 00:42:02: Mila, if I can just jump in from a perspective

00:42:02 --> 00:42:05: on how we kind of address the gaps in the

00:42:05 --> 00:42:08: planning community, the, you know, one group that I'm

00:42:08 --> 00:42:12: involved

00:42:08 --> 00:42:12: with as a volunteer is the Black Planners and Urbanist

00:42:12 --> 00:42:13: Association.

00:42:13 --> 00:42:16: It's a it's a nationwide organization that works in bringing

00:42:16 --> 00:42:20: black planners together, creating opportunities and doing

00:42:20 --> 00:42:22: advocacy.

00:42:20 --> 00:42:22: Some of the some of the work that we've been

00:42:22 --> 00:42:25: doing is also with our professional body which is the

00:42:25 --> 00:42:29: Ontario Professional Planning Institute and the Canadian

00:42:29 --> 00:42:31: Institute of Planners

00:42:29 --> 00:42:31: who have been receptive to under to thinking through and

00:42:32 --> 00:42:35: addressing issues of anti black racism in the profession

00:42:35 --> 00:42:38: through

00:42:35 --> 00:42:38: the curriculums of the universities and also in the workforce.

00:42:38 --> 00:42:41: So there's different opportunities and avenues.

00:42:41 --> 00:42:43: I think that these webinars are very important in bringing

00:42:43 --> 00:42:45: people who are not familiar with it or people don't

00:42:45 --> 00:42:47: have the space to talk about these issues together.

00:42:48 --> 00:42:52: I think the professional associations also have a

00:42:52 --> 00:42:55: responsibility to

00:42:52 --> 00:42:55: update their standards and ethics, the curriculum

00:42:55 --> 00:42:57: requirements to become

00:42:55 --> 00:42:57: a professional in this field.

00:42:57 --> 00:42:59: If you're if you're a part of that to address

00:42:59 --> 00:43:02: anti black racism and also black you know black successes

00:43:02 --> 00:43:04: and stories of of planning right.

00:43:05 --> 00:43:07: And I think the universities also have a big role

00:43:07 --> 00:43:09: to play in terms of how they're getting accredited, making  
00:43:09 --> 00:43:10: sure that they're working.  
00:43:10 --> 00:43:13: And I know many of them are to address issues  
00:43:13 --> 00:43:16: of anti black racism, but also speaking to the positive  
00:43:16 --> 00:43:17: aspects of black life.  
00:43:18 --> 00:43:20: And then as a planner looking in on the architectural  
00:43:20 --> 00:43:23: world, if you guys don't mind me stepping in a  
00:43:23 --> 00:43:25: little bit, I think that one of the key things  
00:43:25 --> 00:43:28: we can do is really start to think beyond the  
00:43:28 --> 00:43:30: very narrow Eurocentric examples of precedence.  
00:43:30 --> 00:43:33: And I know the great work that Soca's been doing  
00:43:33 --> 00:43:37: is really trying to expand how we think about architectural  
00:43:37 --> 00:43:41: forms, practices from a black and Afrocentric perspective.  
00:43:42 --> 00:43:45: And so how do we think about, you know, sustainability  
00:43:45 --> 00:43:47: and looking at examples in the Caribbean and in the  
00:43:47 --> 00:43:50: the African continent or in black communities in the West.  
00:43:50 --> 00:43:52: So I think that there's a lot of learning we  
00:43:52 --> 00:43:53: can all do collectively.  
00:43:54 --> 00:43:56: And then those are just kind of some tips of  
00:43:56 --> 00:43:57: things that are already in the works that can be  
00:43:57 --> 00:43:58: built on.  
00:44:04 --> 00:44:05: Just thank you, Jamila.  
00:44:06 --> 00:44:10: So that's so some of your projects that you've worked  
00:44:10 --> 00:44:14: on, sorry if I hesitate on this question, but also  
00:44:14 --> 00:44:18: it was like so much what Gmail was saying, how,  
00:44:18 --> 00:44:21: how, how is your experience?  
00:44:21 --> 00:44:24: And I think this is just an architectural question of  
00:44:24 --> 00:44:28: just like representing a client but not necessarily being part  
00:44:28 --> 00:44:29: of the client group.  
00:44:29 --> 00:44:29: Does that make sense?  
00:44:29 --> 00:44:31: Like just to echo that again?  
00:44:33 --> 00:44:35: Yeah, I think I get what you're saying.  
00:44:35 --> 00:44:37: I'll respond and tell me if I got it.  
00:44:38 --> 00:44:40: I think it, I think it's to a certain degree  
00:44:40 --> 00:44:44: it's challenging you know as you know running a professional  
00:44:44 --> 00:44:47: practice and you know there's limits to what you can  
00:44:47 --> 00:44:47: do.  
00:44:48 --> 00:44:50: So and to say that I think a lot of  
00:44:50 --> 00:44:53: our work at Soca has both been built work but  
00:44:53 --> 00:44:57: also speculative work that might you know question systems  
and  
00:44:57 --> 00:45:01: approaches that we might not necessarily be able to do



00:45:01 --> 00:45:04: if we're just sort of engaged by a client or  
00:45:04 --> 00:45:04: community.  
00:45:04 --> 00:45:09: So some of the work in Little Jamaica, you mentioned  
00:45:09 --> 00:45:10: Venice B&L.  
00:45:10 --> 00:45:14: If that wasn't, you know, that was an exhibition separate  
00:45:14 --> 00:45:19: from a client group reaching out one project in particular  
00:45:19 --> 00:45:23: was in a way a counter proposal for Alexander Park  
00:45:23 --> 00:45:25: and not specifically.  
00:45:25 --> 00:45:28: And I think these are interesting things, you know, so  
00:45:28 --> 00:45:32: it's not it wasn't specifically about the black community, but  
00:45:32 --> 00:45:36: you know, as Jamil was mentioning, mentioning earlier the kind  
00:45:36 --> 00:45:40: of the intersection between racialized communities and  
00:45:40 --> 00:45:44: poverty or lower  
00:45:44 --> 00:45:44: income communities or even simple things like lack of a  
00:45:44 --> 00:45:44: tree canopy.  
00:45:45 --> 00:45:49: And that project in particular and I I see this,  
00:45:49 --> 00:45:54: you know, a comment about decarbonization was  
00:45:54 --> 00:45:58: questioning do we  
00:45:58 --> 00:46:03: need to completely demolish an entire 18 acre social housing  
00:46:03 --> 00:46:04: site to revitalize it including both the built form and  
00:46:04 --> 00:46:07: also the natural areas.  
00:46:07 --> 00:46:11: So you know there were trees that were you know  
00:46:11 --> 00:46:13: 2 generations old, which will take another two generations to  
00:46:13 --> 00:46:16: reach the same maturity.  
00:46:16 --> 00:46:20: But you know or really what what happens when we  
00:46:20 --> 00:46:24: landfill all that embodied energy, where where is it going?  
00:46:24 --> 00:46:27: So questions like that and I think this become challenging.  
00:46:27 --> 00:46:30: I think also get to where I think outside groups  
00:46:30 --> 00:46:35: can connect because I think what we like to say  
00:46:35 --> 00:46:39: is you know issues affecting the black community are also  
00:46:39 --> 00:46:43: by the very nature that we're all Canadian or Canadian  
00:46:43 --> 00:46:47: issues and the sort of fundamental design issues or planning  
00:46:47 --> 00:46:49: issues that broader practice should be interested in.  
00:46:49 --> 00:46:52: I think we take that approach too.  
00:46:52 --> 00:46:56: So we know we're not just black architects.  
00:46:56 --> 00:47:01: We're saying you know we're we're interested in community  
00:47:01 --> 00:47:04: culture  
00:47:04 --> 00:47:04: and these questions of sustainability and architecture in  
00:47:04 --> 00:47:08: various communities.  
00:47:08 --> 00:47:08: And you know this conversation is is a lens into  
00:47:08 --> 00:47:08: that.  
00:47:08 --> 00:47:08: And I think where people can learn is just having

00:47:08 --> 00:47:13: a critical eye to existing approaches and how they may  
00:47:13 --> 00:47:15: intercept with other communities.  
00:47:15 --> 00:47:18: But I think each other it's not always this call  
00:47:18 --> 00:47:22: call it a black or white scenarios when you're dealing  
00:47:22 --> 00:47:27: with public communities, there's so many different types of  
intersections  
00:47:27 --> 00:47:29: and and issues that you're dealing with.  
00:47:29 --> 00:47:33: So I think that's an approach that we really try  
00:47:33 --> 00:47:38: to emphasize that we're doing work that can inform broader  
00:47:38 --> 00:47:40: community and the spec.  
00:47:40 --> 00:47:43: Back to your question, I think the back to your  
00:47:43 --> 00:47:44: work conversations like this.  
00:47:45 --> 00:47:48: You know, being one of the Co founders of Beta  
00:47:48 --> 00:47:53: Black Architects and Interior Designs Association to push  
conversations where  
00:47:53 --> 00:47:56: you know private practice doesn't allow.  
00:47:57 --> 00:47:58: Thanks Sam.  
00:47:58 --> 00:47:59: Thank you, Tara.  
00:47:59 --> 00:48:03: Robert what would how can planning give empowerment to  
the  
00:48:03 --> 00:48:05: black community?  
00:48:05 --> 00:48:08: Like what planning strategies can you think of that like  
00:48:08 --> 00:48:11: that at the end result help feel people feel empowered  
00:48:11 --> 00:48:13: and and and invited to the table?  
00:48:14 --> 00:48:14: Yeah.  
00:48:14 --> 00:48:18: I mean one of the biggest things I think beyond  
00:48:18 --> 00:48:23: just engagement is when and how you engage with with  
00:48:23 --> 00:48:29: with communities and particularly black communities And  
when we talk  
00:48:29 --> 00:48:35: about intersection, intersectionality, low income, black  
communities at risk of  
00:48:36 --> 00:48:40: displacement, the planning process is one that I think is  
00:48:40 --> 00:48:43: often quite prescriptive.  
00:48:43 --> 00:48:46: There's a lot of policies that have to be adhered  
00:48:46 --> 00:48:46: to.  
00:48:46 --> 00:48:48: There's a lot of things that just have to be  
00:48:48 --> 00:48:51: put in place in communities in order to ensure that  
00:48:51 --> 00:48:54: sort of future development can can take place.  
00:48:54 --> 00:48:59: But I think one of the more meaningful responses is  
00:48:59 --> 00:49:03: really to engage, identify what is at issue and then  
00:49:03 --> 00:49:05: build a process around that.  
00:49:06 --> 00:49:10: So you know if there are concerns about or not  
00:49:10 --> 00:49:14: even just concerns, but if if there's maybe opportunities to

00:49:14 --> 00:49:20: enhance Main Street retail with local locally owned black businesses,

00:49:20 --> 00:49:24: You know what other resources would need to be there

00:49:24 --> 00:49:28: to ensure that those businesses may continue to exist and

00:49:28 --> 00:49:32: continue to thrive after the sort of redevelopment that is

00:49:33 --> 00:49:36: envisioned as as part of any plan takes place.

00:49:37 --> 00:49:41: So really the sort of planning process I think can

00:49:41 --> 00:49:45: achieve a lot of the same outcomes, but really needs

00:49:45 --> 00:49:49: to be redefined in terms of how and when different

00:49:49 --> 00:49:50: things take place.

00:49:52 --> 00:49:52: Thank you.

00:49:53 --> 00:49:56: We're going to wrap up our conversation with the recent

00:49:56 --> 00:49:59: development in the City of Toronto, the renaming of Dundas

00:49:59 --> 00:50:00: Square to Sankofa Square.

00:50:01 --> 00:50:03: Jamila, can you share the definition and the history of

00:50:03 --> 00:50:04: the words Sankofa?

00:50:06 --> 00:50:08: I can do my best as a non Guinean person,

00:50:08 --> 00:50:11: but I've I've come across the term sankofa in my

00:50:11 --> 00:50:15: and I can make the connection toward planning for this

00:50:15 --> 00:50:15: in this way.

00:50:16 --> 00:50:20: When I was doing my master's research, there's this amazing

00:50:20 --> 00:50:24: Guinean political social political theorist named Atu Sankiatu based at

00:50:24 --> 00:50:26: York University, and he wrote a book.

00:50:27 --> 00:50:29: In the opening paragraph of that book he talks about

00:50:29 --> 00:50:30: the idea of Sankofa.

00:50:30 --> 00:50:34: So the idea of retrieving an idea or a concept

00:50:34 --> 00:50:38: or a practice that's been lost from before and bringing

00:50:38 --> 00:50:41: it in to the present moment and using that as

00:50:41 --> 00:50:44: a way to create change and paraphrasing.

00:50:44 --> 00:50:46: But I think that you know the term, the, the,

00:50:46 --> 00:50:48: the, the idea is really important for me as a

00:50:48 --> 00:50:51: planner when I think about Sankofa, because we learned from

00:50:51 --> 00:50:53: black history and I kind of touched on this in

00:50:53 --> 00:50:54: the beginning.

00:50:54 --> 00:50:56: We learn about black history not to just sit with

00:50:57 --> 00:50:59: it and I learned a fact and that's it.

00:50:59 --> 00:51:01: You take it and you make an active effort to

00:51:01 --> 00:51:02: respond to that.

00:51:02 --> 00:51:05: If we know that, you know the history of enslavement

00:51:05 --> 00:51:09: has impact on housing affordability, home ownership for black communities,

00:51:09 --> 00:51:12: how do we then respond to that and address that  
00:51:12 --> 00:51:14: through policies and practices?  
00:51:14 --> 00:51:16: If we know that access to community spaces and social  
00:51:16 --> 00:51:20: amenities are impacted because of the concentration where  
people have  
00:51:20 --> 00:51:22: been concentrated over time, how do we respond to that?  
00:51:22 --> 00:51:23: Transportation.  
00:51:24 --> 00:51:25: There's many things around that.  
00:51:25 --> 00:51:28: So I think we learned from those histories not just  
00:51:28 --> 00:51:31: to know a fact, but to actually think, how does  
00:51:31 --> 00:51:34: this apply to me and my day-to-day work, you know,  
00:51:34 --> 00:51:36: and it's an interesting concept.  
00:51:36 --> 00:51:38: I think it's applicable to everyone.  
00:51:38 --> 00:51:40: You don't have to be African or black to be  
00:51:40 --> 00:51:43: able to understand and embody the the idea of Sankofa  
00:51:43 --> 00:51:45: you can put into your daily practice as architect and  
00:51:46 --> 00:51:46: as a planner.  
00:51:46 --> 00:51:49: But it's about being an active person who responds to  
00:51:49 --> 00:51:52: something that has, you know, there's no shame in going  
00:51:52 --> 00:51:55: back and saying, oh, we didn't know about this, Let's  
00:51:55 --> 00:51:56: implement it today.  
00:51:57 --> 00:52:00: Now, Michael, I know, I think what you said earlier  
00:52:00 --> 00:52:04: in our previous discussions was the interest for the city  
00:52:04 --> 00:52:07: to focus on values versus referring to a place or  
00:52:07 --> 00:52:09: as a form of symbolism.  
00:52:12 --> 00:52:12: Yeah.  
00:52:12 --> 00:52:16: So I mean the the, the Sankofa name in, I  
00:52:16 --> 00:52:20: mean it, it's it says a lot and it says  
00:52:20 --> 00:52:26: a lot about sort of language as this intangible heritage  
00:52:26 --> 00:52:27: that we pass on.  
00:52:27 --> 00:52:29: So a lot of the work that we do we  
00:52:29 --> 00:52:33: kind of look at tangible heritage being buildings and artifacts  
00:52:33 --> 00:52:37: and whatnot and it's and the relationship to intangible  
heritage  
00:52:37 --> 00:52:40: which is more about living histories like how do you  
00:52:40 --> 00:52:42: perpetuate ideas and culture.  
00:52:43 --> 00:52:47: And I mean what what's really fascinating with Sankofa is  
00:52:47 --> 00:52:51: it it it isn't a definition like so so often  
00:52:51 --> 00:52:56: our name places are connected to say, people and that  
00:52:56 --> 00:53:01: that person name, person relationship is very much about,  
you  
00:53:01 --> 00:53:06: know, a definition that you know can change over time.  
00:53:06 --> 00:53:09: And what what's really interesting with with Sankofa is about

00:53:09 --> 00:53:12: it's kind of like an action like doing the the,  
00:53:13 --> 00:53:16: the process of retrieving history and this whole idea of  
00:53:16 --> 00:53:20: retrieving histories is something, yeah, it is explored in  
heritage  
00:53:20 --> 00:53:23: and it's you know really interesting.  
00:53:23 --> 00:53:28: It's like how how do you kind of interpret what  
00:53:28 --> 00:53:32: happened in in a present and relevant way.  
00:53:33 --> 00:53:37: And I I think it's just really interesting this idea  
00:53:37 --> 00:53:42: of you know call it African language, Ghanaian language, I  
00:53:42 --> 00:53:46: can language but it become in shared heritage like and  
00:53:47 --> 00:53:50: it says a lot about language and how it it  
00:53:50 --> 00:53:56: transcends like at least ethnic, national, continental  
boundaries and it  
00:53:56 --> 00:54:00: takes on new meaning to tell the human story.  
00:54:00 --> 00:54:03: And I think it's just really interesting to see this  
00:54:03 --> 00:54:06: being part of the Canadian identity now like we are  
00:54:06 --> 00:54:09: we are taking this language and it's for all of  
00:54:09 --> 00:54:12: us to use and you know how what happens and  
00:54:12 --> 00:54:15: how how this story unfolds, we don't know.  
00:54:15 --> 00:54:18: But at this point it's it's just very interesting to  
00:54:18 --> 00:54:19: me.  
00:54:19 --> 00:54:21: Thank you, Robert.  
00:54:21 --> 00:54:21: Or tour?  
00:54:21 --> 00:54:22: Would you like to add anything?  
00:54:23 --> 00:54:23: Sure.  
00:54:23 --> 00:54:25: Yeah, I'll jump in.  
00:54:25 --> 00:54:26: So, yeah, it's, it's interesting.  
00:54:26 --> 00:54:31: I think it's when we're talking about the tangible language  
00:54:31 --> 00:54:35: my I take and I I think there's a beauty  
00:54:35 --> 00:54:36: to think of.  
00:54:36 --> 00:54:41: You know, thinking it's right next to TMU, which was  
00:54:41 --> 00:54:46: formerly Ryerson and where they, you know, tore down the  
00:54:46 --> 00:54:50: the statue at the foot of what was it right  
00:54:50 --> 00:54:54: at Gould and yeah, Bond Street, I'm thinking.  
00:54:54 --> 00:54:56: So I think this idea that things can change.  
00:54:56 --> 00:54:58: And I think at the same time I feel there's  
00:54:58 --> 00:55:00: a missed opportunity with these things.  
00:55:00 --> 00:55:04: So you know, we have, say, streets in Toronto that  
00:55:04 --> 00:55:08: are still named after slave owners.  
00:55:08 --> 00:55:13: So Russell Street or Peter St., for example, named after,  
00:55:13 --> 00:55:18: you know, Peter Russell, there's, you know, Indian Rd.  
00:55:18 --> 00:55:19: for example.

00:55:19 --> 00:55:21: So I think what I would really like to say,  
00:55:21 --> 00:55:24: I know this doesn't necessarily happen in politics.  
00:55:24 --> 00:55:27: Sometimes you kind of gravitate to one thing is the  
00:55:27 --> 00:55:32: opportunity to really, if we're going to rethink names, statues,  
00:55:32 --> 00:55:36: streets, holistically, what does that mean as a city?  
00:55:37 --> 00:55:40: And then I think too when we're talking about intangible  
00:55:40 --> 00:55:43: things like like a name, but what about some of  
00:55:43 --> 00:55:45: the tangible things?  
00:55:45 --> 00:55:46: You know, if we're going to, you know, the IT  
00:55:46 --> 00:55:47: was for a point there.  
00:55:47 --> 00:55:50: It wasn't just Dundas Square that was going to be  
00:55:50 --> 00:55:53: renamed the San Coppa Square, It was the entire, the  
00:55:53 --> 00:55:53: entire St.  
00:55:53 --> 00:55:57: And you know, the politicization of then businesses are  
changing  
00:55:57 --> 00:56:00: the names of the street, the subway stations.  
00:56:00 --> 00:56:03: And I think an interesting question which, you know, as  
00:56:04 --> 00:56:07: a designer, an architect, you know, makes you think from  
00:56:07 --> 00:56:10: an intangible perspective of say, a name and how we  
00:56:10 --> 00:56:11: think of a name.  
00:56:11 --> 00:56:14: What about then, you know, rethinking the actual tangible  
things  
00:56:14 --> 00:56:15: with the streets?  
00:56:15 --> 00:56:17: So are we just changing the name?  
00:56:17 --> 00:56:18: And that's it.  
00:56:18 --> 00:56:21: In many ways, Dundas Square is not a great square  
00:56:22 --> 00:56:25: and it and it has a lot of shortcomings, physical  
00:56:25 --> 00:56:28: shortcomings for many reasons that could be changed.  
00:56:29 --> 00:56:30: Dundas St.  
00:56:30 --> 00:56:33: you know, thinking of like complete streets and safe streets.  
00:56:33 --> 00:56:35: If we're going to say use St.  
00:56:35 --> 00:56:39: Koppa, which is aspirational, what does that aspiration come  
to  
00:56:39 --> 00:56:40: meaning?  
00:56:40 --> 00:56:43: Ideally it would come to be, you know, changing our  
00:56:43 --> 00:56:46: the built realm and urban design in built form of  
00:56:46 --> 00:56:48: the square and the broader St.  
00:56:49 --> 00:56:50: Thank you, Robert.  
00:56:51 --> 00:56:54: I don't really have much to add, but it is  
00:56:54 --> 00:56:58: a really exciting and interesting time to engage with with  
00:56:58 --> 00:57:03: with Black History in Toronto, sort of understanding where  
where  
00:57:03 --> 00:57:04: we've come from.

00:57:04 --> 00:57:08: And I think what what, Michael, you were saying about  
00:57:08 --> 00:57:12: developing that shared heritage, I mean that is an absolutely  
00:57:12 --> 00:57:14: sort of thrilling possibility.  
00:57:15 --> 00:57:18: And so, you know, I'm just excited that conversations like  
00:57:18 --> 00:57:22: this are happening and that they'll hopefully be many more  
00:57:22 --> 00:57:24: conversations to come.  
00:57:24 --> 00:57:25: And that is it.  
00:57:26 --> 00:57:28: There are hopefully there are many more conversations to  
come  
00:57:28 --> 00:57:30: and this is where I'm going to turn it back  
00:57:30 --> 00:57:31: and I'd like to thank all our panelists.  
00:57:32 --> 00:57:34: So this is a conversation that we're just starting and  
00:57:34 --> 00:57:35: by no means in the month of February are we  
00:57:35 --> 00:57:37: limited to having this conversation.  
00:57:37 --> 00:57:40: So I will turn it to Crystal for some closing  
00:57:40 --> 00:57:42: remarks from ULI Toronto.  
00:57:42 --> 00:57:43: Thank you everyone.  
00:57:44 --> 00:57:45: Thank you, Camille.  
00:57:45 --> 00:57:48: And on behalf of you Like Toronto, I want to  
00:57:48 --> 00:57:51: thank all of our speakers for joining us today and  
00:57:51 --> 00:57:55: for highlighting the powerful historic forces that are  
confronting legacy  
00:57:55 --> 00:57:58: challenges and fuelling the modern frontiers of city building.  
00:57:59 --> 00:58:01: With that, we say thank you for pushing this conversation  
00:58:01 --> 00:58:02: forward.  
00:58:02 --> 00:58:05: On the eve of Black History Month, we have our  
00:58:06 --> 00:58:08: upcoming events slide on screen.  
00:58:08 --> 00:58:11: Please be sure to check them out and visit the  
00:58:11 --> 00:58:12: events page that's posted in the chat.  
00:58:13 --> 00:58:15: Thank you all for joining us today and have a  
00:58:15 --> 00:58:17: great rest of the afternoon.

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