"SMALL CHANDIGARH"

REPRODUCTION OF CULTURAL SPACE AND IDENTITY IN SURREY, BC: IMPLICATIONS FOR MULTICULTURAL PLANNING

by

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Abstract

A key defining characteristic of Canadian Cities today is the increasing ethnic diversity created by changing immigration patterns over the past twenty years. In order to accommodate and ease the transition towards diversity, policy makers have created frameworks that respond to this multicultural context. Despite policy formation, however, changes in the ethnic composition of communities often manifest into tensions and conflict relating to changes in the physical landscape.

Using a case study approach, this research explores the dynamics of diversity exemplified in the mega house issue in Surrey, BC from 1990 to 1998. A review of secondary sources such as planning documents, public hearing minutes, bylaw amendments and newspaper articles provided an initial framework for the mega house issue. As well, in-depth interviews with planners, developers and residents were conducted in order to develop a more comprehensive understanding of the multiple perspectives. During the investigation, key questions for consideration were, how is urban planning as a public institution currently responding to the needs of a multicultural society? What kinds of approaches are utilized to encourage or discourage community participation? How are issues defined and by whom?

The analysis of the mega house issue underscores that while the ethnoracial composition of the population is changing, specific mechanisms and methods of planning are not available to address emerging issues of a diverse population. In order to work toward solutions, the planning profession needs to evaluate its current practices and approaches. Specifically when planning for diversity, participation and access to process and knowledge need to be important considerations. In particular, approaches need to promote wide representation and acknowledge barriers in order to give voice to the full scope of perspectives in a diverse community. Furthermore, planners need to be cognisant of the way they are delivering knowledge because this delivery in fact shapes perceptions and actions. Finally, planning for social issues and fostering community cohesion today is an integral part of the process in working toward building healthy sustainable communities for tomorrow.
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CHAPTER I
Introduction

As we move into the new millennium global flows of people, capital, culture and politics are continuing to change social landscapes in dramatic ways. A transformation of our existing societies is taking place. In the changing world of global integration this movement and migration is creating new opportunities as well as new dilemmas. As immigration patterns change the nature of cities is becoming more and more multiethnic. New forms of culture are being produced, and space is being reshaped and renegotiated. As a result notions of hybridity and struggles over space and identity are becoming inherent in our social landscapes. With social, cultural, political and economic ties grounded in multiple places across the globe, a new politics of difference is emerging. As conflict and tensions arise from this difference, we ask, can a new civic culture emerge from this diversity?

These changing immigration patterns are shaping not only the built environment, but also the social and cultural norms of urban life. Response to these changes is often occurring at the neighbourhood and community levels. As such, municipal planners are often at the fore-front when dealing with challenges that diversity poses. How planning responds to and manages these changes is crucial to building healthy diverse communities. Since social change is linked to the physical, planners need to expand the technical and land use orientation of planning to include managing the social implications of these changes.
My research will focus on the social and cultural dimensions of this change as it is manifested in the physical landscape of our cities. At the neighbourhood level, tensions often emerge from difference and are manifested in land use conflicts. Specifically, I will look at the case of the mega house issue in Surrey, BC from 1990 to 1998. During this time, changes in residential form created tension and conflict in the community. The case study approach will be used to develop a more in-depth understanding of issues and responses to rapid changes in city form brought about by immigration and increased diversity in Surrey. In particular, I will examine how municipal planning practices responded in an effort to manage this diversity.

A key question for consideration is how is urban planning as a public institution currently responding to the needs of a multicultural society? What kinds of approaches are utilized to encourage or discourage participation? How and by whom are issues defined? In order to examine these questions in more detail, I will use a case study approach to explore how planners are responding to changes in residential form in the City of Surrey, a city suburb outside of Vancouver, BC. In particular, I will focus on the “mega house” issue that began in the late 1980’s. Through this exploration I will examine what kinds of participatory mechanisms were employed as well as how and why this land use issue became a conduit for expression of racial tensions and community conflict.

In order to provide a contextual framework, chapter two will provide a review of the literature. This review will be presented in five sections. First, I will look at the role of immigration at the turn of the century through to present day. Specifically, we will see...
how early exclusionist policies have changed to create the diversity we see today. The
next section of the literature will examine legislative frameworks that have been created
to respond to this diversity. We will see how these frameworks such as multiculturalism
have contributed to the shaping of Canada's social identity.

The third section will review critiques of multiculturalism policy. Specifically, scholars
criticize the ideological nature of the policy (Bissoondath, 1994; Abu-Laban and
Stasiulis, 1992; Peter, 1981; Porter, 1965). We will see some authors contend that the
ideological nature of the policy promotes fragmentation and divisiveness. Others feel
that the ideology of multiculturalism is easily expropriated for capitalist purposes. Still
others argue that through the promotion of ideological aspects of multiculturalism,
underlying social problems are not defined.

The fourth section of the literature review looks at theoretical frameworks that may be
helpful in understanding multiculturalism and immigration. Specifically, we will look at
the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism. These perspectives try to explain the
phenomena of migration and social, cultural, political and economic ties that migrants
carry with them to the host country. In particular we will see how multiple allegiances
play out in the reproduction and reformulation of social identity and space.

After exploring policy and larger theoretical frameworks, the final section of chapter one
will focus on planning literature that looks at multiculturalism. Given that immigrants
enter Canadian society at the local level, the effects and responses to national policy
needs to also be examined at this level. In this section, the idea of local policy statements and advisory committee formation and its drawbacks will be explored. I will also examine the role of participation and citizen centred approaches. Finally the view that a full reformation of the planning system to accommodate multicultural interest will also be explored.

Chapter three will outline the methodological approach taken for this research. Specifically I will examine how the case study approach is useful to explore how municipalities are responding to multicultural changes in the landscape. I will use the case of the “mega home” issue, where rapid increases in ethnocultural diversity of the population manifested in changes to the residential form of the city. I will outline the policy responses from the municipality as well as the perspectives of the residents. The case study will provide an overview of this complex case, with multiple players and issues. This case study will also set up a framework from which to examine and analyze municipal responses to managing diversity.

The specific case study is presented in Chapter four. Here I will outline the specific details of the mega house issue in Surrey, BC. We will see that Surrey’s population began to experience increased diversity beginning in the late 1980’s. With these changes in diversity also came increased social tensions and land use conflicts over changes in residential form. Specifically the construction of larger homes, referred to as mega-homes by mainly the new South Asian community sparked complaints from existing long term Surrey residents. This issue fuelled tensions, underlying racism and fear in the
community. It also demonstrated the dynamics of integration. The case study will show how this issue played out in the City of Surrey as well as the municipal responses to it.

In chapter five a synthesis of the case study from perspectives developed in the literature review will be provided. For organizational purposes the analysis will be presented in four main sections. First, I will begin by drawing on the theoretical approaches around transnationalism and diaspora to explore the reproduction of space in Surrey. Specifically, I will argue that the construction of mega homes can be viewed as a reproduction of identity through a hybrid form of residential development.

Second, I will look at the process of problem construction through the communication strategies employed by the City of Surrey. I will show how the dissemination and omission of knowledge framed not only the issues, but also shaped action and responses. This section will lead nicely into the third section where I look at the process of community participation in the mega homes scenario. In particular, I will look at the ideological process of participation whereby the city attempted to create a participatory process. However due to the lack of community representation the participation was largely ceremonial and lacked meaningful insights from the many community perspectives.

In the last section of the analysis, I will examine the role of problem definition and non-definition. That is, problems do not exist as ‘objective identities,’ they are not givens, but are created through interpretation and social definition. Moreover, the act of defining
some problems and not others shapes policy agendas. Specifically, I will explore how the focus on physical land use aspects of the case has functioned as a diversion to avoid addressing the social conflicts underpinning the mega house issue. In fact, I will show that the process of not defining social tension and conflict embedded in the mega house issue has allowed the problem of racism to not be addressed in the City of Surrey.

The final chapter, chapter six will outline some implications for the field of planning that are raised by the analysis of the mega house issue in Surrey. The analysis of the mega house issue underscores the extent to which it is evident that while the ethnoracial compositions of the population is changing, specific mechanisms and methods of planning are not available to address emerging issues of a diverse population. Broad policy and vision statements and some committees are in place; however, the links between the larger policy statements and concrete practices tend to be missing. Planners need tools to enable them to move beyond the policy statements and include practical applications of community engagement. I will specifically outline implications for community participation and representation. Also I will point to the need for planners to expand their way of collecting and gathering knowledge. Finally, I will address the importance of including social planning priorities in the overall institution of planning.
CHAPTER II
Literature Review

With increased global migration countries around the world are experiencing increased diversity and changes in existing social norms. In trying to understand these changes a wide body of literature exists that explores theoretical and practical examinations resulting from the phenomena of mass migration. In the Canadian context, a range of literature that explores larger frameworks of immigration, multiculturalism, transnationalism and diaspora are well documented (Vertovec and Cohen; 1999; Van Hear, 1998; Hiebert, 1998, 1994; Croucher, 1997; Samuel, 1995; Olds, 1995; Tepper, 1994; Bissoondath, 1994; Mitchel, 1993). There is also a body of literature that looks at the role of planning in the multicultural context (Wallace, 2000, Au, 2000, Ameyaw, 2000; Qadeer, 2000; Sandercock, 1999; Penner, 2000; Rees, 1998).

There are, however, gaps in the literature that examine planning for multiculturalism. Although there is an acknowledgement of increased ethnic diversity in our cities, there appears to be little consensus about how to manage diversity, or if in fact, managing diversity is a realistic consideration. In order to provide a contextual framework for the research, this literature review will provide perspectives from the larger frameworks as well as from the local planning arena.

To begin, in order to understand the changing social dynamics taking place in Canadian cities, I will look at the historical policy frameworks that have contributed to the current
diversity and social change. Specifically I will examine the role of immigration, changes to the Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms as well as the formal creation of the multiculturalism policy. I will also explore critiques of multiculturalism policy as well as some of the theoretical frameworks put forth around multiculturalism and the social dynamics of global migration and identity formation. Finally, after exploring multiculturalism as a larger policy, I will focus on planning literature that addresses diversity and multiculturalism.

2.1 IMMIGRATION AND CANADA'S TRADITIONAL PAST

As far back as the National Policy of Sir John A. Macdonald immigration has always been used as a tool to help populate Canada, whether to 'settle or lose parts of the west', or for cheap foreign labour. Based on Canada's two founding nations, Britain and France, the population was historically more homogeneous than it is today. Early immigration policy was designed to attract white North Europeans who would be easily assimilated. Although immigrants at the turn of the century experienced discrimination, most had strong similarities between their cultures and those of their newly adopted country, and thus assimilating into Canadian society easier than for Non-Europeans (Wallace, 2000; Samuel, 1995) In terms of the Aboriginal population, according to Samuel (1995) they were either geographically segregated or forcibly integrated.

Non-Europeans came in small numbers, usually for specific and temporary economic purposes, but exclusionary immigration practices generally restricted them from entry. For example, the first "anti-Chinese" bill was passed in 1885. This included the imposition of a $50 head tax for persons of Chinese origin. In 1900 the head tax was
raised to $100 and in 1903 to $500 (Li, 1998:34). In 1923 the Canadian Parliament passed the Chinese Immigration Act. According to Li (1998), this was the most comprehensive legislation to prevent Chinese from entering the country and to control those already there. “According to this law, the entry into Canada of ‘persons of Chinese origin or descent irrespective of allegiance or citizenship’ would be restricted to diplomatic corps, children born in Canada to parents of Chinese race or decent, merchants, and students” (Li, 1998: 35). All others were excluded from entry into Canada.

Also, in the early part of the century, entry into Canada needed to be made in one consecutive journey. This policy was also designed to discourage immigration from Asia. However, some Asian immigrants did attempt to challenge this policy. A Japanese steam liner, Komagata Maru chartered by an affluent businessman to bring Indian immigrants to Vancouver set sail from Hong Kong carrying 376 Indians. When the Komagata Maru made it to Shanghai, a German cable company sent a message to the German press announcing the departure of the steamer Komagata Maru from Shanghai for Vancouver on April 14 with 400 Indians on board (Jagpal, 1994).

The news was picked up by British press. The Vancouver daily "Province", published the inflammatory news report under the heading of "Boat Loads of Hindus on Way to Vancouver". The British Columbia press began giving such headlines to their articles as "Hindu Invasion of Canada" (www.komagatamaru.com/history.htm). The news of its departure reached the British Columbia authorities. The Canadian authorities did not let the passengers leave the boat claiming they had violated the exclusionist laws. The claim
was that the ship had not arrived via direct passage and most passengers did not have the
$200 that would have qualified them to enter British Columbia. For two months the
passengers of the Komagata Maru, the Indians in British Columbia, and the authorities of
British Columbia were involved in a heated legal battle. At the end of the two months
only 24 passengers were given permission to legally stay in Canada (Jagpal, 1994).
These kinds of measures, generally kept the numbers of Non-European immigrants very
low.

The depression and WWII halted immigration for about fifteen years. However, after the
war, it was recognized that Canada needed to increase its population. After the Statute of
Westminster, passed in 1931, Canada had been given full control over its foreign and
domestic policy. As such, Prime Minister Mackenzie King indicated that immigrants
would be selectively allowed into Canada so as to not exceed its absorptive capacity or to
fundamentally alter the character of the country (Tepper, 1994). This meant that people
that were considered undesirable based on their race, were still restricted entry into
Canada.

2.2 CHANGING IMMIGRATION PATTERNS: 1960 -1990

Although Europe was the main source of immigration after the war, European
immigration started to decline in the 1960’s. Table one shows the shift in national origin
of Canadian immigration between 1961 and 1991. Overall, the percentage of immigrants
from Asia increased while the percentage of immigrants from Europe declined.
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Source: Employment and Immigration Canada

**Table 1. National Origin of Canadian Immigrants Between 1961 & 1991. (%)**

Several key changes in immigration policy had produced this shift in the distribution of immigrant source countries. First, amendments to the Immigration Act in 1962 involved the removal of ‘preferential’ treatment (categories of ‘preferred’ and ‘not preferred’ countries) replacing it with a focus on economic qualifications such as education, training and skills (Wallace, 1999). In 1967, the regulations were again amended to formalize an economic focus with a point system. This established a set of economic and educational criteria that qualify potential applicants for immigration. The creation of the ‘entrepreneurial immigrant’ class in 1978 further changed the criteria used for entry. And finally a ‘business investor’ class was created in 1986. This change allowed people with high net-worth to ‘buy’ visas. In return for the visa they had to invest 250,000 Canadian dollars in the country for three years to a program that would develop business and create jobs (Olds, 1995).

As a result of these changes an opportunity was created to enable substantial immigration from Asian countries. This was especially important for Hong Kong because of the fears associated with the 1997 reversion of Hong Kong by Mainland China. As a result, the
immigration from Asian countries increased substantially. According to the 1991 census, the Chinese population was the largest visible minority group in Canada (626,000), followed by South Asians (506,000) and Blacks (504,000) (Olds, 1995). Apart from the high numbers, the most significant feature of immigrant settlement in Canada during this time was that they lived mostly in metropolitan areas such as Toronto and Vancouver. By 1991 the city of Vancouver had 22 percent of people claiming Chinese origin and by 1996 this figure increased to 27.2 percent.

As a result of changing immigration patterns, the face of many Canadian cities has changed to show a more ethnically diverse mix. With the changes in the ethnic composition of Canadian cities, there are also came social changes. In the next section I will explore legislative frameworks that were created to help respond to the increasing diversity in Canada.

2.3 MULTICULTURALISM: Legislative Frameworks

Along with changes to immigration policy, there were also legislative changes that helped respond to the increased diversity. In 1971, the Trudeau government initiated a federal plan for multiculturalism within a bilingual framework. According to Mitchell (1993) specific multicultural programs focussed on general questions of Canadian National identity and on reduction of animosity with the Quebecois. (Mitchell, 1993: 280). Kallen (1982) as quoted in Li (1999) argues that there was a clear division between private and public sectors in the approach to cultural diversity and official bilingualism. That is “members of ethnic groups would be expected to conform to Canada’s official
languages in public institutions, but would be encouraged to pursue an ethnic culture and lifestyle of their choice in their private life" (1999: 151). As such, official bilingualism would be upheld, while at the same time all Canadians, including ethnic minorities, were able to retain their culture. According to Li (1999), at this time, the federal government provided only moderate financial assistance to ethnic groups for their pursuit of cultural expression, and no political demand was placed on institutions to incorporate multiculturalism.

The objectives of the 1971 multiculturalism policy were described as follows:

1. The Government of Canada will support all of Canada's cultures and will seek to assist, resources permitting, the development of those cultural groups that have demonstrated a desire and effort to continue to develop, a capacity to grow and contribute to Canada, as well as a clear need for assistance.
2. The Government will assist members of all cultural groups to overcome cultural barriers to full participation in Canadian society.
3. The Government will promote creative encounters and interchange among all cultural groups in the interest of national unity.
4. The Government will continue to assist immigrants to acquire at least one of Canada's official languages in order to become full participants in Canadian society. (Canada, House of Commons Debates 1971:8581 as quoted in Li, 1999)

In the 1980's, however, the federal government increased funding for multiculturalism and also focussed on moving multiculturalism into the constitutional and statutory levels of government. In 1982, the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms included a provision that was related to multiculturalism. Section 27 “explicitly linked the interpretation of the charter as consistent with the ‘preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians’” (as quoted in Mitchell, 1993:281). According to Peter Li (1999) in the 1980's along with continuing its commitment to cultural retention, the federal multiculturalism program broadened its scope to include race relations. The
Race Relations Unit was set up in the Multiculturalism Directorate in 1982, to fund programs that combat racism and promote harmonious race relations.

The multicultural policy, however received further criticism. The 1987 report of the Standing Committee on Multiculturalism called the 1971 policy ‘clearly insufficient’ and ‘out of date’ because the policy did not have the statutory protection of the Official Languages Act that bilingualism had or the infrastructural support of the Commissioner of Official Languages (Li, 1999: 155). The committee recommended that a separate Department of Multiculturalism be created to advance the multiculturalism policy.

Concurrent to the Standing Committee’s report the federal government had announced in its speech to the throne, its intentions to develop the Multiculturalism Act (Li, 1999). Originally tabled as Bill C-93, the official Canadian Multiculturalism Act was passed in 1988\(^1\). The Multiculturalism Act expanded its original four objectives into ten elements:

1. To acknowledge the freedom of cultural choice for all Canadians
2. To recognize and promote multiculturalism as a fundamental characteristic of Canada
3. To promote full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins
4. To enhance the development of communities sharing a common origin
5. To ensure equal treatment and protection for all individuals while respecting their diversity
6. To encourage and assist social institutions to be respectful and inclusive of Canada’s multicultural character
7. To promote the understanding from intergroup interactions
8. To foster the recognition and appreciation of diverse Canadian cultures
9. To preserve and enhance non-official languages while strengthening the official languages of Canada
10. To advance multiculturalism in harmony with commitment to official languages (S.C 1988, c.31,s.3 as quoted in Li 1999:155-6).

\(^1\) See Appendix I for a complete version of the Canadian Multiculturalism Act.
An excerpt from the Act reads:

3.(1) It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada (a) to recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage.

(Canadian Multiculturalism Act: as quoted in Bissoondath, 1994: 39)

The Multiculturalism Act sets out an ideological framework to support a particular and positive view, of what a multicultural society can be. The act also commits the federal government to promote policies that enhance understanding of and respect for the diversity of the members of Canadian society. Although these statements provide general goals and philosophical direction, they tend to be open widely to interpretation. In the next section we will look at some critiques put forth by scholars that address some of the shortcomings of multiculturalism policy.

2.4 CRITIQUES OF MULTICULTURALISM

The question of whether our national multiculturalism policy is beneficial or serves the countries best interests have also been put forth by academics. Although many agree with the general approach or ideology of the larger policy, they claim that moving from policy to action is difficult due to the very vague nature of the multicultural policy itself. In this section I will examine these various perspectives.

Fragmentation and Divisiveness

Some scholars contend that the Multiculturalism Act promotes the fragmentation and divisiveness of the nation (Bissoondath, 1994; Abu-Laban and Stasiulis, 1992; Peter, 1981; Porter, 1965). One of the earliest critiques of multiculturalism in Canada came
from Porter’s (1965) Vertical Mosaic. Porter argued that although Canada is a mosaic of
different cultural groups, the ethnic membership is highly correlated with class, creating a
mosaic that is in fact very hierarchical. He argues that vertical stratification of class
overlaps with the horizontal stratification of ethnicity. From his perspective, while
encouraging cultural distinctiveness, in practical terms multiculturalism might be a
laudable goal, it fosters ethnic separation, creates ethnic enclaves and slows the process
of assimilation.

Neil Bissoondath (1994) argues that fragmentation and divisiveness are products of
multiculturalism. He questions the limits of how far Canada should go in promoting and
encouraging cultural difference. He questions “is there a point at which diversity begins
to threaten social cohesion?” (Bissoondath, 1994: 43). He argues that by making policy
and provisions aimed at encouraging division and difference, ethnic groups are
discouraged from looking for commonalities among themselves. He argues that the act is
also full of assumptions about the people that are coming here from other places. It
implies that each group is homogeneous with all holding exactly the same values and
beliefs. In his view, the act accents the differences rather than commonalities. In
particular, he believes it promotes an “exotic” or otherness about the foreigner and a
belief that this person wants to be viewed as being different.

Peter (1981) also criticises multiculturalism for its emphasis on ethnic exotica and that
ethnic groups exist outside of or independent from Canadian society. According to Peter
(1981), multiculturalism creates a “we” and “they” syndrome that reduces the role of
ethnic groups to “that of contributors of quaint cultural practices and upholders of individual identities, while at the same time it denies them a political and economic reality in Canadian life” (1981: 57).

**Expropriation of Policy**

Katharyne Mitchell (1993) argues that the Multiculturalism Act is a positive policy; however it has been politically expropriated to promote capitalism. Mitchell argues that the production and promotion of multiculturalism in Canada conceals particular power configurations. In the context of rising tensions around city transformation, and rapid capitalist development the concept of multiculturalism is appropriated to suit capitalist needs. Using the façade of racial harmony and national identity, she contends that multicultural ideology is being ‘re-worked’ and used to promote capitalist interests. Specifically, Mitchell reviews the case of Vancouver and the influx of foreign investment from Hong Kong during the early 1990’s. She points to the backlash of racist attitudes that emerged during that time with the case of the larger homes that were replacing traditional homes in the Shaughnessy area of Vancouver as well as the large Concord Pacific Condominium developments along the north shore of False creek.

Mitchell argues that policy directions emerged to address specific development issues. In response to changes occurring in Shaughnessy and other areas, there was a flourishing of organizations and private institutions involved in promoting multicultural understanding, particularly between Vancouver and Hong Kong. Groups such as the Hastings Institute, the Affiliation of Multicultural Societies and Services Agencies of BC and the Laurier
Institute emerged in 1989 and 1990. In particular, the Laurier Institute, a private institution, was the most prominent and well financed. According to Mitchell, six businessmen founded the Laurier institute, but their brochures do not identify the founders by name. The board of directors in 1990 were four lawyers in major law firms, three executives in large corporations, two investment and management councillors and one real estate executive.

Mitchell indicates that while these institutions are promoting multicultural understanding, their underlying goals and interests need to be examined. She contends that the composition of the Laurier Institute Board may indicate that the promotion of multiculturalism may overlap with their business investment and foreign investment interests. For example, of the corporations or the firms represented, nine were directly or indirectly involved with Hong Kong business or investment. Furthermore, reports commissioned by this group include a study of real estate prices that show rising prices of housing were a product of demand from aging post-war baby boomers, not from rising immigration, as well as another report that showed that immigration levels did not contribute to speculation in the housing market. Mitchell indicates that soon after these reports, headlines in the Vancouver Sun read “Foreign buyers absolved.” And the Globe and Mail wrote “Aging baby boomers, not foreign immigrants are the main reason Vancouver housing prices are rising, a study says....” (285). Mitchell argues that these reports were not as concerned with showing the possible reasons for price increases, but more with what are not possible reasons.
She also points to the federal government’s strategy involving mitigation of racial tensions emerging around the increase of wealthy Asian immigrants. Again, there are similar directions of promoting multicultural understanding for business and economic interests. For example, Prime Minister Brian Mulroney promoted the economic benefits of multiculturalism in 1986 at a conference called “Multiculturalism Means Business” (Mitchell, 1993: 281). Mitchell indicates that in his speech, Mulroney made links between Canada’s need for export markets and increased trading opportunities “with a more nurturing, progressive stance of government ‘vis a vis’ the nations ethnic members who might perhaps have links to ‘other’ parts of the globe.” (Mitchell, 1993: 281).

Overall, Mitchell argues that we need to examine “who is saying what and why about multiculturalism” (288). We have to look below the surface of what people say to see what motivates them. This is the first step toward contesting and reclaiming meaning around the ideology of multiculturalism and creating more positive interpretations.

**Problem Definition and Non-Definition**

Similarly, Sheila Croucher (1997) examines the ideological nature of multiculturalism policy. Specifically Croucher looks at the process of problem definition in the context of multiculturalism. Croucher begins by looking at the broad body of literature that informs the study of problem definition and the construction of issues, images and identities. She indicates that scholars have long recognized the importance of factors other than ‘objective conditions’ in explaining policy agendas, decisions, and outcomes, and the ‘malleability’ of public issues and openness to their interpretation. Overall, she contends
that problems do not exist as ‘objective identities’, they are not simply givens, but are a matter of “interpretation and social definition” (Croucher, 1997: 321). She quotes Becker (1966) in saying that “social problems are what people think they are” (321). Furthermore she point to the issue of access and power, and argues that the public arena is not set on an equal playing field, that some groups have greater access to power than others, and therefore are able to define the shape and definition of public issues (321).

She uses this theoretical approach of problem definition and non-definition in looking at the case of Toronto. She argues that problem non-definition created by ideological representations of Toronto prevents certain conditions, grievances, and claims from being defined as social problems. Specifically, she examines Toronto’s notoriety as a city that promotes “ethnic harmony” in the context contradictory interpretations and experiences. In looking at problem non-definition, Croucher also looks at the role of multiculturalism as an ideology that constructs and maintains an image of ethnic harmony in Toronto. She argues that the policies and rhetoric of multiculturalism focus on the symbolic nature of ethnic group identity, but fail to address the more material conditions of immigrant groups (Croucher, 1997: 333). Croucher contends that ideologies and rhetoric of multiculturalism serve to portray Toronto in terms of ethnic harmony, and as such function to prevent racism as being defined as a social problem in Toronto.

She looks at the historical name of Toronto as a derivative of Turuntu, the native Huron Indian word for meeting or gathering place and its evolution into “Toronto the Good.” Croucher notes that with changes in immigration and increasing numbers of immigrants
from Asian and Caribbean countries “life in ‘Toronto the Good’ changed dramatically” (325). Toronto became home to the largest percentage of visible minorities in Canada. As of 1991, immigrants accounted for 33 percent of the population.

The portrayal of ‘Toronto the Good’ in the media continued the positive image. Croucher indicates that media reports suggested that “Toronto was remarkable in terms of how smoothly the city absorbed and adapted the presence of these newcomers” (325). Public widespread attention and praise began as Toronto was featured by Harper’s Magazine as “the Canadian city that works” (325). Other spokespeople for multiculturalism in Toronto also reinforced this positive image. The director of the Multicultural History Society in Ontario in an interview with Maclean’s in 1986, said “that Toronto still represented ‘all that is potentially rich in neighbourhood terms of mutli-racial harmony, commitment to quality, private initiative and integration of employment and residential life’” (326). These positive images gave rise to the story of Toronto’s success.

This ‘successful’ image of Toronto, continued to be portrayed in tandem with other events that indicated otherwise. On May 4th, 1992 Toronto experienced its first ‘U.S. Style’ race riot. According to Croucher, the riot was originally scheduled as a peaceful demonstration to protest the acquittal of the Los Angeles Police officers accused of beating Rodney King. However, this public gathering took on great significance, after the shooting of a black man by Metropolitan Toronto police. Croucher adds that this shooting was just one in a long series of shootings of black men in Toronto.
The racial unrest in Toronto continued to be framed and defined as a problem that was not inherent to Toronto’s structures. Croucher states that many officials were willing to recognize the riot as a public crisis, but located the blame outside of Toronto’s political, social and economic structures. For example, a Toronto police sergeant “explained the disturbance as a product of outside agitators, specifically blacks from the United States” (330). Beyond the riot, public officials responded to questions about Toronto’s success in the area of race and ethnic relations “by emphasizing the role of the City’s social programs” and by pointing out that Canada “does not have the same shameful record of slavery and racial injustice that the United States does” (331).

2.5 OTHER THEORETICAL APPROACHES

In the context of exploring multiculturalism, there are also some theoretical concepts worth examining. As a result of increased immigration and global migration in the last 25 years there are also theories around the formation of diaspora and transnationalism. According to Van Hear (1998), the term diaspora refers to a situation created by migration whereby people have multiple allegiances to place. There has also been an emergence of transnationalism – the formation of social, political and economic relationships among migrants that span several societies. Both the concepts of diaspora and transnationalism are in-extricably linked. In the literature on transnationalism, there is also considerable discussion surrounding a kind of ‘diaspora consciousness’ marked by dual or multiple identifications, from an individual awareness of “decentred attachments, of being simultaneously ‘home away from home’, ‘here and there’ (Vertovec and Cohen, 1999): xxi). Exploring these concepts in further detail may be useful in understanding in
general terms, how global identities are constructed and, more specifically how the multicultural context of Canadian society took shape.

Nicholas Van Hear (1998) contends that diasporas are populations that meet three criteria. First, the population is dispersed from a homeland to two or more territories. Second, the presence abroad is “enduring” and includes movement between the homeland and the new host country. Third, there is some kind of social political, economic or cultural exchange among the spatially dispersed populations. Van Hear (1998) uses the term transnational community to include diaspora, but also to include populations that are contiguous rather than scattered (6).

Steven Vertovec and Robin Cohen (1999) point to the complexities of this diasporic and transnational phenomena created by migration. They suggest that diasporic populations are socially, culturally as well as physically, not anchored in their place of origin, or their place of destination. As such, in the global age diasporas are acknowledged “and even feared by policy makers” who see these kinds of multiple allegiances as a threat to nation building. However, Vertovec and Cohen argue that these diasporic and transnational populations in fact can be a positive means of bridging national and transnational economies, cultures and societies.

The discussion of diaspora and transnationalism also looks at these phenomena as modes of cultural production. Vertovec (1998) points to the creation of a ‘hybrid’ culture and political identity as a result of diaspora and transnationalism. He argues that the tensions between political and cultural orientations, the divided loyalties result in new
contestations, reproductions and reconstitutions of identity. He points to Stuart Hall’s (1991) work in cultural studies that looks at the production and reproduction of forms. According to Vertovec, Hall offers some important insights regarding diaspora, ethnicity and identity. Hall argues that the diaspora experience is not defined by the essence of purity, but by the:

Recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity; a conception of identity which lives with and through, not despite difference; by hybridity. Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference (as quoted in Vertovec and Cohen, 1999: xx).

Hall indicates that the production of this hybrid cultural phenomena and ‘new ethnicities’ is found especially among youth as their primary mode of socialization has taken place “with the cross-currents of differing cultural fields” (Vertovec and Cohen, 1999: xx).

The reproduction of place or locality has also been a topic of diaspora transnationalism literature. Vertovec and Cohen (1999) argue that the “nationalist project” was to make space and identity coincide. That is, the idea and production of space should be based on a unified identity. However, Vertovec and Cohen contend that practices and meanings from people’s geographical and historical points of origin are transplanted and reconstructed in new destinations. They argue that transnationalism has changed people’s relations to space, as new “translocalities” are formed through the negotiation and reproduction of identity.

The survival of kinship networks in the migration process has also been explored in the study of diaspora and transnationalism. Harvey Choldin (1999) indicates that although
some scholars contend that the prospects of industrialism, geographic mobility, and
migration destroy the extended family, research has shown otherwise. Choldin argues
that despite the spatial dispersion of household members, the extended family continues
to exist. In fact the extended family has persisted over different generations and has
continued strong affective ties among its members.

He looks at the work of Litwak to offer an explanation for the persistence of the extended
family. According to Choldin, Litwak argues that the extended family aids members of
migrating as well as receiving communities. First, he argues that the receiving
community, in an extended family situation is able to pool its resources to help with the
migrant family member’s trip and settlement. As well, the receiving family, through its
social networks and resources is able to help in the adjustment to urban life and re-
establishing social ties in a new community. In looking at the perspectives around the
concept of multiculturalism, it is important to understand the complex social relationships
and contextual frameworks around the experiences of migration. Thus, the concepts of
diaspora and transnationalism need to be included in the discussion of multiculturalism.

2.6 PLANNING AND MULTICULTURALISM

After looking at multiculturalism from a broad theoretical framework such as diaspora
and transnationalism, in order to understand what is happening at the local level, it is also
important to examine the literature on planning for diversity. Since the 'lived experience'
occurs at the local level, a review of the local planning literature would be useful as
municipal planners are generally the policy makers who respond to the day to day manifestations and outcomes of increased diversity.

There tend to be two main streams of thought around planning for diversity. One line of thinking indicates that planning should be done for the “public good” and specific policies around ethnicity would give special treatment to certain groups. As such, planners are generally reluctant to plan for multiculturalism because attempts to zone for one group may accommodate one while restricting another. From this perspective, planning for ethnicity occurs on a case-by-case basis, responding to special needs as they arise.

On the other hand, in planning circles, some academics contend that planning is for people, and there is no “one” public good, in this environment of diversity there are multiple publics. As such, in order to serve the public interest, planners need to recognize the changing ethno-cultural demographics of their community and respond accordingly. Furthermore, planners are recognizing that multiculturalism is changing the urban and suburban environment, and thus the tools planners use need to change as well. Overall, although there is recognition of increased diversity, there seems to be no clear consensus as to what planning for diversity should entail. In this next section I will review some of the literature as it pertains to planning for multiculturalism.
Policy Statements and Advisory Committees

Some planning approaches use changes in policy statements and creation of advisory committees as a first step toward addressing diversity issues. In terms of looking at local policies and practices in British Columbia, a report written by Paul Penner (2000) finds that most municipalities in BC adopted multicultural policy statements in response to changing immigration patterns; however most of the outcomes are adaptations of general multicultural policy statements, diversity training for staff, and the formation of advisory committees. Specifically the report uses a case study approach to assess the multicultural policies and practices of eight municipalities in British Columbia: Burnaby, Coquitlam, Kelowna, City of North Vancouver, District of North Vancouver, Prince George, Richmond, and Vancouver.

The study found that most of the multicultural policy statements were broadly articulated supporting a philosophical perspective. Common elements amongst the formally adopted multicultural policy statements included recognition of diversity in the community, support for equitable access to services, promotion of positive attitudes, condemnation of discriminatory attitudes and support for participation of all citizens in determining multicultural services (Penner, 2000). Prior to adopting formal multicultural principles, most municipalities had ad hoc practices that fell into areas such as translation, interpretation, events, outreach and training.

According to Penner, Burnaby, Richmond and Vancouver, began experiencing increased cultural diversity in the 1980's. During the mid 1980's, these municipalities completed a
review of their multicultural policies. After this review, it was determined that these municipalities would adopt formal municipal multicultural policies in order to proactively respond to their community’s increasing diversity. Vancouver and Burnaby adopted multicultural policies in 1986, and Richmond in 1991. Some common approaches to implementation included multicultural and diversity training for staff, translation of documents, multilingual signage, interpretation and events.

Along with adopting formal policy statements, in order to foster community participation, the use of advisory boards and committees is also a common approach used by many municipalities. According to Penner, the use of internal and external advisory committees is more prevalent in the policy and development phase. Internal committees are comprised of inter-departmental representatives, and external committees are usually comprised of representatives from community organizations, the general public and Council. However, Penner, states that few municipalities maintain committees that specifically guide implementation of multicultural policy on an on-going basis.

Tim Rees (1998) also believes that principles of participation and inclusion are fundamental for planning in a multicultural environment. However, he questions how these principles can be translated into practice. Specifically he examines the City of Toronto and the creation of race relations, citizen’s councils, commissions and advisory committees as a vehicle for citizen participation. Overall, he finds in the end that advisory committees are in fact disempowering tools and serve as obstacles to true inclusion and civic participation.
Rees argues that committees are often ceremonial and as such ineffective in producing broad substantive changes in the status of racial minorities. He points out that several authors that have found that the committees tend to be consumed by the larger politics of the municipality, and are often co-opted because they are appointed by politicians and are expected to be loyal (Rees, 1998; Reitz, 1988; Keith and Murji, 1987). Rees also notes that advisory councils have also been criticized as being powerless. Because of their advisory status, they are not able to make decisions, cannot hold anyone accountable, and have a discretionary mandate that can be revoked at any time by the mayor. As such, despite their level of activity, advisory committees are generally incapable of making policies and programs.

In conclusion, Rees contends that advisory committees are in fact obstacles to meaningful and legitimate civic participation. Furthermore, due to their advisory nature, they are an inappropriate mechanism to deal with institutional racism; they “may be able to buy time, but cannot resolve conflict” (Rees, 1998: 23). Rees does not offer any alternatives, but does argue that these committees are not an effective means to reform the institutional process, and thus for true civic participation to occur, other empowerment mechanisms should be pursued.

Citizen-Centred Approaches—Participation

Others suggest that formation of policy statements is not enough; multicultural planning requires a citizen-centred approach (Au, 2000; Ameyaw, 2000, Forester 1999, 1989, 1980; Sandercock, 1998). The notion of participation and access is important and a
change in the approach to planning needs to occur in order to facilitate true participation. John Forester (1999) contends that planning is an interactive, communicative activity that requires a more qualitative approach. He draws on the work of Jurgen Habermas’ critical communications theory of society to reflect on planning practice. Forester argues that planning actions are not only technical, but they are “communicative,” and that talking and listening play an important role in the access and shaping of knowledge. Forester feels that situations are unique and contextual, and storytelling can provide valuable insights.

He acknowledges the political nature of planning in which relations of power and systematic inequalities are involved. Planners need to pay attention to these imbalances of power and work to redress them. Furthermore, he contends that communications also shape action and agenda. As such, planners need to be cognisant of their ways of communicating information. What planners say is just as important as what they don’t say. Communication strategies shape information and citizen’s access to information, interpretation of the information as well as their ability to participate effectively.

Wendy Au (2000) also suggests a need for more participatory approaches and effective communication strategies. She suggests that multicultural planning is not a doctrine, but rather a process. This process involves community development, education, communication and integration. In particular she argues that communication strategies are essential in developing positive dialogue between community members so that sensitive issues are not left to public hearings. Furthermore, Au says that in developing communication strategies, planners need to understand cultural contexts and not rely on
literal translations. She suggests that the right interpretation requires information that people can relate to their own experience.

Au believes that a multicultural planner’s job involves determining how well current practices serve the population, and adjusting them as the population changes. She contends that “one of the biggest obstacles that planners face is the systematic resistance of their own profession. The fear of change pits traditionalists against the innovators, specialized approaches against the integrated ones” (21). As such, she suggests that we need to strike a balance in finding new ways to address social changes in our urban centres. In particular, planners need to understand how all groups are affected by change, and deal with the tensions that arise between racial and socio-economic groups.

Stephen Ameyaw (2000) suggests also an alternative model for multicultural planners to engage the community. He suggests a communicative planning process that he refers to as “Appreciative Planning.” This approach to planning is based on “mutual respect, trust, and care-based action” that helps create a “two-way learning and problem solving” process. He argues that in today’s pluralistic society, the “appreciative” concept confronts the real conflicts, issues, dissent, and trade-offs in city planning.

In his analysis he brings forward examples in dealing with diversity with issues surrounding mega-homes in Surrey, BC and single-room occupancy housing in Vancouver. In both of those cases he points out that planner’s use public hearings, town hall meetings and zoning changes in response to divergent groups. He argues that these
approaches create further tensions and conflicts between competing groups, because “their methods are too abstract and do not address ‘real’ concerns of ethno-cultural groups” (2000: 105). He suggests that planners need to be able to appreciate the values and assets of different groups and include them in the planning process.

Multiple Publics and the question of the “Public Good”

Others also argue that planning for multiculturalism requires a re-evaluation and a new approach. Along with citizen based, participatory approaches, planning needs to recognize the multiple publics, and that there is no “one public good.” (Sandercock, 1998). Sandercock argues that we need to change our planning vocabulary to include concepts of social justice, community, multiple publics and new ways of knowing. Sandercock argues that a new language is required to manage and acknowledge difference in our cities.

In order to respond to culturally diverse populations, or multiple publics, Sandercock believes that the current technical and rational ways of gathering information, need to also include and acknowledge other ways of knowing. In her work, she describes six other ways of knowing through: dialogue, experience, local knowledge, symbolic and non-verbal evidence, symbolic or appreciative knowledge and learning by doing.

Similar to Sandercock’s argument, Wallace and Milroy (1999) suggest that planning needs to adopt holistic approaches when looking at managing diversity. In their examination of planning for diversity, they contend that policy generally does not address
'multiple aspects’ of diversity, such as gender, ethnicity and class. They suggest that responding to these characteristics together would produce an exchange of ‘something new rather than another opportunity for the dominant group to train subordinate groups in its ways’ (Wallace and Milroy, 1999: 55).

Wallace and Milroy argue that it is important to acknowledge that a person’s experience and identity is not formed by ethnicity or culture alone (1999: 59). To illustrate this, they examine occupational statistics of immigrants and those born in Canada. They find that there are intersections and parallels in terms of gender and class in the distribution of major occupations. Furthermore, in terms of economic contribution, there are omissions of informal labour, paid and unpaid, which exist beyond the formally recognized labour force. They argue that this type of work is especially relevant because it is where a disproportionate number of women and ethnic minorities find themselves working (61).

Wallace and Milroy contend that planners tend not to differentiate groups along ethnic, gender or cultural lines. In Ontario, for example, people are defined through planning legislation as generic and undifferentiated, using terms such as “persons” or “public.” This type of approach conceals the complexities of planning for a “multiple” public. Furthermore, they also argue these that there are few conceptual tools and documented approaches that deal with diversity initiatives. These approaches need to be pursued and municipalities need to continue to find ways to hear and work with collections of diverse people.
Reformation of the Existing Planning System

Another planning initiative that needs to be included is changes to official municipal plans. Qadeer (2000) examines the case of planning in Ontario to illustrate this perspective. First he provides a brief overview of the planning process, showing that at this point, multicultural issues are generally dealt with on a case-by-case basis. He also points out that municipal decisions fall under legislative frameworks such as the Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms (1982), the Multiculturalism Act (1985) and the Ontario Human Rights Code (1990). However, he argues that municipal councils have considerable discretion in their decision-making, which results in varying degrees of sensitivity to cultural norms and ethnic minorities (Qadeer, 2000: 190).

As such, without a general planning direction embedded in official community plans, city councillors have a high degree of interpretation. Thus it leaves much of the direction on ethno-cultural issues in the hands of municipal councils. Being handled on a case-by-case basis means the progressive or conservative nature of the council may determine how seemingly "fair" various decisions may be perceived.

Qadeer examines the substantive issues of planning; land use, housing, institutions and services, and architecture and aesthetics. He cites various examples in the Ontario context with respect to each area. In conclusion, he finds that although Ontario has established a legislative framework that helps curb discrimination and accommodate multiculturalism, culturally sensitive planning is in its early phases. He suggests that
there needs to be a systematic re-examination of planning policies, standards and practices.

Qadeer makes three specific recommendations for the reform of Ontario’s planning system. First, there needs to be explicit provincial regulations that require all planning regulations to conform to the Human Rights Act. Second, there needs to be a system-wide review of planning policies and standards from a multicultural perspective. And finally, Qadeer suggests power-sharing through the inclusion of ethnic minorities in planning decision-making bodies. He contends that these kinds of changes will help lay necessary groundwork for promoting institutional change in Ontario’s planning system that is required to serve multicultural populations.

2.7 CONCLUSION

As we have seen from the literature, the process of immigration after the late 1970's has changed the ethnic and social make-up of Canada, spawning tensions and fears. In response to these changes, national policies have been created to foster the multicultural identity of the nation. However, the movement from ideology to practice has not been smooth. As critics of multiculturalism policy point out, this policy can create further divisiveness, ideological responses and mask underlying tensions. As such, the phenomena created by changes in increased ethnicity need to be understood from the literature on diaspora and transnationalism.
After looking at larger frameworks, it is also important to examine what is happening at the local level. Since the ‘lived experience’ occurs at the local level, a review of the local planning literature was also reviewed. Municipal planners are generally the policy makers that experience the day to day experiences of increased diversity. As such, local policy and practices may most directly impact the lived experiences of the local community.

The literature shows that there are many different approaches when it comes to managing diversity. Generally there tends to be a school of thought that promotes planning for ethnicity on a case-by-case basis, that planning regulations are made for the “public” good, the one public and that no specific policies should be made for ethnicity. Others, however argue that planners need to recognize the increasing diversity in their communities, and in order to effectively respond, they need to re-evaluate their policies and approaches. Overall, although there is recognition of increased diversity, there seems to be no clear consensus as to what planning for diversity should entail.

To obtain a clearer, more in-depth understanding of the real tensions and responses to ethno-cultural change in our cities we now move on to the case study of ‘mega-homes’ in the city of Surrey, BC from 1990 to 1997. We will see how these aspects of multiculturalism, transnationalism and diaspora are playing out at the local level and how the municipal government is responding through formation of policy and legal frameworks.
CHAPTER III
Methodology

This research used a case study approach to look at how municipalities respond to complex multicultural changes in the landscape. In particular, the focus was on the City of Surrey, BC. Between 1991 and 1996 the City of Surrey has undergone rapid change and increased diversity in the ethno-cultural composition of its population. In such a case I was interested in how the planners and politicians in the City of Surrey respond to social, cultural and physical changes in the landscape that are brought about with a changing population.

The goal of this study was exploratory because institutional responses to change in residential form involving racial undertones are not well documented. By using a case study approach, I was able to do focus on the specifics of one case to study the institutional responses from the city of Surrey in response to the construction of mega homes. This approach also allowed a form for the documentation of such issues where one did not exist before.

3.1 RESEARCH DESIGN

Case study approaches are a prominent form of qualitative research design. They are especially useful when a case is complex and involves multiple people. With the case of the mega-house issue in the City of Surrey, this approach lent itself well to exploring the complexity of the issue. To begin, the issue spanned over about a ten year period. Mega home complaints began in the early 1990’s and continually re-surfaced through until
recent day. Using a case study approach, I was able to provide an in-depth recount of the case throughout this time period. In addition, the case involved numerous changes to bylaws and policy at the City of Surrey. Using secondary documents and amendments allowed for the compilation of this information.

The case study was particularly useful in capturing the multiple perspectives around this issue. For example, there were citizens both opposed to the construction of larger homes as well as those in favour. The case study design allowed for a consideration of both of these perspectives. In addition, politicians and staff from the city of Surrey and their responses added to the web of people involved. Finally, the media’s role in the portrayal of the issues was an important aspect of the case. The case study design allowed for a description of this area as well.

Explanatory insight is also an important aspect of this study, as such combining the theoretical approaches reviewed in the literature with the descriptive accounts using a case study design, allowed for a critical analysis of the issues. Furthermore this analysis served as a tool to look at policy implications.

3.2 DATA COLLECTION

Multiple methods were used to gather the data for the case study. Specifically I used in-depth open ended interviews and analysis of secondary documents. Using these multiple methods allowed for an in-depth analysis of the issues.
Interviews

A qualitative interview approach was used to gather information from respondents. A total of 16 in-depth interviews were conducted: five with planning staff, 2 with developers, 2 with real estate agents and 7 with residents in the community. In the approach, a series of open-ended, probing questions were asked in order to understand the issue from various perspectives. The interviews with planners consisted of current staff at the City of Surrey, as well as people that used to be planners during earlier stages of the issue. Two were no longer working for the city of Surrey. Questions posed to the planners were not only focussed on gathering facts for the case study, but also their personal perspectives about the mega house issue and about planning for diversity in general.

Interviews with the developers and the real estate agents also helped elicit different perspectives on the mega house issue, specifically in terms of developing an understanding of their personal experiences in dealing with the municipality. This was especially important as the developers in particular were directly impacted by changes to policy and bylaws in terms of construction. Residents were another group that were directly impacted by the mega house issue. Since many of the residents opposed were represented in the public hearings and the large house workshop, I interviewed South Asian residents that resided in large homes or “mega homes” in Surrey. These interviews generally ranged from about forty-five minutes to an hour and took place in the residents’ homes.
**Sampling Techniques**

In terms of sampling, the goal was not to collect large, representative samples, but rather to select a smaller number of key informants that help to understand the social setting and the controversial issues involved. In addition respondents were selected from names listed in secondary sources such as planning reports and city memos.

For collecting resident samples, an initial few respondents were derived from a real estate agent, after which the snowball sampling technique was used to generate other contacts. This procedure is especially useful when members of a special population are difficult to locate. In the case with residents living in mega homes, since there is no defined “list” to select from; the snowball technique was particularly useful.

**Secondary Document Review**

A review of the documents was also useful in pulling together information about the mega house issue. This allowed data collected by another source to be selected and reanalyzed for the purposes of the mega house case study. Various secondary sources were obtained from public hearing minutes, city memorandums, newspaper articles, and published reports. Reviewing these documents was particularly important due to the sensitive nature of this case. Since the mega house issue involved strong racial undercurrents and negative press, many city staff such as the city clerk, and some planners were tight-lipped about the information they were willing to share.
Several documents were useful in documenting the atmosphere and attitudes around the mega house issue. For example, minutes of public hearings as well as city memos were useful to outline the issues expressed as well as document the attitudes and feeling expressed by residents opposed to large houses. City memos were particularly useful to help define the city’s direction and response to issues.

City documents such as the book of bylaws, amendments to bylaws, and sample design guidelines were very useful in documenting key changes to the legal aspects and policy initiatives established by the city of Surrey. In addition reports that outlined workshops and task force findings were also useful in defining key strategies that the city used in order to respond to the mega house issue.

Media stories were particularly useful for highlighting controversial issues. An analysis of the content of media stories helped to develop an understanding of “mainstream” sensibilities around the mega house issue. The coverage in the press also allowed for follow up on particular dates with other documents such as important public hearings.

3.3 LIMITATIONS OF THE METHOD

In pointing to the positive aspects of using the case study method it is also important to point out the limitations. Given the wide scope of this investigation and the many aspects and issues that were imbedded in the larger issue, this examination is intended as an exploratory study. Although all efforts were made to bring out the main aspects of this case, it was impossible to address every detail. For such a long involved case, I needed to
be somewhat selective in terms of identifying key events and situations to be examined. It is also important to note that this process of selection may have had potential for my own biases to impact on the outcome of the study.

Due to the controversial nature of this case, the information was often difficult to locate and access to information was also, at times, a problem. While I was able to rely on key informants\(^2\) to help locate sensitive information, there is no way of knowing with any certainty, if I was given access to all pieces of the information that would have been useful to the goals of the study.

\(^2\) See Appendix II for description of Key Informants
CHAPTER IV
Case Study

Changes in Residential Form and Land-Use Conflict:
the Mega House Issue in Surrey, BC 1990-1998

In our continually changing and diverse cities, the issue of managing diversity continues to be complex and controversial. As we have seen from the literature review, although there are many critiques and general directions, to date, planning literature does little to offer practicing planners concrete solutions for dealing with issues of equity, access and participation in a multicultural environment. Consequently, as ethno-cultural influences change features of the existing landscape, planners are often faced with increased land use conflicts and tensions. Furthermore, despite the many compositions of various communities, the same land use conflicts emerge in different countries with respect to places of worship, ethnic commercial centres and residential form (Wallace, 2000; Qadeer, 2000, 1997; Sandercock, 1995; Thomas, 1994). Wallace (2000) questions whether the key challenge is adapting to ethno-cultural diversity, or whether it is the constraints of the planning profession itself (2000:4). From a review of the literature it is evident that although the overall concepts of equity and justice are generally accepted as important goals, there is little clarity in terms of how these goals can and should be achieved.

These land use conflicts have often manifested in debates around the construction of larger homes in cities across Canada. Beginning in the late 1980’s, municipalities such as Vancouver, North Vancouver, Burnaby, New Westminster and Richmond and Surrey
were experiencing a trend toward the construction of larger homes. With the case of Vancouver, existing affluent neighbourhoods were being reshaped through redevelopment. According to Ley (2001) the common pattern was that existing homes were demolished and replaced by new homes that made maximum use of the dwelling size permitted by zoning. These large “square” or boxy homes with minimally landscaped lots built mainly by new immigrants from Hong Kong, gave rise to the term ‘monster house.’ After much public debate between long-settled Caucasian residents and newly arrived Hong Kong neighbours, in 1992 a joint planning process a solution that satisfied both parties was reached.

We will now examine the situation, processes and outcomes around the construction of larger homes in the City of Surrey. In Surrey, the term ‘mega house’, some times referred to as ‘monster house” is used to refer to a larger home that is built to its full entitlement in a neighbourhood of smaller sized homes. Complaints about these homes generally refer to their large size and that it feels out of character with surrounding homes. In the case of Surrey, the South Asian population generally preferred these large homes in order to accommodate extended families, as well as to symbolize status within their community. In order to give a contextual framework, before proceeding to the substantive portion of the case study I will provide some background in terms of the population characteristics and changes.
4.1 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

The city of Surrey is situated 40 kilometres south east of Vancouver, bound by the Fraser River to the north and the Canada U.S. border to the south. It has long been known as a suburban area that has served as a bedroom community to the City of Vancouver. However, over the past 15 years, Surrey has grown dramatically. Between 1986 and 1991 it was known as one of the fastest growing municipalities in Canada; Surrey's population increased 55 percent (Surrey Chamber of Commerce). With its population over 300,000 today, Surrey has experienced the same 'growing pains' as other large metropolitan centres. It has also experienced changes its ethno-cultural composition. In 1970 twenty-two percent of the population was made up of immigrants, this had reached thirty percent by 1996.

The source country for immigrants settling in the City of Surrey was different from other places in the Lower Mainland. While recent immigrants from Hong Kong, Taiwan, China and the Philippines were highly concentrated in Vancouver, Richmond, or Burnaby, immigrants from India favoured Surrey. According to Statistics BC, for immigrants who landed in the first three quarters in 1993, Surrey attracted 28.8 percent of Indian immigrants landed in that period. Furthermore, the largest segment of the immigrant population in Surrey is from India. Of the 30 percent of immigrants in Surrey in 1996, 28 percent were from India.

Motivations for immigration for Indian immigrants were also quite different from other Asian immigrants. While most of the immigrants from Hong Kong, China, and Taiwan
were admitted under the Business or Independent Skilled Worker Class, the majority of immigrants from India were admitted under the Family Class. In fact from 1996 to 2000, eighty-one percent of all landings from India were admitted under the Family class (Statistics BC). According to Statistics BC, the high percentage of family related landings resulted in a high proportion of the Indian immigrants that were sponsored parents, grandparents or spouse/fiancés.

The characteristics of immigration posed strain on social and integration services in Surrey. First, many of these Indian immigrants at the time of landing did not possess any Canadian official language ability. During 1996 to 2000, about three of every four immigrants from India did not speak, write or understand English. For most of the Indian immigrants their mother tongue was Punjabi or Hindi. This proportion was significantly higher than other groups of immigrants where the ratio was about half that were unable to speak, read or write in English. In addition, the main category of Indian immigrants came under the family class, rather than the business class as in the case of other municipalities. As such, although families would have provided social networks, the integration process may have been more difficult in Surrey for these immigrants due to less financial security and independence combined with English language barriers.

These changes in the ethno-cultural mix of the city’s population, as well as the pressures of overall growth, created many changes in the physical and social landscape. This included many temples and mosques being built, as well as the build up of Scott Road and the Newton area of Surrey as a new commercial centre for the South Asian
community. With the focus on family reunification and immigration, this area also began to see many larger homes built to accommodate larger extended families. Figure one shows where Newton town centre is situated in Surrey.

Figure 1. Town Centres in Surrey

4.2 PERSPECTIVES AGAINST THE RISE OF MEGA HOMES 1990's

It was in the context of this increased diversity, increased growth in general, and low real estate pricing that the “monster home” issue began in the city of Surrey. One of the features of rapid change in Surrey was the construction of new larger homes. These homes were generally built to their full entitlement, using the full allowances available to them according to the existing bylaws. A common feature of these homes is that they were generally larger than the existing rancher style homes in their surrounding neighbourhoods. According to a planner that was working for the City of Surrey at the
time, “mega houses occur where a community has, in effect, underdeveloped residential lots and a new house is built which uses more entitlement.”

Beginning in the late 1980’s complaints and concerns were expressed to city Council about the construction of the mega homes. According to a planner at the time:

the initial concern is often that the new house is "out of scale" with its neighbours. This is usually accompanied by the observation that the "style" of the house is out of character with the surroundings. The (often unspoken) concern about mega houses is that more than one family will occupy them.

Specifically, in terms of the style of the house being out of character with its surroundings, a current city planner at the city of Surrey contends that:

“the visual impact of their size, inadequate landscaping and their lack of articulation ("boxy") were considered incompatible. I think there were also some concerns about the preference for certain exterior colours (pinks, purples, etc.) and building materials (red tiles) that were used in many of these houses and which were considered incompatible with the "west coast" colours and materials traditionally used.”

At a number of public hearings, residents in Surrey voiced concerns about the development of these homes. According to minutes documented from a public hearing on September 3, 1991 a resident stated that “mega-houses will create future slums” and that in having extended families live in a single family residential zone means that “more than one family in a home does not pay their fair share of taxes.” Another resident voiced concerns about his “inability to sell a home in an area of mega houses and illegal suites.” Complaints at public hearings continued to be voiced at public hearings. On May 20, 1993, a resident stated concerns about “the type and quality of homes” being built in Surrey. He stated that the residents in his community want “no mega homes.”
4.3 RACIAL CONFLICT AND CONTESTED SPACE 1996

The most openly confrontational events around the mega house issue came with the Heritage Woods controversy. Mega-houses continued to be an issue in the City of Surrey and it was evident that the racial underpinnings around the mega houses were deeply rooted. Heritage Woods is a subdivision of 60 small houses in the Newton area of Surrey. An article in the Vancouver Sun Newspaper described Heritage Woods as “homes of front porches and trellises of shaggy clematis vines growing up peaked roofs, and of no garages, and their designs are as similar to each other as Kentucky kin. Heritage Woods has the feel of an enclave keeping the world at bay” (McMartin, Oct. 1996). McMartin indicates that the residents became “alarmed” when in 1994 they began to see the two larger houses being built.

A developer was granted subdivision approval for a total of five lots adjacent to the Heritage Woods development. One blue house already existed on the lot. He was given approval based on stipulations for structural changes to the existing blue house on the corner. According to the city, the developer had not followed through on changes required to the existing home, and had not complied with building scheme requirements for the additional new home. Jerry Huot, a city councillor at the time, had received complaints about the new house being built adjacent to the Heritage Woods subdivision, his niece lived in that subdivision. Huot insisted that the “new houses were a blight” on the neighbouring Heritage Woods subdivision (Oct. 2, 1996, Sun). Figures two shows a
home in the Heritage Woods Subdivision and figure three shows one of the new larger neighbouring homes.

Figure 2. Home in the Heritage Woods Subdivision in Surrey

Home in Heritage Woods Subdivision, Surrey

Figure 3. New Home Neighbouring the Heritage Woods Subdivision

New Home Neighbouring Heritage Woods
Overt racism became evident when the Director of Planning at the City of Surrey tape-recorded Jerry Huot making a racial slur in reference to this issue. This tape was leaked to the media. It was reported by several newspapers that Huot said the developer, Manjit Saini, is building “goddamn East Indian, goddamn megahouses” in reference to the two houses being built next to the Heritage Woods subdivision. Although he denied the allegations, the tape-recorded comment created a large public outcry and heated controversy about the issue.

These tensions continued on around the mega house issue. Various neighbourhoods formed community associations to gain political support in opposition to the construction of mega houses. At a public hearing on Tuesday July 22, 1997, residents of the 70B Avenue Association requested that Council “help and advise them on how to stop mega home construction in their neighbourhood.” One resident speaking on behalf of the association stated that “homes in the area are single family rancher homes and the large mega homes are developing as small motels.” Another resident stated the history of the area: “in 1976 the houses that were built were ranchers and some two storey houses under 2,800 square feet. Mega Houses were built in 1991, 1994 and now again in 1997.” He also contended that “falling value of homes in the area are due to mega houses being built.”

In looking at these few examples of the documented complaints about the mega homes, it is evident that the concerns were continual beginning in the early 1990’s and continuing into 1997. Along with complaints about the visual size and character of the house,
residents were also concerned about secondary suites reducing property values in their
neighbourhoods. In addition, the Heritage Woods controversy also exposed the racist
undertones that were embedded in the negative perceptions of the mega homes.

4.4 RESHAPING SOCIAL SPACE- A SOUTH ASIAN PERSPECTIVE

In looking at the mega house issue from the perspective of the South Asian community,
however, the picture seems to be quite different. In interviews with owners of these
homes, I found that they were very proud of their home and their community on a
number of different levels. First, their home was a symbol of status, an indication that
they had “made it” in this country. The owners of these homes did not find them
unattractive, or unappealing. But rather they found that these homes were very much to
their liking. According to a respondent, he said:

I don’t want to live in a small, broken down house. I like my home to be
new and spacious. In India, we had a large house also. This is not only
ture for the farming villages, but also this way in some of the nice cities.
In Chandigarh, many homes are large also. Actually, sometimes we refer
to our area in Surrey as Small Chandigarh!

During the interviews, the residents of these larger homes were also asked about
“extended” families. Interestingly, respondents did not refer to their family as
“extended,” but just as their family. They indicated that not only do they look after their
elders, but also house their children until they are married.

You see, we are obliged to look after our elders. They are to be treated
with respect. They looked after us when we were young, and now it is our
turn. I don’t think too many people here understand this.
Some of the people interviewed indicated the positive aspects of the “extended family.”

They indicated that having a larger home allowed them to house everyone in their family. It was noted that the social support system of the family was important, but also the sense of community and the social networks were also important. Needing their own privacy and adjusting to the norms here, a suite helps provide that.

I live with my son and daughter in law. They both work and we [referring to her husband] stay at home. We enjoy spending time together as a family, but we also have our own schedule. We walk to the temple and meet with our other friends there. Also, we like to eat our own food, I don’t feel satisfied until I have had my roti. So, I like having my own kitchen downstairs, I can cook what I like and my son and daughter-in-law can do what they like also. Having the suite allows us the space we need to do this. We are also able to watch our own programs on the TV while the children watch their shows. But we are always close by if we need their help or if they need ours.

In speaking with the South Asian residents of these larger homes, it became evident that the suite filled a need for privacy and proximity. The elders were able to go about their own daily activities without being a burden on their children, but they were also close by if they needed some help. Furthermore, these homes accommodated family members more comfortably than a smaller home.

The larger home also made economic sense. One respondent indicated that having their children live with them after high school or during college or university would help their children to establish a stronger financial base, and better opportunities than they had. A respondent indicated that:

we want to help our children and economically, it is better for them. They can stay at home while they save up money for their own homes. I was not lucky enough for that in Canada, I don’t want my children to go through those hardships I did.
From these responses, it is evident the larger family situation occurs because adults are caring for their aging parents and also because their children stay at home longer for economic reasons.

In this analysis, however the generational gaps in some cases are evident in terms of the preference of the extended family. A respondent indicated that the larger family makes sense, but it may be difficult to continue with younger generations.

My grandchildren say that they want to ‘move out’ and ‘find their own place.’ I say this is your own place, why do you need to rent when you can save up money to buy something?

Overall, negative reactions to the mega homes were generally considered by the residents of mega homes to be a racist response. For example in the Heritage Woods issue, the South Asian community was very disturbed by this outwardly racist comment from a City Councillor. The community responded at many levels. Angry South Asian residents gathered at city hall demanding an apology. The executive members of the Sikh temple in Surrey met to consider a response to the remark allegedly made by Councillor Huot. President of the Guru Nanak Sikh Temple, Harchand Gill, was quoted in the Vancouver Sun as saying, “It smells like [racism]. It seems that he has some bad notions in mind” (Oct. 3, 1996).

Manjit Saini, the developer, indicated that Huot’s campaign against him sparked vandalism and reduced the marketability of his properties. He indicated that someone had “scrawled ‘F--- Hindus’ in the newly poured concrete foundation of the first house.
Windows were smashed, electrical wires slashed and plumbing damaged” (The Vancouver Sun, Oct 2, 1996).

Other perspectives from a realtor indicated that the large homes were mainly seen as a problem created by the extended families in the South Asian community. He said that the objections were voiced to council by non-South Asian, long term residents of Surrey. He also added that he believed that the mega-house issue was one that was rooted in racial discrimination. He commented that when selling large homes in Surrey,

“it is a discriminatory issue too, you see, a man asked me to find him a home in Surrey, he wanted me to find him a home where there were no East Indians. I said, sure I could find you a place, but what will you do when your neighbour sells his home and an East Indian buys it? You can’t escape.”

4.5 RESPONSES FROM THE CITY OF SURREY 1990-1996

Faced with the pressure of vocal citizen concerns and increasing racial tensions, the city attempted to respond to the issue. At various public hearings the city proposed various ways of limiting the size of single family homes. These proposals however were met with a negative reaction from individuals, developers and realtors who thought that the proposals would not achieve the desired effect, would negatively impact on housing construction and would not accommodate the needs of certain groups. According to a planner at the time, because of the racist undertones of this issue and increased tensions in the community, there was a sense of urgency to quickly resolve this issue. As a result,
in early 1990, Council decided to hold a workshop with representatives of the community and the development industry to discuss the issue and attempt to find solutions.

**Large House Workshop 1990**

The city planners identified a series of six issues prior to the workshop. These issues laid the framework for the Large House Workshop. Council wanted the workshop participants to *clarify* the issues as the community saw them, and come up with a course of action. The six issues identified prior to the workshop are listed below.

1. There was an acknowledgment that there was a trend toward larger homes in general in the Lower Mainland and there were economic, functional, and socio-cultural reason for this trend.
2. There was also a rise of secondary suites in general. In Surrey, it was estimated that there were over 5000 secondary suites, which accounted for roughly 10 percent of single family homes. It was noted that large houses, because of their size, lend themselves easily for accommodation of secondary suites.
3. In Surrey, there appeared to be two distinct types of large houses: the Executive and the Surrey Special. The Executive home is defined as a large style of home that is the choice of second and third time affluent home buyers who like the space provided by a large home environment. The Surrey Special is described as the large style of home that is predominant in Surrey. It appears to be the choice of some people with extended family living.
4. There was an impact on Community Character. Specifically, when large homes were built on a street of existing smaller homes, or when large boxy houses fill in the gaps on a street of existing traditional high-pitched small homes, the physical appearance and character of a neighbourhood is altered.
5. Large homes impact on neighbourhood livability. Specifically a large home may block a neighbour’s sunlight, view or intrude upon the privacy of adjacent neighbour outdoor areas. Also, more people living in a single home may result in more parked cars, more traffic and more garbage.
6. Should the size of single family homes be controlled at all?

The workshop was held in the summer of 1990. The city invited various members of the community to attend the workshop. In speaking to a planner from the city of Surrey at the time, she indicated that the city:
brought together residents of the neighbourhoods where this type of housing was prevalent, making sure we invited both the new residents, mostly Indo-Canadian residents who favoured this type of housing, and existing residents who were not Indo-Canadian and who had concerns of this form of housing; community leaders, builders, realtors, designers, Councillors, and city staff from various departments.

However, upon examining the list of participants from the workshop, the 35 workshop participants were mainly association representatives. The majority of them belonged to community and ratepayers associations; there were also members of the Real Estate Boards, and Home Builder’s Associations. Only two participants were “Indo-Canadian representatives,” both of whom were real estate agents. According to a questionnaire presented at the workshop, the majority of respondents were homeowners, and long term residents of Surrey (lived in Surrey for more than 10 years). Furthermore, eighty percent of the respondents agreed that large houses were a problem in Surrey. Only two respondents disagreed that there was a large house problem in Surrey.

Workshop Proceedings

To begin, a presentation of the issues was made by planning staff. The participants were formed into five small groups with a facilitator for discussion. According to the Large Houses Commentary summary report the issues identified were classified into two general types of concerns: those related to design and those related to secondary suites.

In terms of design issues there was a general concern that the problem with large houses had to do with being out-of-scale with the lot as well as the existing neighbourhood. Massiveness and bulkiness, incompatible design and repetitive design were raised as design concerns. There was no consensus however, over the idea that large houses had a
negative effect on property values. In terms of bylaws, the need to define site coverage, and what is included in that definition was an issue. Also the need to define “large” was raised, however a consensus as to the definition could not be reached.

Secondary suites were raised as the second main issue with large homes. Although suites were recognized as being illegal, participants recognized the economic trends and financial benefits of having secondary suites. In particular the fact that suites served as mortgage helpers, affordable housing options, and accommodation for seniors was addressed. It was also acknowledged that large homes accommodated the extended family structure of certain cultural groups. The racial dimension of this issue was also raised. The question of cultural segregation versus cultural integration was discussed but unresolved. The inequity in services and taxes associated with secondary suites was raised. Participants commented there was inequity in terms of services required and taxes paid due to rental suites and larger families. Participants also felt that there was also increased demand on the need for parking, schools, water and sewers. In addition, there was agreement that there was a lack of enforcement in terms of bylaws and regulations to control secondary suites.

In regard to the design issues, solutions were focussed on ways to decrease the size of the housing as well as the aesthetic appearance. It was suggested that the building envelope needed to be controlled, perhaps by changing the floor space ratios. In addition, participants supported enforcing the existing zoning regulations regarding design repetition, and also improving architectural design in general. Solutions typically
involved more design control over single family homes through design guidelines, design
review and municipal control over developer's design controls. Landscaping suggestions
were also put forth to preserve mature trees and to establish some kind of minimum area
for landscaping. The establishment of landscape guidelines were also recommended.
Comments were also made about improving communication between the developers, the
community, and the municipality.

Several solutions were put forth with regard to handling secondary suites. Rezoning for
secondary suites on the condition that they were owner-occupied had the widest
acceptance among participants. However there was disagreement about other issues such
as licensing illegal suites and having a policy on extended family homes. Tax fairness
and services was another area addressed. Participants had suggestions toward making tax
payments fair in relation to the number of service users or household members. The
general principle of more parking spaces for larger homes was widely supported. Most
groups, however, felt that better enforcement of existing policies and bylaws would help
keep the homogeneity of single family areas. Finally, participants suggested improving
communications between various sectors involved in development and the community.
People specifically talked about the need for multi-cultural information exchange and
dialogue.
From this workshop, staff made ten recommendations for Council to consider:

1. That By-law 10247, covering text amendments to the Zoning By-law regarding large houses and which is currently tabled, be abandoned.
2. That a maximum .4 FSR regulation be introduced in the R-F, R-F(R) and R-F(F) zones.
3. That Council instruct staff to develop building envelope regulations for single family dwellings, to examine proportionality and prevent overlooking onto adjacent neighbours private outdoor areas.
4. That Council approve the replacement of the existing “repetition regulation” in the Zoning By-law, Part IV C.4 with the following:

   “The exterior design of a single family dwelling or duplex to be erected on a lot shall not be identical or similar to that of an existing dwelling on a lot on the same side of the fronting street within 54 metres (180 feet) measured from the closest property lines. A dwelling is deemed to have a similar exterior design to an existing dwelling when the front elevation designs or silhouettes vary only in architectural detail, or are a mirror image to each other, with or without any variation in architectural details.

5. That council request as part of the process of considering rezoning applications for large scale urban SF subdivisions (at least 20 lots), special building schemes through restrictive covenants for the outermost lots of the subdivision, to ensure compatible dwelling scale with existing adjacent homes.
6. That Council approve the following additions to the landscaping sections of the R-F, R-F(R), R-F(F) Zones:

   “No more than 30% of the area within the required front yard shall be paved, black topped, or cleared for the driveway or parking purposes”

7. That Council adopt a policy to encourage landscaped boulevards in strategic residential areas of the community, and instruct staff to bring forward the appropriate implementation strategy.
8. That Council instruct staff to identify areas of high residential on-street parking congestion, and to recommend appropriate actions to respond to the situation.
9. That Council instruct staff to explore new “infill” multi-family zones and small-lot, single family zone with policies for their location, and bring them forward as part of an affordable housing strategy for Surrey.
10. That Council authorize staff to prepare a strategy for multi-cultural information exchange in the community, and bring it forward for Council consideration.

The Technical Fix: Changes to Zoning and Bylaws 1991

After the workshop, several amendments to the zoning bylaw for single family residential were revised. To control the size and massing of the building form, changes to the total floor area and the second floor area were instated. For example, the floor area of the second storey over a single family dwelling could not exceed 80% of the lower floor area. This reduction was accomplished by a required setback from the front face or side of the
As well, floor space ratio (FAR) was reduced for single family dwellings. For example for lots of 6000 square feet or less the FAR was reduced from .52 to .48. For lots in excess of 6000 square feet, the FAR was reduced from .48 to .42. For lots of any size, the area reserved for a garage or carport was reduced from 480 square feet to 430 square feet. Along with reduction of floor area ratio, the maximum height for single family homes with roofs having a slope of less than 1:4 ratio were reduced from 30 feet to 24 feet.

As well a series of design guidelines were introduced. Although bylaws addressed massing and setbacks in terms of minimum standards uniformly applicable city-wide, however according to a planner at the city of Surrey by-laws cannot address the individual neighbourhood characters, especially relating to the compatibility of the building materials, finishes and colours or specific massing characteristics that may be expressed in the designs of entrances, porches, balconies and garages.

The city also recognized that they are not able to “regulate” the design control, or force a developer to prepare a design, however, they do have indirect control as “the city can withhold a permit” to that developer that does not comply.

There were also changes to address secondary suites. First, fee impositions for secondary suite zones to subdivide and add secondary suites were introduced in 1993. The charge was $1,315 plus $550 per dwelling unit calculated. This bylaw was amended in 1997 to increase the amount from $1,680 plus $60 per unit calculated. Next, owners were also required to apply for a business licence for a home that had a secondary suite, regardless if the suite was rented or not. This bylaw was changed in 1999 to allow owners that had
a secondary suite, but were not renting to forgo the business license. Finally, small zones were allocated as areas where secondary suites permitted. The map below in figure four shows the areas of designation.

**Figure 4. Secondary Suite Areas in Surrey**

Although changes to bylaws to accommodate control of building size and secondary suites, were implemented in 1991, allowances for multicultural communications were still not addressed. According to a report to Council, it was the opinion of the Council that the existing community forums and public hearing processes were sufficient forms of communication. While the city declined to address race relations directly, the issue of racial tension and conflict continued to brew.
The Heritage Woods incident in 1996 showed that the “mega house” issue was still unresolved with bylaw and zoning changes. Furthermore, the incident exposed the deeply rooted racial tensions that underpinned this issue. As this issue erupted, the City of Surrey, again reactively managed the situation. Since the South Asian community in Surrey was comprised of about 40,000 people at the time, they represented a large voting block. With an election only eight weeks away, members of council reacted by visiting the Sikh temples and apologizing to the community for the remarks. Apologies were also made at a public hearing. After which, rather than look at the social issues underlying the “mega homes,” they once again went back to the technical drawing board in an attempt to stop the creation of the large homes.

Building the “right” character: the Building Design Regulations 1996

According to the City, although the vast majority of homes were considered satisfactory under the building scheme provisions in the rezoning, subdivision and building permit process, however “a small number of controversial single family homes suggest[ed] that the design regulatory mechanisms [in place at the time] were not totally effective” (City of Surrey, 1996: 2). As such, the city felt that the provisions in the development approval process needed to be strengthened. In an effort to strengthen the provisions of the existing process, the City of Surrey proposed that a task force be established to conduct a study of the design and regulatory process.

A memo to the Task Force Members outlined the city’s statement of the problem and the purpose of the Task Force. The memo read as follows:
Council and Administration are concerned with the development of houses that are disproportionately large and/or considered to be inconsistent with the character of existing neighbourhoods. Council and Administration do not want these housing types, and attempts have been made through rezoning, subdivision approval and building permit process to prevent their development. Despite efforts and intentions, however, these houses continue to be built.

The purpose of the Task Force, put simply, is to help Surrey find tools its (sic) needs to stop the development of these disproportionately large/out-of-character houses....The City Administration believes that the problem is process-based. Despite counter-measures taken, the City feels that some element in the approval process between planning, building and enforcement is broken or missing and is creating an opening for these houses to be developed. The City believes that the Task Force should focus its efforts on the processes involved. The City feels that the solution lies in mapping out and dissecting the processes to determine where gaps or problem steps exist.

It is evident from the language used in this memo that the City does not want these large houses and wants the construction of these large houses stopped.

Upon a review of the rezoning, subdivision and building permit process the Task Force raised some concerns about the existing development process. First, the Task Force noted that the developer is not required to produce the building schemes until after the public hearing. Second, although the building scheme is a legal document containing building design guidelines, there is no guarantee that the building scheme reflects the character of the area, since the preparation of the building scheme is not based on a character study of the area. Third, it was noted that the “the city is not able to force a developer to submit a building scheme at any point of the process. According to the City Solicitor, a developer could refuse to submit such a scheme. In all such cases, however, Council does not give formal approval.” (memo March 8, 1996, file 6107229.1).
As a result of these concerns, changes were made to the development process. At the outset, the developer would be required to engage a qualified design consultant to undertake a study of the area’s character, and to create a building scheme that demonstrates how the proposed development fits with the character. The area character study would be reviewed by staff early in the process, presented in the report to Council, and presented to the public hearing. Based on comments of Council and the public, the building scheme is finalized before final adoption. In an attempt to make it easier for the staff to review all the design elements before construction begins, the City would require the qualified design consultant to create a checklist. The checklist will itemize all design elements, and will include materials such as colour chips.

As a result of the implementation of the building design guidelines, smaller developers that build fewer homes, rather than large scale developers, were mainly affected. This is largely because the cost for a smaller developer to hire a designer is factored over fewer houses and creates more expenses. In addition, the changes to the building guidelines increased the overall time and cost for development of homes in Surrey. Furthermore, after all this time and effort to change bylaws, zoning and design regulations, the complaints about mega homes continued. The minutes of the public hearing in 1997, reveal that the city continued to receive complaints about the mega homes.

4.6 SUMMARY

In summary, the case study of the mega-house issue illustrates how changing ethnocultural values in a community can play out in the physical landscape. With the case of
Surrey, the issue initially began to surface in late 1980's, at about the same time the population's ethnic diversity increased. Specifically, Surrey received an influx of South Asian residents, many of whom had immigrated to From India under the Family class. Since the extended family was an important feature of the South Asian culture, many of the South Asian residents preferred the larger homes. These homes also began to be converted to homes that accommodated secondary suites, often to non-family members, but also provided inexpensive rent to friends and relatives. The rental suites also provided an inexpensive form of housing for the newly immigrated population. Unlike many new immigrants, the Indian immigrants found that they felt more comfortable living in a home and community that they were familiar with.

Changes in the size of homes being built, and perhaps less obviously, the changes to the ethnic make-up of the neighbourhood sparked concerns and complaints from long term residents in Surrey. Due to the sensitive and racial undertones prevalent in this issue, the City attempted to “manage” the issue in a relatively quick and efficient manner. This began with the Large houses Workshop, where mainly members from community associations were invited. Most of these participants were opposed to the ideas of large homes and identified the large houses in Surrey as a problem. As such, without too much inter-group conflict, the one-day workshop set the agenda for the course of action.

Initially, the City implemented bylaws, zoning changes, and vague design guidelines that would help prevent, or make more difficult the construction of mega-houses in Surrey. However, as was evident from the Heritage Woods controversy, these kinds of changes
did not resolve the issue. In fact, the racial undertones imbedded in this issue erupted when Surrey’s Director of Planning released a taped conversation with Jerry Huot. His racist slurs relating to the development of mega-houses revealed the tensions and complexity of the mega house issue in Surrey.

However, the City of Surrey continued to view incident as a technical land use issue. After formal apologies at the Sikh temple, Council appointed a Task Force to re-examine the process of building development for large houses. Specifically, they felt it was a process issue, one that was due to gaps in the system. As such the main goal of the Task Force was to find and close these gaps in order to stop the construction of mega-houses.

Little, if any attention was given to the social dynamics that underscore this issue. Although some of the recommendations called for multi-cultural communications, none were pursued. Instead the direction from Council and staff was to deal with the physical planning aspects: bylaws, zoning and design regulation. It was their belief that dealing with the social problems underpinning this issue was not part of the planning mandate. In terms of participation, attempts to involve the South Asian community were largely ideological as only two token members of the South Asian community were invited to the workshop. Without representation from all stakeholders, it is difficult to imagine there was any meaningful contribution, debate or discussion which might have led toward resolution.
Having outlined the descriptive aspects of the mega home issue in Surrey, I will now move to an analytical focus. Specifically, I will draw on perspectives put forth in the literature review to examine and analyze the dynamics of the Surrey mega house case. For organizational purposes the analysis will be presented in four main sections. I will begin by drawing on the theoretical approaches around transnationalism and diaspora to explore the reproduction of space in Surrey. It will be argued that the construction of mega homes can be viewed as a reproduction of identity through a hybrid residential form.

Next I will look at the process of problem construction through the communication strategies employed by the City of Surrey. I will show that the dissemination and omission of knowledge framed not only the issues, but also shaped the action and responses. This section will lead nicely into looking at the process of community participation that will also be examined in the mega homes scenario. In particular, I will look at the exclusionary practices of the city of Surrey in terms of representation and inclusion in the planning process.

Finally, in the last section of the analysis, I will examine the role of problem non-definition. Specifically, I will explore how the focus on physical land use aspects of the case has functioned as a diversion from looking at the social conflicts underpinning the
issue. In fact, I will show that the process of not defining social tension and conflict embedded in the mega house issue allowed the very real problem of racism to go unaddressed by the City of Surrey.

5.1 THE REPRODUCTION OF SPACE

The emergence of the “mega-house” in Surrey can be viewed as the reconstitution and reproduction of cultural values in physical form in Surrey. Interviews with residents in Surrey that lived in the larger or, “mega-homes,” show that certain values and cultural identities such as an obligation to care for the elderly are being reproduced through a production of space, the mega house. The larger home is well suited to accommodating grandparents and the children. Interestingly, the spatial living arrangements created with a secondary suite allows for a blending of cultural values. The children are able to have their parents live in their home, while at the same time they are able to live independently from them. The suite allows for two connected yet, individual and private spaces to work together. As a respondent indicated having a suite allowed her to prepare her own roti to eat and watch her television programs, without being disconnected from her son and daughter-in-law. In this case the needs of an “extended” family were changing from traditional spatial arrangements to accommodate a mixing of cultures.

Transnationalist literature also contends that migrant’s practices and meanings from their geographic points of origin are often reconstructed in new origins. This points to an interesting question about whether there may be some geographical norms in the built form from India that are be transplanted in the appearance of the mega homes of Surrey.
Are there particular characteristics from homes in India that are replicated in these large homes? For example the complaints about the mega home goes beyond size to include criticisms that the aesthetic appearance of the larger houses is different and unattractive next to the more “traditional” homes in the Surrey neighbourhood. The aesthetic appearance of these homes has been criticized by long term Surrey residents as being “boxy” and “out-of-character” with the surrounding homes. According to a planner at the city of Surrey, residents have complained that these homes are “boxy and lack articulation” and the colours used, such as “pinks and purples” do not fit in with the existing neighbourhood.

According to a South Asian resident from Punjab, India, who owns a “mega home” in Surrey, he liked the appearance of his home. He wanted his home to be spacious and new. In fact he makes a connection with his home in Surrey with homes in India. He indicated that his neighbourhood, largely made up of larger boxy style homes is known as “small Chandigarh” among friends. To understand this respondent’s comment, it is important to have a visual reference in terms of the predominant building styles in Chandigarh, the capital city of the province of Punjab in India. The city of Chandigarh was designed by Le Corbusier and touted as a “planned” city. According to Joshi (1999) the housing in Chandigarh is referred to as having a particular “Chandigarh style” with a “box-like appearance” (Joshi, 1999:44). A simple visual scan of Chandigarh’s architecture seems to show a predominance of “boxy” modernist building forms. It could be argued that many of these homes and public institutions tend to be similar to the
“mega-homes in Surrey. The pictures below show some architectural styles of buildings of a home in Chandigarh and a “mega house” in Surrey.

Figure 5. Example of a “Mega House” in Surrey

Mega House, Newton Area of Surrey

Figure 6. Example of a Home in Chandigarh, Punjab, India

Chandigarh House, Architect, E. Maxwell Fry: Source, Joshi, 1999
Although these homes are not exact replicas of the homes in Chandigarh, they seem to be a blend of the style of home and the notion of status reconstituted in the “mega home.” In fact the “distasteful and unattractive” the mega homes in Surrey may be a home that the owner tends to find to her or his liking. These homes perhaps represent a hybrid style, a style that is comprised of notions of success and aesthetics of nice homes in Chandigarh transplanted here in the different or out-of-character building styles of the “mega houses” in Surrey.

5.2 CONSTRUCTION OF THE PROBLEM

Communications that shape the story and the agenda for action is another important aspect to look at in the mega house issue. Drawing on the work of John Forester, we have seen that the process of communication shapes action and sets agendas. With the mega house issue, we can use Forester’s perspective to examine the communication strategies used in the Large House workshop.

The kind of information given determines how a story is constructed and also shapes the sense of relevance in the inclusion and omission of information. According to Forester, what is said is just as important as what is not. To begin, as noted earlier the planners outlined six key issues prior to the workshop. These six issues lay the framework for the discussions that took place at the workshop. The listing of issues clearly described the difference between the two types of large homes. The “Executive” style large house was described as the choice of second and third time home buyers, who are affluent and like the space provided in a large home environment. The second type of large home was the
“Surrey Special” or the “Double Vancouver Special” and described as being predominant in some areas of Surrey and appears to be the choice of some people with extended family living.

Negative characteristics were linked to the Surrey Special homes with extended family living. One of the issues indicated the large homes in Surrey impact on community character “when large boxy houses fill in the gaps on a street of existing traditional high-pitched small homes.” Another issue, pointed to the negative impact on neighbourhood livability because “unduly large homes may block a neighbour’s sunlight” as well “more people living in a single home may result in more parked cars, more traffic, more garbage, etc.”

The “information” provided about the issue seems to be slanted in such a way that frames the Surrey Specials, large homes with extended families living in them, as a problem because they negatively impact community character and livability. Clearly, statements that say, “more traffic, more garbage” are leading. The information provided to the participants of the workshop emphasizes negative characteristics attached to these homes. Nowhere in this information set are they provided with the positive aspects of extended family living. By being given this information, they are being told which facts are relevant. This shapes information and citizen’s access to information, interpretation of the information as well as their ability to participate effectively. These “facts” then construct the problem and shape the discussion and actions of the workshop participants.
5.3 EXCLUSIONARY PARTICIPATION

Participation and representation are another important aspect to examine in the case of Surrey's mega house issue. A review of the literature has indicated citizen-centred approaches that promote participation are an important aspect of multicultural planning. Au (2000) suggests there is a need for more participatory approaches and effective communication strategies. She suggests that multicultural planning is not a doctrine, but rather a process. This process involves community development, education, communication and integration. Qadeer (2000) also recommends more participatory approaches that include ethnic minorities in planning processes.

The process of community participation becomes an important aspect of understanding participatory processes the city used to respond to the large house issue. The city created the 'Large House Workshop' which was an exercise in community engagement designed to help understand how the community felt about the large house issue and an avenue for the community to suggest solutions. Suggestions from the workshop also helped frame the agenda and future actions in response to the large house issue.

Although the workshop could be viewed as a form of community participation, it lacked true representation that would be required to respond to the needs of the "whole" community. A former senior planner in Surrey interviewed for this study indicated that the workshop participants were made up of residents of neighbourhoods where the mega houses were prevalent. Furthermore, she indicated that there was equal representation of both Indo-Canadians who favoured the large homes as well as other residents opposed to
the mega-houses. However, examination of the list of participants showed a very one-sided representation. The majority of the participants were representatives from community and neighbourhood associations groups, while only two of the thirty-five participants were from the South Asian community. Furthermore, it was evident from the workshop that the residents who favoured this type of housing were under-represented, and those who considered mega houses a problem, comprised the majority. Results from a questionnaire during the workshop underscore the conclusion. The survey showed that 80 percent of the respondents agreed that there was a large house problem in Surrey, 96 percent of the respondents were home owners, and 72 percent had lived in Surrey more than ten years.

The imbalance of perspectives created by unequal community representation reduced potential conflict and tension during the workshop. Consequently, the workshop participants were able to arrive at a set of solutions for this complex issue in a very short time frame. This exclusion of voices that favoured large houses, created a situation whereby, the strong representation of long term residents who viewed the mega houses as a problem directed the agenda. As a result, over the course of one day, the workshop participants were able to suggest solutions that were aimed at stopping the construction of mega houses without much opposition. An interview with a planner at the time indicates that speed in which the matter was dealt with was important. She said, "I remember at the time, a lot of reticence to touch this issue because of the 'racist overtones', and a need to have some solutions put in place sooner rather than later, because of the outcry."
More equitable community representation during the workshop may have prolonged the process because of the existing tensions in the community, however a solution arrived at through negotiation and compromise might have provided an outcome suitable to a variety of perspectives. According to another planner also interviewed for this study, the bylaws created to respond to the mega house issues did not address the needs of the entire community. He indicated that Surrey has a large ethnic population and "the bylaws do not, in [his] opinion, serve the needs of that community. [He] spent more time wondering what the bylaws would be like if they had been written to accommodate the needs of the community." By excluding voices that favoured mega homes, the large house workshop served as a superficial exercise in community involvement.

5.4 PROBLEM NON-DEFINITION

The role of problem non-definition can also be seen at play in the mega house issue in Surrey. Referring to Katharyne Mitchell’s discussion of problem definition and non-definition, she indicated that multiculturalism as an ideology in the case of Toronto, constructs and maintains an image of ethnic harmony so that actual problems are not addressed. In the case with Surrey’s Mega homes, it can be argued that the focus on the physical aspects of the mega houses, functions to prevent underlying racial tensions from being defined as a problem in Surrey.

To begin, the mega home issue was treated purely as a land use and zoning issue. After the Large House Workshop, changes were made to bylaw and zoning regulations to stop the construction of the mega homes and reduce the creation of secondary suites. Floor
space ratios and building heights were reduced through amendments to bylaws for single family homes. Secondary suites were permitted in specific areas zoned for secondary suites. This area was a very small proportion of Surrey’s total land area. In addition a series of building design guidelines were instated to control the aesthetic appearance of homes being built in Surrey. When the complaints about the mega homes continued, the approach again was to address the physical aspects of land use planning. The city created a task force to respond to the issue. According to a memo the city Council indicated that:

Council and Administration do not want these housing types, and attempts have been made through rezoning, subdivision approval and building permit process to prevent their development. Despite efforts and intentions, however, these houses continue to be built.

These solutions, designed to address the mega house issue, did not include addressing any kind of social aspects of the problem, rather the continued focus was to stop the construction of these homes. The direction from City Council was to find the “gaps” in the system that were allowing these homes to be built. They were very clear that the taskforce’s goal was to “help Surrey find tools its (sic) needs to stop the development of these disproportionately large/out-of-character houses.”

Meanwhile it was evident from the Heritage Woods controversy that racial undertones continued to fuel the flames of dissent around the mega homes. According to a developer involved in the Heritage woods project, he experienced racist responses on his development properties in Surrey. Although these instances were reported in the media, the city did not respond to the social aspects around the issue. The problem with this kind of “non-response” and “non-definition” is that because racism is not labelled as a real problem; real strategies are not formed to respond to it.
5.5 SOCIAL CONSTRUCTION OF MEANING

The definition of ‘normal’ is another important aspect in analyzing the mega house issue. In looking at the language used at the public hearings, the documentation of the workshop, the existing political powers and the images in the media, we can see a creation of an “us” and “them” dichotomy. This construction of meaning I argue is used to maintain power of the traditional, mainstream values and structures in Surrey.

To begin, the language used to frame the issues created a divide between the people living in extended family structures and those in traditional family situations. The language used separates the existing longer term residents in the community from the newer residents. The language in the workshop labelled and separated the two larger style homes in Surrey; one as the “Executive Homes” and the other as the “Surrey Specials.” The language associates affluent positive language such as “Executive” with homes for second or third home buyers, while the larger homes that are the “Surrey Specials” are associated with those that prefer to live in an extended family. The wording “those that prefer extended family living” (City of Surrey, 1990) seems to suggest that the extended family is not the “norm,” but outside the regular conventions of mainstream life. The term extended family implies that the extended family is a larger than a “normal” family.

The positioning of positive and negative images also creates an imbalance in power. For example, the language used to refer to mega homes at some public hearings was quite derogatory. A resident used the terms “slums” or “ghettos” to describe the mega houses. Residents in the existing community also expressed a “fear” of what will happen if mega
homes were allowed to be built in their neighbourhoods. Interestingly, the complaints did not relate to “run-down” or unkempt yards, or garbage build up around the property, or unsanitary conditions, or even poverty. The term “slum”, normally associated with such qualities was in fact referring to newly constructed houses where the owners took pride in their homes. The use of the term “out-of-character”, to describe the mega homes creates a further separation. It implies that the traditional existing homes are of the ‘appropriate’ character, while the larger homes with extended families are not.

On the other hand, positive images were associated with the existing smaller homes in Surrey. The traditional housing styles were portrayed using comments such as “small home in a nice quiet neighbourhood.” In the media, for example, the Heritage Woods subdivision of smaller homes was described as a “cozy” community with “traditional values” (McMartin, Oct. 1996). Language such as “small” and “quiet” creates an image of the existing homes in Surrey as vulnerable and in need of protection.

I argue that these mega homes images are socially constructed by community members who feel their traditional way of life is threatened. Essentially, the good ‘traditional’ community is pitted against the bad ‘slums’ created by extended family living. Juxtaposing these kinds of images creates a “good” and “evil” scenario, and reinforces, perhaps even creates, the divide and tension in the community. Not only does this positioning oversimplify the complexities involved with the issue, it also uses fear to set an image to “protect the good, and stop the bad.” As the memo during a task force meeting outlined, the construction of these houses “needs to be stopped.” However, I argue that these mega homes represent the rise of another culture making its mark on the
territory, claiming space by reconstructing the image of the community. It could be argued that construction of dichotomous images serves to protect the power and existing structures of mainstream society in Surrey that are threatened by new cultural values such as the extended family.
With the evident changing ethnoracial composition of our cities, practical applications and tools to plan for diversity are needed in the practice of planning. Although broad policy and vision statements and committees are in place, the links between the larger policy statements and concrete practices tend to be missing. The need to move beyond the policy statements to include practical applications of community engagement is especially needed in order to plan for increased diversity. Furthermore, with the fragmentation created by the changing and mixing of values that are transplanted here from abroad, planners now more than ever need to recognize their role as facilitators and mediators whose role it is to foster community cohesion. Moreover, to foster true community involvement planners need to look for innovative ways to improve access to knowledge and services for ethnic minorities. In so doing, they need to be cognisant of communication strategies that not only involve multiple publics, but also to be conscious of how communication strategies can shape agendas and actions in response to issues.

6.1 PARTICIPATION AND REPRESENTATION

Participation and access to process and knowledge are important considerations when planning for diversity. In particular, this access needs to promote wide representation and inclusivity in order to give voice to the full scope of perspectives in a diverse community. As we have learned, from the Surrey’s Large House workshop, the imbalanced representation of the community created a one-sided view of the issues. Planners had a direct influence in this, by the manner in which they invited and
encouraged participation in the workshop. People that were opposed to the mega houses made up the majority of workshop participants. Consequently their recommendations and course of action did not and could not represent and benefit the entire community. The indirect exclusion of those in favour of the mega homes allowed the dominant voices opposed to the construction of mega homes to shape the issues and solutions. The interests of the South Asian community were under-represented and thus did not have a voice in terms of creating a plan for action. Rather than have a negotiated solution from various perspectives, the solutions were mainly aimed at stopping the construction of these types of homes.

These kinds of problems of exclusion lead us to question the role of policy makers in addressing imbalances of power. Participation and access to process and knowledge are important considerations when planning for diversity. In particular, this access needs to promote wide representation and inclusivity in order to give voice to the full scope of perspectives in a diverse community. As we have learned, from the Surrey's Large House workshop, the imbalanced representation of the community created a one-sided view of the issues. Without this kind of analysis marginalized communities in general may continue to be excluded from the process of planning.

6.2 BARRIERS TO PARTICIPATION

The acknowledgement of barriers is essential in the context of fostering participation. In the case of Surrey, this is especially important due to extensive language barriers and cultural differences within the community. Planners need to recognize language barriers
as part of characteristics and make up of the city’s diverse population. The community demographics showed that 30 percent of the population is comprised of immigrants. Many of those immigrants also had low English language capacity. As such, proactive planning to include culturally sensitive approaches would help increase knowledge about communities as well as encourage participation.

In addition, to language barriers, there are other cultural factors such as fear of authority and lack of knowledge of the system, which may create further obstacles to participation and involvement. Working to remove these barriers through increasing networks and partnerships with the community through outreach programs as well as with social and integration services may prove to be a useful approach. In a climate of diversity and multiplicity, planners need to recognize that they need to move beyond traditional forms of community engagement and include broader ways of gathering information. For example planners recognize that the traditional use of public hearings, surveys and questionnaires may not be planners need to expand their toolkits to include more innovative ways of learning and gathering information.

6.3 COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

Effective and innovative communication strategies are necessary for planning in general and especially important when planning for diversity. Planners need to acknowledge the role that selective communication strategies have on the potential to frame issues and to shape knowledge and action. For example, planners in Surrey had listed six issues for the participants of the Large House Workshop to consider. The language used to
communicate the issues gave a biased slant in terms of information delivery. The issues were communicated in such a way that the large houses or mega houses were portrayed in a negative light. This portrayal shaped the participants responses as well as their recommendations for action.

From the case study we see that planners need to be cognisant of the way they are delivering knowledge because during the delivery they are in fact shaping knowledge. Language that is used can be a very powerful tool, and needs to be acknowledged as such. In terms of planning for diversity and delivery of knowledge, the goal of the planner needs to be to educate and promote understanding, rather than reinforce negative stereotypes. Using negative or leading phrases in their communication has an impact on the issues at hand. As such, in order to foster understanding and tolerance, planners need to be conscious of their choice of language in their communication strategies.

Furthermore, the omission of information also needs to be considered in the process of communication. It is not only what and how planners communicate, but also what they do not communicate that impacts action. By omitting important perspectives, they are shaping what is relevant and what is not. This omission could potentially disempower certain groups or communities. Again, planners need to work to balance the differences of power and give issues relevance through the inclusion of multiple perspectives.
6.4 LONG-TERM COMMITMENT

The planning profession needs to recognize that long-term commitment to true community participation, rather than short-term solutions may provide the most cost-effective results as well as lead to healthy stable communities. As we saw with the case of the mega home issue in Surrey, the one-day workshop provided a quick course of action, but the underlying issues for the entire community remained unsolved. Although the added time to ensure the inclusion of minorities may slow down the process, in the long term it will provide more viable and fair solutions for the community. The Large House Workshop, an exercise in community engagement, served as an efficient solution with one workshop that represented the “loudest voices” in the community. Using this kind of approach, the planners were not able to ensure representation from less organized groups in the community. As a result, this one-sided solution created an easy short-term resolution, but the problem continued to re-surface.

6.5 IMPORTANCE OF SOCIAL PLANNING

Finally, not all planning decisions will be based on issues related to ethnoracial diversity. Some planning practices require technical knowledge and actions. However, these should not be confused with issues that have social implications. Although all issues may not begin as a social planning issue, they can evolve into one. For example, in the case of the mega houses in Surrey, the case began as a purely technical land use issue. However, rising community tensions, the racial undertones and inflammatory comments from Council around the construction of mega houses changed the nature of the issue. The
response to the issue however remained “technical” and land use oriented. The social implications and the lack of community cohesion were not addressed.

Social issues that arise from our changing ethnocultural landscape need to be addressed in order to find positive and effective solutions. By not defining the social problems inherent in the mega house issue, appropriate and effective responses were not created. As such, addressing underlying social issues are extremely important when planning for diversity. Tensions and conflicts left to continue in the landscape can foster deep divides and intolerance in a community. Increased divisiveness and fragmentation between various groups may further decrease the stability and livability of neighbourhoods. Thus, planning for social issues in conjunction with physical land use issues may help in working toward fostering community cohesion. This kind of integrated, holistic approach needs to be an integral part of planning and building healthy communities.

6.6 CONCLUSION

As the ethnoracial composition of our cities becomes more diverse, our cities become increasingly vibrant and dynamic places. New meanings of space are re-negotiated, re-defined and re-constructed as different social relationships and norms emerge from the mixing and clashing of traditional and new cultural values. As a response, all levels of government have created policy frameworks in order to accommodate and ease the transition towards diversity. Despite policy formation, however, increased diversity can often manifest into tensions and conflict about changes in the physical landscape. Spaces in our cities become battlegrounds that pit traditional values against the new.
Municipal planners tend to be at the fore-front, responding to the tensions arising from conflicting values shaping neighbourhoods and communities. In managing this diversity, however, there are no tried and true recipes for success. As we saw from the Surrey Mega House case study, traditional planning approaches can often be ineffective and exclusionary when dealing with diversity issues due to their reactive, rather than proactive nature. As a result, conflicts over changes in the landscape continue to destabilize and divide communities.

Whose role is it, then, to foster and facilitate community cohesion? Although we all as a community share this responsibility, policy makers have a unique opportunity to find ways to plan and facilitate approaches that promote directions toward increased understanding, tolerance and stability in our neighbourhoods. Planning professionals need to acknowledge increased diversity as part of their landscape. Just as changing demographics, such as an aging population, need to be considered in the planning efforts, similarly so too do changes to the ethnoracial composition of our communities.

In working toward fostering community cohesion, planners do not need to change what they do, but to evaluate how they are doing it. Effective means to encourage participation and acknowledge barriers need to be explored. These approaches need to consider ways to not only engage but also access ethnic minorities beyond the traditional existing programs. In addition, managing diversity can often include managing conflict. As such, planner’s roles as facilitators and mediators become an increasingly important skill set toward creating stable and livable communities. Furthermore, appropriate
communication strategies that promote access of information and knowledge for all community members need to be considered. Since knowledge shapes direction and understanding of issues, an evaluation of communication strategies need to be part of planning for diversity.

As we move forward into the new millennium, challenges faced in managing diversity will continue to emerge. Thus, research and practical efforts that encourage healthy and diverse communities need to be a continued priority. Being equipped with proactive strategies, planners and other policy makers may be able to respond to issues using more appropriate and flexible approaches that consider the needs of the whole community. This kind of foresight and thought about diversity will not produce firm, fixed solutions amid conflict. Rather, proactive planning for diversity may lead us in the direction toward fostering more understanding, compromise and tolerance in our communities.
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WHEREAS the Constitution of Canada provides that every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and benefit of the law without discrimination and that everyone has the freedom of conscience, religion, thought, belief, opinion, expression, peaceful assembly and association and guarantees those rights and freedoms equally to male and female persons;

AND WHEREAS the Constitution of Canada recognizes the importance of preserving and enhancing the multicultural heritage of Canadians;

AND WHEREAS the Constitution of Canada recognizes rights of the aboriginal peoples of Canada;

AND WHEREAS the Constitution of Canada and the Official Languages Act provide that English and French are the official languages of Canada and neither abrogates nor derogates from any rights or privileges acquired or enjoyed with respect to any other language;

AND WHEREAS the Citizenship Act provides that all Canadians, whether by birth or by choice, enjoy equal status, are entitled to the same rights, powers and privileges and are subject to the same obligations, duties and liabilities;

AND WHEREAS the Canadian Human Rights Act provides that every individual should have an equal opportunity with other individuals to make the life that the individual is able and wishes to have, consistent with the duties and obligations of that individual as a member of society, and, in order to secure that opportunity, establishes the Canadian Human Rights Commission to redress any proscribed discrimination, including discrimination on the basis of race, national or ethnic origin or colour;

AND WHEREAS Canada is a party to the International Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination, which Convention recognizes that all human beings are equal before the law and are entitled to equal protection of the law against any discrimination and against any incitement to discrimination, and to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights, which Covenant provides that persons belonging to ethnic, religious or linguistic minorities shall not be denied the right to enjoy their own culture, to profess and practice their own religion or to use their own language;
AND WHEREAS the Government of Canada recognizes the diversity of Canadians as regards race, national or ethnic origin, colour and religion as a fundamental characteristic of Canadian society and is committed to a policy of multiculturalism designed to preserve and enhance the multicultural heritage of Canadians while working to achieve the equality of all Canadians in the economic, social, cultural and political life of Canada;

NOW, THEREFORE, Her Majesty, by and with the advice and consent of the Senate and House of Commons of Canada, enacts as follows:

SHORT TITLE

1. This Act may be cited as the *Canadian Multiculturalism Act*.

INTERPRETATION

2. In this Act,

"federal institution" means any of the following institutions of the Government of Canada:

(a) a department, board, commission or council, or other body or office, established to perform a governmental function by or pursuant to an Act of Parliament or by or under the authority of the Governor in Council, and

(b) a departmental corporation or Crown corporation as defined in section 2 of the *Financial Administration Act*,

but does not include

(c) any institution of the Council or government of the Northwest Territories or the Yukon Territory or of the Legislative Assembly for, or the government of, Nunavut, or

(d) any Indian band, band council or other body established to perform a governmental function in relation to an Indian band or other group of aboriginal people;

"Minister" means such member of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada as is designated by the Governor in Council as the Minister for the purposes of this Act.

R.S., 1985, c. 24 (4th Supp.), s. 2; 1993, c. 28, s. 78.
3. (1) It is hereby declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada to

(a) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism reflects the cultural and racial diversity of Canadian society and acknowledges the freedom of all members of Canadian society to preserve, enhance and share their cultural heritage;

(b) recognize and promote the understanding that multiculturalism is a fundamental characteristic of the Canadian heritage and identity and that it provides an invaluable resource in the shaping of Canada's future;

(c) promote the full and equitable participation of individuals and communities of all origins in the continuing evolution and shaping of all aspects of Canadian society and assist them in the elimination of any barrier to that participation;

(d) recognize the existence of communities whose members share a common origin and their historic contribution to Canadian society, and enhance their development;

(e) ensure that all individuals receive equal treatment and equal protection under the law, while respecting and valuing their diversity;

(f) encourage and assist the social, cultural, economic and political institutions of Canada to be both respectful and inclusive of Canada's multicultural character;

(g) promote the understanding and creativity that arise from the interaction between individuals and communities of different origins;

(h) foster the recognition and appreciation of the diverse cultures of Canadian society and promote the reflection and the evolving expressions of those cultures;

(i) preserve and enhance the use of languages other than English and French, while strengthening the status and use of the official languages of Canada; and

(j) advance multiculturalism throughout Canada in harmony with the national commitment to the official languages of Canada.

(2) It is further declared to be the policy of the Government of Canada that all federal institutions shall

(a) ensure that Canadians of all origins have an equal opportunity to obtain employment and advancement in those institutions;

(b) promote policies, programs and practices that enhance the ability of individuals and communities of all origins to contribute to the continuing evolution of Canada;

(c) promote policies, programs and practices that enhance the understanding of and respect for
the diversity of the members of Canadian society;

(c) collect statistical data in order to enable the development of policies, programs and practices that are sensitive and responsive to the multicultural reality of Canada;

(e) make use, as appropriate, of the language skills and cultural understanding of individuals of all origins; and

(f) generally, carry on their activities in a manner that is sensitive and responsive to the multicultural reality of Canada.

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE MULTICULTURALISM POLICY OF CANADA

4. The Minister, in consultation with other ministers of the Crown, shall encourage and promote a coordinated approach to the implementation of the multiculturalism policy of Canada and may provide advice and assistance in the development and implementation of programs and practices in support of the policy.

5. (1) The Minister shall take such measures as the Minister considers appropriate to implement the multiculturalism policy of Canada and, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, may

(a) encourage and assist individuals, organizations and institutions to project the multicultural reality of Canada in their activities in Canada and abroad;

(b) undertake and assist research relating to Canadian multiculturalism and foster scholarship in the field;

(c) encourage and promote exchanges and cooperation among the diverse communities of Canada;

(d) encourage and assist the business community, labour organizations, voluntary and other private organizations, as well as public institutions, in ensuring full participation in Canadian society, including the social and economic aspects, of individuals of all origins and their communities, and in promoting respect and appreciation for the multicultural reality of Canada;

(e) encourage the preservation, enhancement, sharing and evolving expression of the multicultural heritage of Canada;

(f) facilitate the acquisition, retention and use of all languages that contribute to the multicultural heritage of Canada;

(g) assist ethno-cultural minority communities to conduct activities with a view to overcoming any discriminatory barrier and, in particular, discrimination based on race or national or ethnic origin;

(h) provide support to individuals, groups or organizations for the purpose of preserving, enhancing and promoting multiculturalism in Canada; and
(1) undertake such other projects or programs in respect of multiculturalism, not by law assigned to any other federal institution, as are designed to promote the multiculturalism policy of Canada.

(2) The Minister may enter into an agreement or arrangement with any province respecting the implementation of the multiculturalism policy of Canada.

(3) The Minister may, with the approval of the Governor in Council, enter into an agreement or arrangement with the government of any foreign state in order to foster the multicultural character of Canada.

6. (1) The ministers of the Crown, other than the Minister, shall, in the execution of their respective mandates, take such measures as they consider appropriate to implement the multiculturalism policy of Canada.

(2) A minister of the Crown, other than the Minister, may enter into an agreement or arrangement with any province respecting the implementation of the multiculturalism policy of Canada.

7. (1) The Minister may establish an advisory committee to advise and assist the Minister on the implementation of this Act and any other matter relating to multiculturalism and, in consultation with such organizations representing multicultural interests as the Minister deems appropriate, may appoint the members and designate the chairman and other officers of the committee.

(2) Each member of the advisory committee shall be paid such remuneration for the member's services as may be fixed by the Minister and is entitled to be paid the reasonable travel and living expenses incurred by the member while absent from the member's ordinary place of residence in connection with the work of the committee.

(3) The chairman of the advisory committee shall, within four months after the end of each fiscal year, submit to the Minister a report on the activities of the committee for that year and on any other matter relating to the implementation of the multiculturalism policy of Canada that the chairman considers appropriate.

GENERAL

8. The Minister shall cause to be laid before each House of Parliament, not later than the fifth sitting day of that House after January 31 next following the end of each fiscal year, a report on the operation of this Act for that fiscal year.

9. The operation of this Act and any report made pursuant to section 8 shall be reviewed on a permanent basis by such committee of the House, of the Senate or of both Houses of Parliament as may be designated or established for the purpose.

Appendix II

List of Key Informants

1. Large House Workshop Participant
2. Surrey Real Estate Agent
3. Past City of Surrey Planner