



Toronto @ 20: Participation in a “too big, too small” city

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1. Why participation matters

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2. Gaps in participation

A large, white, downward-pointing arrow with a black outline, centered between the second and third text boxes.

3. How can we do about it?

1. Why participation matters

Participation is essential to good governance

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Good Governance
at the Local Level:
Meaning and
Measurement

Zack Taylor
Western University

UNIVERSITY OF
TORONTO

“Authority and resources without participation and accountability make for tyranny; democracy without capacity is a recipe for ineffectiveness.”

The (legal) bar is shifting

“The democratic legitimacy of municipal decisions does not spring solely from periodic elections, but also from a decision-making process that is transparent, accessible to the public, and mandated by law.”

Participation standards

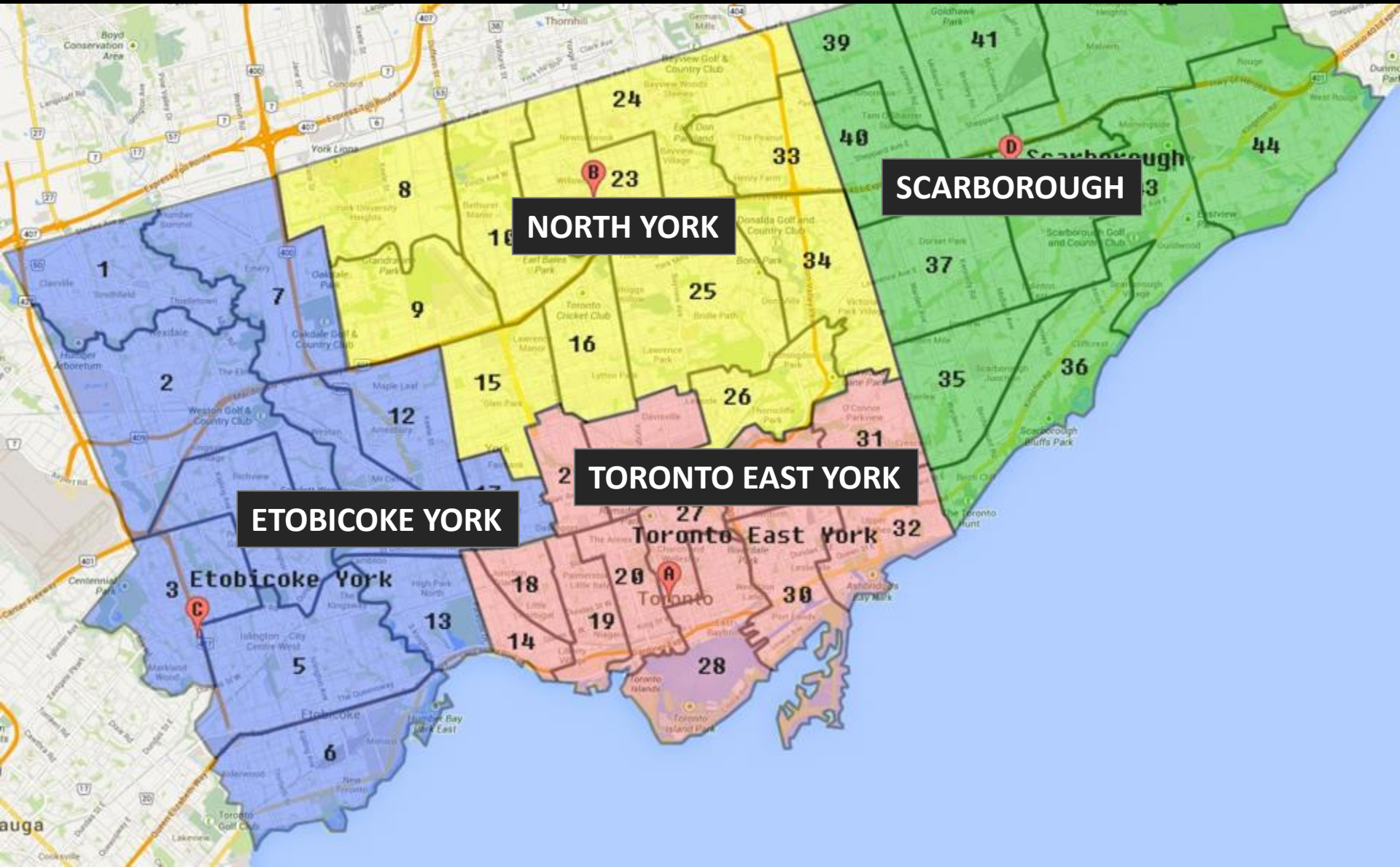
- Those affected have a right to be involved in the decision-making process.
- Public officials must seek out and facilitate the involvement of those potentially affected by or interested in a decision.
- Participants must have the information they need to participate in a meaningful way.

2. Gaps in participation

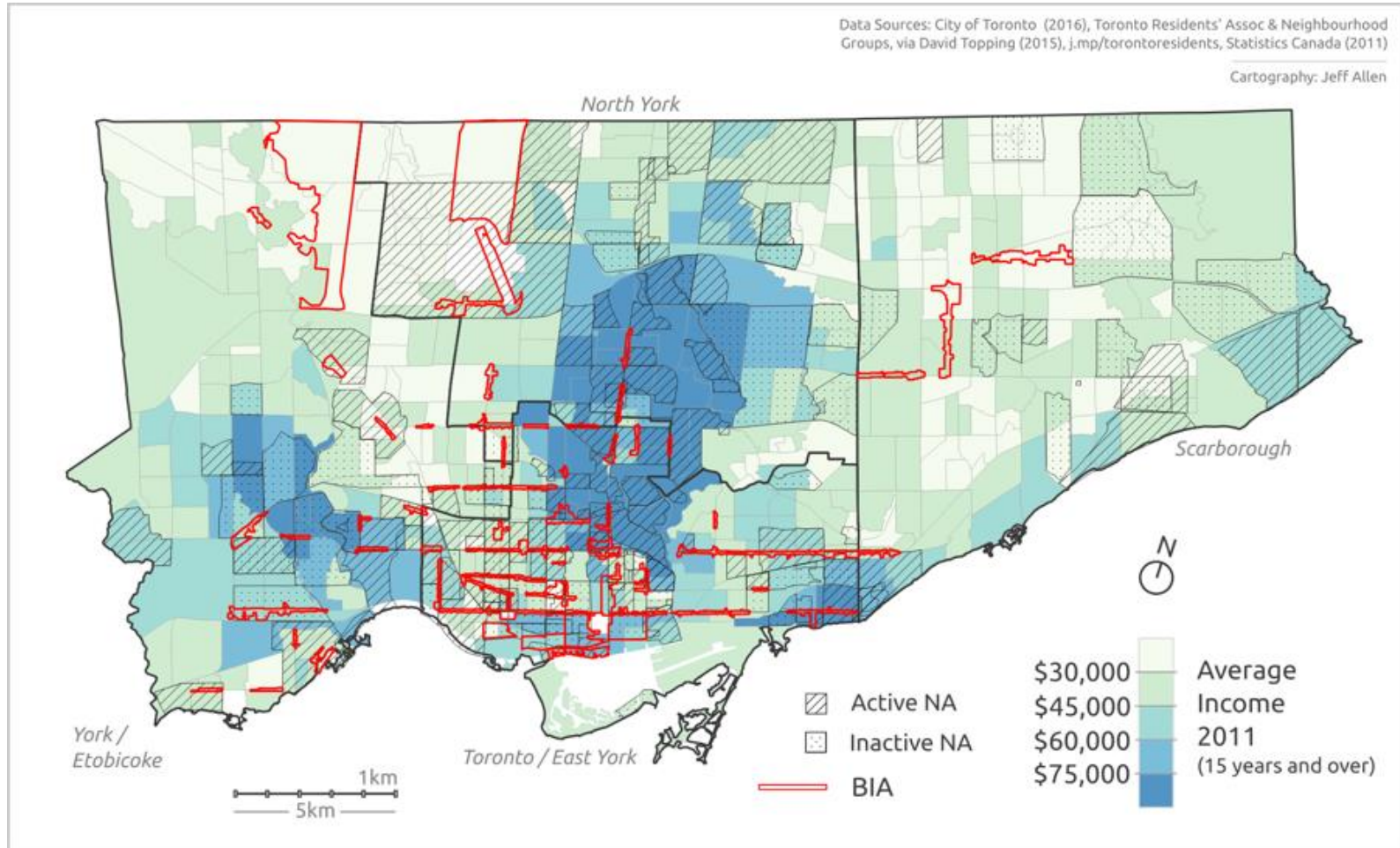
**The Toronto area has
participation gaps at the
“local” level**

“Those who fear their local neighbourhood will sink into the megacity morass should prepare themselves for grimmer news. The province has promised that neighbourhood issues will be dealt with by six advisory community councils made up of local, elected officials from the megacouncil along with hand-picked local residents. ... But there is no mention of such bodies in the legislation...”

Community councils aren't designed for "local" access



Local groups influence decisions & process unevenly



Especially worrisome in a polarized city and region



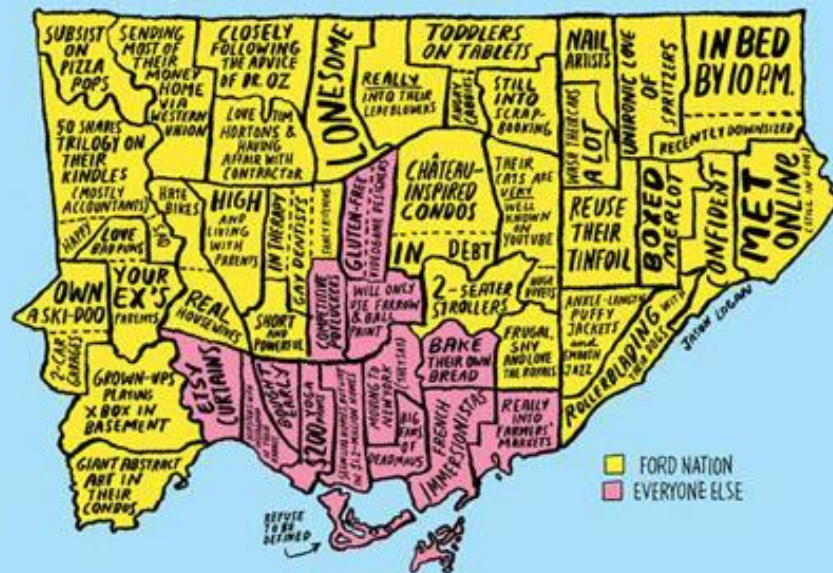
THE THREE CITIES WITHIN TORONTO

Income Polarization Among Toronto's Neighbourhoods, 1970-2010

BY J. DAVID HULCHANSKI, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO



THE DIVIDED CITY A PORTRAIT OF TORONTO IN 2014



A SPECIAL ISSUE ON HOW TO UNITE THE TWO TORONTOS

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**The Toronto area has
participation gaps at the
“regional” level**

Some recent controversies

SIDE WALK LABS



“Some say the deal has been shrouded in secrecy. Others fear the company's vague but sweeping plans could threaten the city's authority over a massive swath of waterfront or even its public transit system and other key services.”

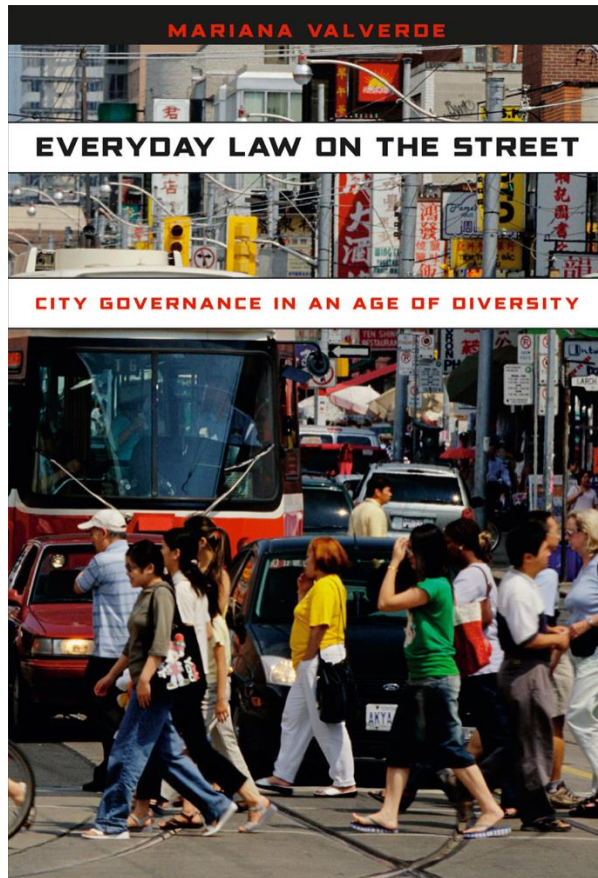
Some recent controversies



"They dropped this on us with no deliberation, with no collaboration, they just said, this is what we're doing, what colour do you want it?"

**3. What can we
do about it?**

Accessible governance takes work



“Democracy at the scale of the city [...] requires careful attention to the mechanisms used to solicit input and allow for citizen participation.”

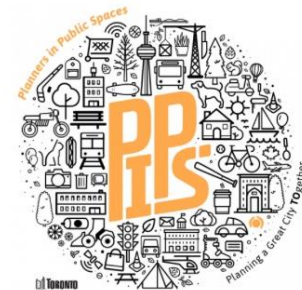
Some recent initiatives



TOcore Avatars



Toronto Planning Review Panel



Planners in Public Spaces

Next steps for the “just right” city



Thank you!