Since 1957, Social Planning Toronto has promoted equitable, effective, and inclusive policies to improve life for all residents of Toronto. SPT does research, policy analysis, community planning, and capacity building. We work with agencies across Toronto’s community service sector.

**OUR PROGRAM PRIORITIES**

**Community Capacity Building**
We increase skills, knowledge, and resource development in local communities through our planners, researchers, and communications staff.

**Social Research and Policy Analysis**
Our research focuses on three key areas:
- Income Security and Labour Markets
- Public Education and Human Development
- Community Infrastructure, Public Finance and Resource Allocation

We provide communities and organizations with the facts they need to make positive change.

**Community Education and Advocacy**
We provide opportunities for city-wide education, and support local educational activities, particularly for the most marginalized and vulnerable communities. Making information accessible helps create a foundation of understanding on which communities can act for positive social change.

**Building Partnerships**
SPT uses its community planning, research, and communications capacities to support responses to critical challenges facing Toronto residents.

---

**OUR MISSION**

“Social Planning Toronto is committed to building a civic society: one in which diversity, equity, social and economic justice, interdependence and active civic participation are central to all aspects of our lives - in our families, neighbourhoods, voluntary and recreational activities, and in our politics.”

---

**OUR ROLE**

Social Planning Toronto is a
- Convener of social research, often with other non-profit and academic organizations, and a convener of collaboration with service providers and residents in local communities.
- Mobilizer of community leaders, residents, and organizations to improve equity, inclusivity, and the quality of life in the city.
- Advocate with policy makers, agencies, and institutional leaders for improved facilities, social and economic conditions, access to jobs, and services.
- Resource for community-based action in support of community-identified issues and priorities through research, policy analysis, public education, and leadership development.

---

**SPT STAFF**

Israt Ahmed, Community Planner
John Camprey, Executive Director
Richard DeGaetano, Community Planner
Cutty Duncan, Project Co-ordinator, ANC – Mt. Dennis
Layla Farah, Research and Policy Assistant
Yvonne Forrest, Community Program Assistant
Yasmin Haq, Community Planner
Mohamed Ismail, Researcher
Lesley Johnston, Researcher
Sarah Matsushita, Communications Officer
Mary Micalef, Program Support
Araf Mohamed, Research and Policy Assistant
Sharma Quieser, Program Assistant
Maria Serrano, Director of Operations
Navjeet Sidhu, Researcher
Besrat Solomon, Bookkeeper
Ryan Tilley, Program Support (Membership)
Beth Wilson, Senior Researcher

---

**SPT BOARD MEMBERS**

Jan Armstrong — Member at Large, Executive Committee
Brigitte Barbeau
Karen Bell – Chair, Governance Committee
Michael Bornstein
Michael Creek – Vice-President
Joe Cressey
Miriam DiGiuseppe — President
Jasmine Earle — Chair, Access and Equity Committee
Brian Eng
Charles Finlay—Member at Large, Executive Committee
Alix Freiler—Chair, Research Advisory Committee
Nancy Henderson – Secretary
O’Neil Edwards
Anshula Ohri — Treasurer and Chair, Finance Committee
Ginelle Skerritt

---

**SPT FUNDERS**

United Way Toronto
City of Toronto
Ontario Trillium Foundation
Atkinson Charitable Foundation
Toronto Community Foundation
Service Canada
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services

---

**SUSTAINING ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS/PARTNERS**

ACCES Employment
ASSOCIUM
Central Neighbourhood House
Children’s Aid Society of Toronto
COSTI Immigrant Services
East Metro Youth Services
Fred Victor Centre
IBEW Local 353
North York Community House
Parkdale Community Legal Services
St. Christopher House
St. Stephen’s Community House
Toronto Neighbourhood Centres
VHA Home Healthcare
Warden Woods Community Centre
YMCA Toronto
YWCA Toronto

---

**VOLUNTEERS**

Nessa Bably
Mario Calla
Pat Chapman
Alina Chatterjee
David Cross
Simone Dawkins
Rick Eagan
Bryan Evans
Elizabeth Forrestell
Tam Goossen
Jefferson Guzman
Scott Leon
May Lu
John Myles
Gulf Setash
Vani Visava
Armine Yalnizyan

---

**STUDENTS, INTERNS**

Chris Connolly
Sydney Edmonds
Claire Gatto
Rosalind Gunn
Danielle Jamieson
Courtney Kahn
Scott Leon
Isabel Luciano
Ramzi Massi
Imogen Mercer
Deborah Quiggin
Erik Shaw
Kelly Stephenson
Anthony Stumpo
Jennifer Turney
Ava Williams

---

**OUR MISSION**

“Social Planning Toronto is committed to building a civic society: one in which diversity, equity, social and economic justice, interdependence and active civic participation are central to all aspects of our lives - in our families, neighbourhoods, voluntary and recreational activities, and in our politics.”

---

**OUR ROLE**

Social Planning Toronto is a
- Convener of social research, often with other non-profit and academic organizations, and a convener of collaboration with service providers and residents in local communities.
- Mobilizer of community leaders, residents, and organizations to improve equity, inclusivity, and the quality of life in the city.
- Advocate with policy makers, agencies, and institutional leaders for improved facilities, social and economic conditions, access to jobs, and services.
- Resource for community-based action in support of community-identified issues and priorities through research, policy analysis, public education, and leadership development.

---

**SPT STAFF**

Israt Ahmed, Community Planner
John Camprey, Executive Director
Richard DeGaetano, Community Planner
Cutty Duncan, Project Co-ordinator, ANC – Mt. Dennis
Layla Farah, Research and Policy Assistant
Yvonne Forrest, Community Program Assistant
Yasmin Haq, Community Planner
Mohamed Ismail, Researcher
Lesley Johnston, Researcher
Sarah Matsushita, Communications Officer
Mary Micalef, Program Support
Araf Mohamed, Research and Policy Assistant
Sharma Quieser, Program Assistant
Maria Serrano, Director of Operations
Navjeet Sidhu, Researcher
Besrat Solomon, Bookkeeper
Ryan Tilley, Program Support (Membership)
Beth Wilson, Senior Researcher

---

**SPT BOARD MEMBERS**

Jan Armstrong — Member at Large, Executive Committee
Brigitte Barbeau
Karen Bell – Chair, Governance Committee
Michael Bornstein
Michael Creek – Vice-President
Joe Cressey
Miriam DiGiuseppe — President
Jasmine Earle — Chair, Access and Equity Committee
Brian Eng
Charles Finlay—Member at Large, Executive Committee
Alix Freiler—Chair, Research Advisory Committee
Nancy Henderson – Secretary
O’Neil Edwards
Anshula Ohri — Treasurer and Chair, Finance Committee
Ginelle Skerritt

---

**SPT FUNDERS**

United Way Toronto
City of Toronto
Ontario Trillium Foundation
Atkinson Charitable Foundation
Toronto Community Foundation
Service Canada
Citizenship and Immigration Canada
Ontario Ministry of Community and Social Services

---

**SUSTAINING ORGANIZATIONAL MEMBERS/PARTNERS**

ACCES Employment
ASSOCIUM
Central Neighbourhood House
Children’s Aid Society of Toronto
COSTI Immigrant Services
East Metro Youth Services
Fred Victor Centre
IBEW Local 353
North York Community House
Parkdale Community Legal Services
St. Christopher House
St. Stephen’s Community House
Toronto Neighbourhood Centres
VHA Home Healthcare
Warden Woods Community Centre
YMCA Toronto
YWCA Toronto

---

**VOLUNTEERS**

Nessa Bably
Mario Calla
Pat Chapman
Alina Chatterjee
David Cross
Simone Dawkins
Rick Eagan
Bryan Evans
Elizabeth Forrestell
Tam Goossen
Jefferson Guzman
Scott Leon
May Lu
John Myles
Gulf Setash
Vani Visava
Armine Yalnizyan

---

**STUDENTS, INTERNS**

Chris Connolly
Sydney Edmonds
Claire Gatto
Rosalind Gunn
Danielle Jamieson
Courtney Kahn
Scott Leon
Isabel Luciano
Ramzi Massi
Imogen Mercer
Deborah Quiggin
Erik Shaw
Kelly Stephenson
Anthony Stumpo
Jennifer Turney
Ava Williams

---

**OUR MISSION**

“Social Planning Toronto is committed to building a civic society: one in which diversity, equity, social and economic justice, interdependence and active civic participation are central to all aspects of our lives - in our families, neighbourhoods, voluntary and recreational activities, and in our politics.”

---

**OUR ROLE**

Social Planning Toronto is a
- Convener of social research, often with other non-profit and academic organizations, and a convener of collaboration with service providers and residents in local communities.
- Mobilizer of community leaders, residents, and organizations to improve equity, inclusivity, and the quality of life in the city.
- Advocate with policy makers, agencies, and institutional leaders for improved facilities, social and economic conditions, access to jobs, and services.
- Resource for community-based action in support of community-identified issues and priorities through research, policy analysis, public education, and leadership development.
The 2014 Frances Lankin Community Service Award Recipient — Kay Blair

In her ten years of service as President and CEO of United Way Toronto, Frances Lankin made an invaluable contribution to the non-profit community sector in Toronto. To acknowledge this decade of accomplishment, Social Planning Toronto established the “Frances Lankin Community Service Award” in 2011, on the occasion of Frances’ retirement from United Way Toronto. This award is presented annually to an individual who has made a sustained, significant contribution to the work of the non-profit community sector in Toronto.

It is our hope that this award will serve, on an ongoing basis, to inspire and acknowledge the special individuals whose work, dedication, and passion for community are the true embodiment of “community service.”

In 2014 this award was presented to Kay Blair. In her role as Executive Director of Community Microskills Development Centre, Kay has been highly active in the local community and throughout the GTA, and her expertise and leadership has been recognized by the broader community on many occasions.

Friends, family, and well-wishers joined us at the award ceremony, as well as Frances Lankin herself, who joined UWT President Susan McIsaac in presenting the award to Kay’s family and colleagues from Microskills. SPT was delighted to acknowledge Kay’s contribution to our sector by selecting her as the 2014 recipient of the award.
President’s Report

At critical junctures in Toronto’s history, Social Planning Toronto has played an important role in highlighting trends, pointing toward solutions, and mobilizing communities to make change. At this year’s Annual General Meeting, we are reflecting on the impact that Metro Suburbs in Transition – a key publication of the former Metro Toronto Social Planning Council – has had on Toronto’s development over the thirty-five years since it identified the fact that services in Toronto’s inner suburbs were not reflecting the dramatic demographic changes that were taking place across the city. Over a quarter century later, initiatives such as United Way’s 2003 Strong Neighbourhoods Task force and subsequent work in priority neighbourhoods across the city, and this year’s “Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020” from the City of Toronto, are continuing to respond to the issues first identified by Marvyn Novick and his Social Planning colleagues back in 1979.

This is an indicator of not only the continued importance of the work of Social Planning Toronto and its predecessor organizations, but also of the necessity of continuing that work. It is always a gamble to predict the future, but we can hope, for example, that the work of Social Planning Toronto and the Alliance for a Poverty-Free Toronto, led by Winston Tinglin until his retirement last June, to develop strategy to eliminate poverty in Toronto, will have had a similar impact on Toronto a quarter century from now. City Council’s unanimous vote, just last month, to develop a poverty reduction strategy for Toronto is an important first step along that road.

In addition to its visionary role on the big issues of poverty, inequality, and equity in our city and beyond, SPT continues to play a vital role in making smaller, but significant changes for the better in both local communities and across the city. Whether it is supporting emerging events like the successful “WestWon” Festival in Mount Dennis, bringing together local communities with the City’s Ombudsman, to enhance access to her services across the city, or winning gains for communities and the organizations that serve them through the city budget process, Social Planning Toronto continues to link its research capacity to real community mobilization in ways that truly do “improve the quality of life of all residents of Toronto.”

I have been fortunate to have the support of a strong, dedicated Board team, who have not only provided strategic direction and perspective, but who have pitched in to provide strong support in organizational policy development, financial management and fundraising, as well as representing SPT in a variety of forums. I want to acknowledge the contributions of departing Board members O’Neil Edwards, Mikhael Bornstein, and Joe Cressy, who have all brought valuable skills and insights to our Board table – we will miss their contribution. The Board also continues to appreciate the quality and sheer range of work accomplished by the SPT staff – truly an impressive team.

Social Planning Toronto appreciates the many partners who make our continued work possible – we look forward to continued collaboration and shared leadership as we face the challenges of 2014 and the years to come.

Miriam DiGiuseppe
President, SPT Board of Directors
Executive Director’s Report

Social Planning Toronto’s value as a resource, advocate, and valued partner for the non-profit community sector is reflected in our growing organizational membership – in 2013, just under 200 agencies and community groups were organizational members of SPT. Through our electronic newsletter, our social media presence, and the growing influence of our “TogetherToronto.ca” petition website, Social Planning Toronto’s work is reaching tens of thousands of Toronto residents each year.

2013 posed some significant challenges for SPT – we keenly felt the gaps created by the retirements of Margaret Hau and Winston Tinglin, and, like most other organizations in the non-profit sector, we continue to face the pressure to do more with less. Despite these constraints, SPT has continued to produce quality research, to make that research accessible through a range of publications aimed at a variety of audiences, and through community events that provide opportunities to link our research with community mobilization and action.

SPT continues to benefit from a dedicated, hard-working staff. Our research team, Beth Wilson, Nav Sidhu, and Lesley Johnston, supported by a number of students, (paid!) interns, and volunteers, make a major contribution to the knowledge we have about housing, education, community services, and labour markets in our city, and bring that knowledge to life through their involvement in an incredible range of organizations, networks, and coalitions seeking – and often winning – real changes in policies and practices that make a real difference in the lives of residents of Toronto, particularly for marginalized individuals and communities. Our community planners – Israt Ahmed, Yasmin Haq, Richard DeGaetano, and Cutty Duncan – ground our work in local communities, building and sustaining the local networks that ensure that our research and policy work is relevant and effective at the local level, and giving ‘legs’ to our city-wide work in Etobicoke, Scarborough and York. Our administrative and program support team – Maria Serrano, Mohamed Ismail, Mary Micallef, with assistance from Ryan Tilley on membership, Sarah Matsu-shita on communications and Besrat Solomon on bookkeeping – make sure that the myriad responsibilities and tasks that need to be done to make sure that things actually happen – do an amazing job of literally doing more with less.

We are also an organization that continues to benefit from a dedicated, hard-working Board. Being an engaged, effective Board member is becoming more and more difficult for volunteers across the sector. SPT is truly fortunate to have a marvellous Board team, who step up and play a vital role in the direction of the organization, as well as providing me with valued support and counsel. I particularly want to acknowledge the extraordinary contribution made by Board President Miriam DiGiuseppe, who not only provides effective leadership at the governance level, but has also devoted countless hours of painstaking work to ensure that our publications, presentations, and policies are of the highest quality.

SPT continues to benefit from the support of a wide range of individuals, organizations, and funders, who continue to show their belief in our work, and its impact, by giving of their time, talents, and resources. We look forward to maintaining and building on all of these important partnerships in the years to come.

John Campey
Executive Director
Community Organizing in Scarborough

SPT’s senior planner provided significant consultation and coordination support to many community engagement initiatives in Scarborough in 2014. SPT’s community forum with City Ombudsmian, Fiona Crean, was received with enthusiasm in the Scarborough Bluffs area where residents learned about the opportunity to strengthen city government through the office of the Ombudsman. SPT’s other forums included TTC privatization, growing income gap, and impact of immigration policy. SPT also provided important support to Scarborough Anti-Poverty Coalition in addressing growing income gap and employment barriers. SPT successfully organized a $14 minimum wage rally with partners and raised awareness on this issue. SPT is currently leading the process of setting up a Community Planning Board in East Scarborough that was recommended by the Planning and Growth Management Committee to be included as a pilot project with the Chief City Planner.

Minimum Wage Campaign

Over the past year, Social Planning Toronto has been actively working with various community partners across the City and the Province, such as the Workers’ Action Centre, Ontario Coalition Against Poverty, ACORN and Toronto & York Region Labour Council, on the Campaign to Raise the Minimum Wage. The goal of the campaign was to end the year provincial minimum wage freeze and raise the rate from $10.25 to $14.00, to lift low-income workers and families out of poverty.

Over the past twelve months, coalition members worked to bring the minimum wage issue onto the public and political agenda – from intensive organizing and outreach, research, MPP meetings and deputations, media work and monthly community-based and social media actions. Earlier this year the Ontario government announced that it would raise the minimum wage in June 2014 to $11.00 and introduce legislation to index it to the rate of inflation.

Program Highlights

**Middle Childhood Matters Coalition Toronto**

The Middle Childhood Matters Coalition Toronto, one of which is a group of social service agencies and community members who are committed to working together with parents to increase access to high quality out of school time programs for all children ages 6-12 in Toronto. It is significant that the City has made clear its commitment to children ages 6-12 with the Middle Childhood Strategy. Subsequently, we have seen the expansion of over 500 subsidized spaces for child care, the implementation of the Swim to Survive program, an increase to CPAP funding to support community programs, the 16 -site expansion of the After-School Recreation and Care (ARC), expansion of the Student Nutrition program, and the creation of a position within Children’s Services for a Middle Childhood Strategy Coordinator to oversee implementation of the Middle Childhood Strategy.

**Lost in the Shuffle**

In response to the previously published SPT report, *Lost in the Shuffle*, SPT and Aisling Discoveries Child and Family Centre, with support from the Toronto Community Foundation and the Provincial Advocate for Children and Youth, have released *Lost in the Shuffle: In Support of Children in Transition*, a resource manual and a workshop guide that aims to build a greater understanding of the barriers children living in shelters face in their attempts to be successful in school, while providing strategies for school and shelter staff to assist children. The workshop explores the underlying context of the lives of many of the children who live in shelters. Many of the resources in this manual are meant to be shared by education and shelter staff with parents, to help them navigate their way in a stressful time.

**Triple Threat to Equity Campaign**

Thanks to the tireless work of many committed parents, students and community members on the Triple Threat to Equity Campaign, eight TDSB Model Schools coaches, previously cut, will be returned to schools for 2014-15. In addition, the Campaign built greater awareness about the importance of using the Learning Opportunities Grant as it was intended – to fund additional supports for students facing socio-economic challenges in order to close the opportunity and achievement gap. Significant progress was also made in making the accounting for this grant more transparent.

A second opportunity lies before us. This year the Toronto District School Board will engage in a two-year prospective budgeting exercise and will be setting a tentative budget for 2015-16 and 2016-17. The Triple Threat to Equity campaign will continue to raise the issue and promote the need to make budgetary decisions with an equity lens.

**SPACE Coalition**

Social Planning Toronto and the SPACE Coalition released two new reports this year: *Public Space for Public Use: A Review of Community Access to School and Municipal Facilities in Ontario and It All Begins with Space: Maximizing use of public assets for engaged and healthier neighbourhoods*.

This research reveals the importance of having access to safe public space and identifies the continuing barriers to accessing that space, both in Toronto and across the Province, focusing on the importance of safe spaces for youth and importance of community hubs in promoting neighbour- hood health.

City Council committed to ten new appropriately-funded youth drop-in spaces in the 2014 budget. SPACE will be working to support Community Recreation for All in monitoring the implementation of the drop-in program, to ensure it meets youth and community needs.
York Youth Coalition
ANC—Mount Dennis provides support for the York Youth Coalition which continued to support local youth serving organizations in coordinating local initiatives and filling service gaps for local youth. Activities included a youth leadership summit, regular information sharing meetings with local youth workers, hosting community forums on Equity in Education and advocating to the Toronto Police Services as part of the ‘Campaign to Stop Police Carding’.

Etobicoke Civic Engagement
For the 2013 and 2014 Toronto City budget processes, the SPT Community Planner in Etobicoke organized a number of civic engagement/public information sessions between Commitment to Community (C2C) and several senior groups operating in the Rexdale area, as well as supporting community forums on the budget in the Lakeshore.

Outreach to youth to consult with the Etobicoke Youth Network was organized in several neighbourhoods with high needs populations in social housing in wealthy central Etobicoke. Youth were engaged in the development of funding proposals for the creation of a Central Etobicoke Youth and Family (CEYF) Community Hub that would bring together service providers, City departments, and grass roots groups in a community-run space.

SPT also coordinated a number of public meetings for the City of Toronto’s Ombudsman, Fiona Crean, to meet residents and community service providers in discussion of the role of the Ombudsman’s office.

City Budget Watch 2014

2014 City Budget Watch
Through its annual budget process, Toronto City Council makes decisions about how to allocate billions in public dollars. It is arguably the most important set of decisions that City Council makes all year. The budget is where the rubber hits the road, where decisions are made about our public services; it is where priorities are set that shape the health, wellbeing and opportunities of residents across Toronto. Social Planning Toronto believes that residents should be at the centre of this decision-making.

SPT monitors and reports on the budget process, step-by-step, helping residents to understand and engage in the budget process. City Budget Watch provides a level of analysis and reporting that cannot be found anywhere else. SPT further engages community members and supports civic engagement through our budget events. In 2013, SPT expanded its budget forums to include Scarborough, York and downtown sessions. SPT staff encourage city councillors to hold their own budget town halls, and assist community groups include Scarborough, York and downtown sessions. SPT staff encourage city councillors to hold their own budget town halls, and assist community groups with ‘Budget 101’ training sessions.

Solidarity City: Access Without Fear
Social Planning Toronto, in partnership with groups such as Parkdale Community Legal Services, No One Is Illegal Toronto and the South Asian Legal Clinic of Ontario, joined together as the Solidarity City Network to help improve access to municipal programs and services for non-status and precarious immigration status migrants.

Our advocacy efforts prevailed in February 2013 when Toronto’s City Council voted overwhelmingly to pass an historic ‘Access without Fear’ motion (the first of its kind in Canada), re-affirming its commitment to providing services to the non-status community. Along with the Network, SPT has been working closely throughout the year with city staff to develop and implement strategies to improve access to services by ensuring staff training and public education/outreach to non-status residents throughout Toronto.

Action for Neighbourhood Change - Mount Dennis
ANC continued to make strides in 2013-14. Starting with our West End Local Economic Development Initiative, residents worked in partnership with University of Toronto Geography Professor, Dr. Katherine Rankin and the Anti Poverty Community Organizing and Learning (APCOL) initiative to develop a local grass roots response aimed at improving the local economic conditions in Mount Dennis. This work saw the creation of research with small businesses and entrepreneurs, a community-business summit and the creation of a local economic development publication and progress towards creating a local employment project with Irving Tissue to provide job opportunities to Mount Dennis residents.

West Won Fest moved to another level in 2013 and we expect further growth in 2014! This exciting summer festival officially became a street festival, as we were successful in closing off Ray Avenue just south of Weston Road. With financial support for the first time from the City of Toronto Community Festival Grant, the festival drew a record crowd of 1500 residents and local performers.

Our Emmett space project passed another hurdle with a lease agreement from TDSB which will allow us to move the project on to its second phase offering, providing organizing space for the Mount Dennis Boys and Girls Club and Emmett avenue residents.

Plans for 2014 and beyond include creation of a local news publication, community forums on ‘Equity in Education’ and ‘Local Economic Development’, and a project to create local employment opportunities, local leadership development, and creation of new space for community initiatives.

Action on Housing and Homelessness
Social Planning Toronto works with residents, tenants and community groups to advance the human right to safe, decent and affordable housing. SPT plays a leadership role on this issue, is active with Housing Action Now, a city-wide network that informs, mobilizes and advocates on housing and homelessness issues, is a supporter of the City of Toronto’s Close the Housing Gap campaign, and a contributing member of the Alliance for Affordable Co-operative Housing.

In the Winter of 2013, activists intensified their calls for City Hall to open new shelter space for people who are homeless. In response to rising concerns about shelter access, SPT conducted a short survey of community-run emergency shelters in 2013, adding an important voice to the debate and providing support to the call for new shelter space. SPT worked with dozens of community groups and engaged residents across the city to support the call.

In response, Toronto City Council took a number of steps forward by first acknowledging the problem, second, by passing a motion to set shelter system occupancy at or below 90% (a smart policy from the late 1990s that the City had abandoned for more than a decade), and third, by opening a temporary shelter for women with plans to create a new permanent shelter. The 90% target has not been achieved but yet the move is in the right direction.

SPT also released a position paper on affordable homeownership to inform the review on Toronto’s Official Plan, successfully advocated with partners and residents to stop contracting out of good jobs in food and custodial services in City shelters, and supported community calls for the development of an emergency shelter for LGBTQ youth who are at increased risk of homelessness and face barriers and safety concerns in the shelter system.
Alliance for a Poverty Free Toronto

The Alliance for a Poverty Free Toronto (APFT) is a coalition of people living in poverty, non-profit organizations, community groups and labour who work to focus on the impact of poverty in our city. Social Planning Toronto provides coordination and convening support to APFT.

SPT’s former Director of Community Engagement Winston Tinglin provided leadership with APFT partners in drafting, revising, and releasing a new report, Toward a Poverty Elimination Strategy for the City of Toronto that laid out a strong set of recommendations for residents, city leaders and different levels of government to take action on poverty.

As a result of APFT’s report and advocacy initiative, and with the strong support of other organizational partners and Councillors, Toronto City Council passed a motion (26-0) to develop an anti-poverty strategy for the city.

Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020: Neighbourhood Improvement Areas

Prior to defining the new “Neighbourhood Improvement Areas”, the City of Toronto organised community consultations, but none in the York South-Weston area. On a very tight time-line, local SPT Community Planner, Yasmin Haq, with support from other community groups, coordinated a local consultation at SPT’s York Office in which about 75 residents and agencies participated.

According to the report by the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration on the Toronto Strong Neighbourhoods Strategy 2020 – Recommended Neighbourhood Improvement Areas, the riding has six Neighbourhood Improvement Areas. They include the previous two “Priority Neighbourhoods” – Weston and Mount Dennis and the newly identified areas within our community: Beechborough-Greenbrook, Rockcliffe-Smythe, Rustic and Keelesdale-Eglinton West; and Black Creek (ranked as having the lowest ‘equity score’ in the city).

Commitment to Community (C2C) Campaign

Social Planning Toronto has provided coordination support to the C2C Campaign three years in a row with its partners, allies and Toronto residents. Through the 2014 city budget process, C2C helped build support for significant investments in public and community services. These new and enhanced programs will improve the quality of life for many Toronto residents, diverse communities and neighbourhoods. C2C successfully secured new recreation spaces using the St. Stephen’s best practices model, and free recreation programs for adults and children that were not funded throughout the summer of 2014.

C2C also helped obtain a 2.2% inflationary increase for the community partnership and investment program (CPIP) which supports the delivery of community services through non-profit community organization. City council also added $300,000 to the CPIP budget to fund new programs and projects considered high priority in underserved areas. The budget also included full funding for the year 2 implementation of the student nutrition 5 year expansion plan.

City Council did not reverse the 4.3 Million cut to homelessness programs but added $75,000 to Tenant Outreach and Organizing Program to facilitate tenant education, training and other support. However, councillors passed a motion to address challenges around the Housing Stabilization Fund and will look into monitoring and oversight of the program through a report in the first quarter. All these crucial gains in the 2014 budget were made possible by the hard work of C2C staff, allies, partners, and engaged resident volunteers.