women plan toronto

shared experiences and dreams

inc. implications for city planning

artwork by Birgit Sterner

acknowledgements

Almost all of this report is the spoken experiences, perceptions and ideas of women in 25 groups, from all walks of life.

As Women Plan Toronto evolved, so did the groups who contributed valuable direction and feedback. At the outset it was the Administrative Committee with Kathleen Bee, Ivy France, Liz Feltes and Nancy Singer. This group of members of Women in/and Planning, our sponsoring group helped put the project on track. After this the Co-ordinating Committee has been keeping us on track. It included women from some of our first sessions, interested lay women and some Women in/and Planning Members: Gloria Fallick, Sandra Carpenter (dawn), Patricia Dujeux (tabl), Mitzi D'Souza (ry) Avina Skolnik, Simona Gasparetto and Grace Strachan, Lynn Feldman, Ivy France, from W.i/a P. The many good ideas and hours contributed by the Co-ordinating Committee have been of great benefit.

Then there is a small group of people with special skills and special dedication, such as dian marino, assistant professor in Environmental Studies, York University, Anella Parker-Martin of the Quality of Working Life Centre, Department of Labour, Ont., Jackie Claxton from Women's Programs, Secretary of State, Canada and Nancy Singer from the Department of Planning

and Development, City of Toronto. These women have been a phone call away, any hour of the day and provided ongoing advise, help and their precious time.

The project owes very special thanks to Birgit Sterner, facilitator, artist, generator of ideas and feedback, friend and most of all untiring co-worker.

The support given by Women's Programs, Secretary of State Canada, the Ontario Women's Directorate, the City of Toronto Planning and Development Department and the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University is most appreciated.

co-ordinator

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introduction

what this report is and is not about

is

- a step in a process
- womens' experiences and ideas, expressed in their own words
- a reflection of a very wide range of women
- a result of informal group discussions
- quotes, illustrations, personal perceptions or 'qualitative research'
- to help 'lay women' and officials to understand each other better, and to workout solutions and courses of action together

not

- an end in itself
- a summary or evaluation of data prepared by professionals in their words
- based on a scientifically prepared sample
- the result of a uniformly applied individual questionnaire
- statistics, tables or traditional 'scientific research"
- an attempt to impose solutions

project background

As womens' roles and awareness are changing we are starting to feel that our communities no longer understand and meet our needs. This is occurring in Canada and around the world. It can result in women and children having to cope with stress, poverty and isolation.

Women Plan Toronto gives women in Metropolitan Toronto a chance to share their experiences, concerns and ideas with others and to get together to evaluate traditional urban planning, design and services, and to develop a plan of action.

The idea for this project came from Women Plan London - England, with some adaptation in process.

steps in the project

1. meetings with womens' groups

2. this report summarizing sessions

3. one day workshop.

- to hammer out recommendations for planning, design, service policies and
- a plan for action

4. action:

- publication of workshop results
- implementation of action plans
- feedback to various lay and professional groups.

goals

- to record womens' experiences and ideas about the Metro Toronto environment.
- To establish planning, design and service guidelines which reflect womens' needs.
- To encourage understanding and communication between lay women and their groups, professionals and agencies and to bring about the changes women would like to see happening in their environment.
- to ensure that lay women are shaping the process of this project.

"I do like to be asked about what we are looking for. Who would ever ask us any other time in our life. It is difficult to get into that frame of mind to be able to speak freely. And after this I have to go back into that other world again and I have to go back and forget about all I have dreamed today." (DOC)

the theory that goes with the process

To bring about change we need to be able to communicate our ideas, experiences, concerns and dreams to others. Speaking about our concerns and listening to the concerns of others requires some understanding of where the other person is coming from and how they are thinking of an issue or even a word. How one thinks of an issue we will call interpretation Two people may be thinking about the same thing but have a different interpretation of it depending on the work they do and their backgrounds. For example: a full time mother may interpret house to mean home; a place that is important; a place she wants to be secure and good; a place where she carries out most of her daily activities. A planner, on the other hand may interpret house to mean a dwelling - a building in which people live - which uses up space, has a certain size and height, is a certain age and is in a particular 'physical condition.'

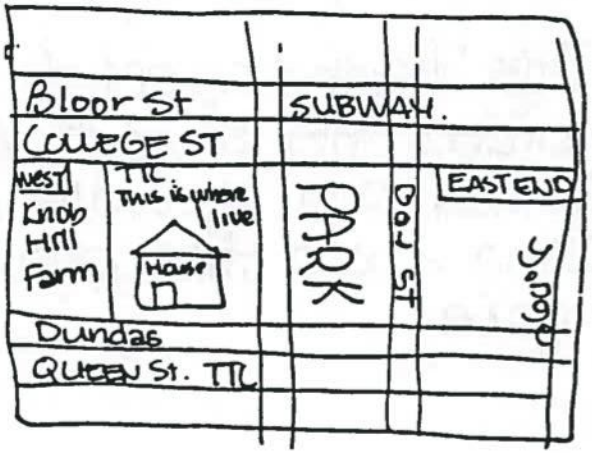
Not understanding how another person or group is interpreting an issue can often lead to frustration. We end up doing alot of talking, but the talking doesn't seem to move us towards our goal.

Learning to understand and to listen to other peoples' views on an issue can lead to new and creative responses to the issue or problem.

This 'theory' or belief in how people work together has guided this project. We are hoping that it can help women and officials communicate with each other to bring about the changes you would like to see take place.

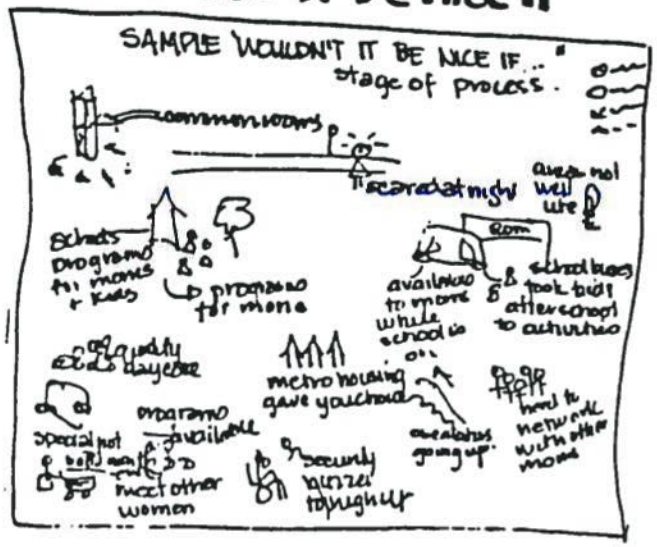
group discussions

Each group discussion starts with an introduction which gives the background of the project. Depending on the group we may either : ask each women to share with us some of the problems she experiences when trying to carry out her everyday and weekly activities through words or a drawing or **individual maps**

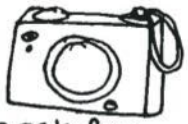


we jump right into 'blueskying'. Women are asked to think about possible solutions to the problems they experience and to begin their sentences with 'wouldn't it be nice if.."

'wouldn't it be nice if'



Finally we ask women to tell us what parts of the process they liked and thought worked well, as well as, what they would recommend be changed in future group discussions with other women.



we ask for permission to take photographs and to tape record sessions.

evaluations

♡ I like the pictures, I think they say more than the words (ry)

too much background noise (ry)

♡

interesting and enjoyable (stc) ♡

THE PICTURES ARE HELPFUL IN FOLLOWING AND IN VISUALIZING THE MESSAGE SEEMS TO COME ACROSS BETTER IT SEEMS TO BE MORE REAL (DDC)

- visualizing comments is helpful
- workshop needs to be publicized (tbc)

We don't know how to enact changes — changes which we have seen happen were ineffective (fwcc)

I Loved the fruit (rcc)

there should be representatives at the workshops from Mothers Allowance and Family Benefits (foc)

how are we going to get our needs heard; are we going to have some clout? are we wasting our time (stc)

I was surprised when it was not a structured talk, I enjoyed doing this: through drawing we got much more of a feeling of input then if it was just the tape (trcc)

next steps

- please read this collection of womens' concerns and ideas and share it with your group, friends or colleagues (we can send you additional copies)
- note down your reactions (see, hear, feel, think) to the report and what is said in it. Use the enclosed poster if you wish Please get back to us with your comments!
- Join the workshop design team or pick some people (10 or more) from your group to be part of it. Without you there will not be a workshop team or workshop. So come out to the first meeting on **MAY 5th 1986** at **7:30 pm** in room C of the Metro library at 789 Yonge to plan the workshop. Some compensation for childcare and transportation is available.
- To make sure that you do have a place to come together we had to pick a date and place for the workshop. The workshop could take place

June 14th 1986 10-3 pm at **City Hall**

daycare, a schoolaged childrens workshop, luncheon & wheelchair access included

- take part in developing an action plan towards a Toronto which better meets the needs of women on JUNE 14 1986.

⇨ if there is a particular issue you or your group would like to follow up on let us know if we can be of use.

mark up this report!

what do you like about this report?

did you feel that others share your experiences, concerns and ideas?

what would you add or change?

add stuff to it

poster image

get back to us.

Our address is:

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Toronto / Ont. M4E 2T9

phone: 463-4413 (office) or 690-6644 (h)

	most imp.	o.k.	not inter.	
getting around				
my place.				
finding under.				

please use the chart we included, in the envelope

women we met with

We met with 25 groups. Each group has been given a code which we have used throughout the report to identify the source of the ideas. These individual groups have been arranged into the following 9 larger sets. We recognize that some overlap cannot be avoided:

1. EMPLOYED WOMEN:

WOMEN WHO ARE INCOME EARNERS AND ALSO MOSTLY RESPONSIBLE FOR HOUSEWORK AND/OR NURTURING DEPENDENTSD. THE FOLLOWING EIGHT GROUPS FALL INTO THIS SECTION:

- the Jane Finch Community Workers (jfw),
- two groups of employees at Toronto City Hall, (ch1,ch2),
- the women who came to the meeting at Scarborough City Hall (sc),
- the executive members of the Toronto Women Teachers Association (twt),
- the Toronto Women's Breakfast Club Network (twbc),
- women from the Constance Hamilton Co-op (chc), and
- the women from the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre (trc).

2. FULL-TIME HOMEMAKERS:

MOSTLY MOTHERS WITH YOUNG CHILDREN WHO HAVE CHOSEN NOT TO WORK OUTSIDE THE HOME FOR THE TIME BEING

- two Take-A-Break groups (Tab1,Tab2), and
- the Delta Childcare Network (dcc)

3. WOMEN IN TRANSITION:

WOMEN WHO LIVE WITH VERY UNSTABLE HOUSING AND/OR EMPLOYMENT

- two sessions at Sistering (sist1, sist2), and
- East End Literacy (eel).

4. IMMIGRANT WOMEN:

IMMIGRANT WOMEN WHO BELONG TO SUPPORT GROUPS

- women of the Spanish Speaking community (spsp),
- Italian women of the Rexdale Women's Centre (ital), and
- a group of East African women of Indian origin (ea) organized through the Riverdale Immigrant Women's Centre.

5. NATIVE WOMEN:

The input of native Canadian women (nat) is unfortunately limited to two interviews with leaders of native women's groups.

6. YOUNG WOMEN:

WOMEN PRIMARILY ENGAGED IN LEARNING:

- a high school class at Central High School of Commerce (cc),
- a 3rd year planning class at Ryerson Politechnical Institute, (ry), and
- a post graduate class at the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University (fes), and
- ideas contributed by some participants during the International Women's Day display at Ryerson P.I. (iwd).

7. ELDERLY WOMEN:

WOMEN OVER 65 YEARS OF AGE.

- a group of St. Clair-O'Connor Community Residents and
- members of Concerned Senior Citizens of Ontario (stc) met jointly with us.

8. DISABLED WOMEN:

WOMEN WITH PHYSICAL DISABILITIES

- members of the Disabled Womens Network (dawn);

9. SOLE SUPPORT MOTHERS:

SOLE SUPPORT MOTHERS LIVING MOSTLY IN SUBSIDIZED HOUSING AND GETTING BY ON LIMITED INCOMES

- the Sole Support Mothers Group from Regent Park (rpssm) and
- a class in the Focus on Change program (foc)

what was said:

what was said

We have grouped the wide range of concerns and ideas women have raised during the sessions as follows, keeping in mind that neat and tidy delineations are impossible:

1. my place
2. my community
3. getting around
4. finding understanding & support

While the most numerous comments centered around "Getting Around", and the most serious concerns focused on housing, under "My Place", the most fundamental issues are contained under the heading "Finding Understanding and Support".

In some cases, concerns and ideas for solutions did not match due to the spontaneous group process. In a few instances where important issues did not get an idea for a solution we ourselves have made a suggestion. These are differentiated by omission of quotes. Several issues may not appear to be women's issues, such as Italian women asking for a place where their men could play boccie. Yet, these issues have been raised by women because they do affect them as women; they are therefore included in the report.

We are retaining the quotes and graphics to safeguard the spirit of the sessions. In this way we hope to avoid overgeneralization while conveying women's perceptions of their environment. However, a trade-off of this approach is the loss of some of the context for the comments. We hope that this will not detract lay women and professionals from appreciating the validity of both the concerns and ideas raised in this report.

summary of major themes:

daycare

- quality daycares available need to be made.
- more space for preschoolers.
- subsidized on weekend.
- flexible hours

getting around

lights can turn too quickly for us to cross safely

icy sidewalks are dangerous

safety

not enough seating

only one exit could be trapped

not enough lighting

stop

it would be nice if TTC drivers were friendlier to seniors, moms and new canadians

kneeling buses for seniors

doors make it difficult to get on with strollers

distances

need to plan seperate trips

doctor

must take TTC = $

plaza

afraid

not enough lighting

too close for kids playing

underground parking garages

unsafe

coping with discrimination attitudes + stereotyping

"people think you lose your marbles when you turn 65"

housing

wouldn't it be nice if there were homes not domes

no choice, low availability, not affordable

finding a place

design

kitchens are not designed for families

stair edges should be marked

2 tenants sharing common living + dining room

common rooms for kids

recreation

wouldn't it be nice if community centres weren't recreation centres

community centres are just a name

coping with hostel rules

CITY HALL: NOBODY IN

TTC price too high!

wouldn't it be nice if community centres had activities anyone could join in and participate

quality playgrounds are needed.

Almost all groups feel that finding and paying for housing is an enormous problem. Yet there is a reluctance to come up with ideas addressing this issue as if it were beyond our power to deal with it.

When it comes to problems with and ideas for housing design there is no hesitation or shortage of creative suggestions. These range from the design of appliances to the grouping of dwellings. The section is structured as follows:

MY PLACE - finding a place,
- affording a place,
- coping with housing we did not design,
- coping with chores,
- caring for children, and
- needing a space for myself.

my place

finding a place

concerns:

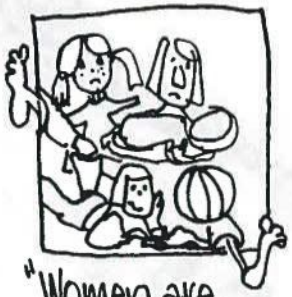
"Good housing is a fundamental fist step enabling an individual or family to pull itself out of a low."(chc)

"In my job housing is such an overwhelming issue; it's so horrible, so non-existent that you almost don't even want to look at it; it's so terrible."(sc)

"We have stayed in 12 different places over the past 12 months. Right now we are at the Dundas Street Family Shelter, my husband my 2 boys and myself all in 1 room. That's because they haven't got space; the 4 of us in 3 beds. My husband is working; it's not just a question of money, but finding a place to rent to us. If you have an earning partner you are a lower priority for Ontario Housing."(sist2)

"The Metro Housing Company and Authority have now a waiting list of 3000 seniors and over 6000 families."(stc,trc)

"You are supposed to fill in a sheet that you have looked at 10 apartments; but you are not provided with any busfare. They don't allow the use of their phone and don't provide money for phone calls. If you don't have the sheet filled out you get kicked out."(sist2)



"Women are living in one room with their children" (nat, foc)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-it were public policy to ensure the supply of sufficient, affordable quality housing for all types of households, and if the three levels of government had the necessary funding and organizational base to implement this policy.

-"there were a lot of low rental housing."(chl)

-"there were more facilities for elderly, alcoholic, transient and terminally ill women."(twbc,stc)

-"there were low cost hotels where people could stay as long as they need to get permanently settled."(nat)

-"I would take in bums, because they can't find places; and I hate to see dead bums."(sistl)

concerns:

"I was in a hostel, trying to find a place to rent so that I can get welfare. But I need a welfare check for a rent-deposit. Landlords nowadays don't like to hold a room for you without deposit, especially if they realize you are on welfare."(sist2)

"More and more housing is being restricted to 'adults only';'we don't want kids here'; I think that this city is not suited for kids, yet they are our best natural resource."(ch2,sist2)

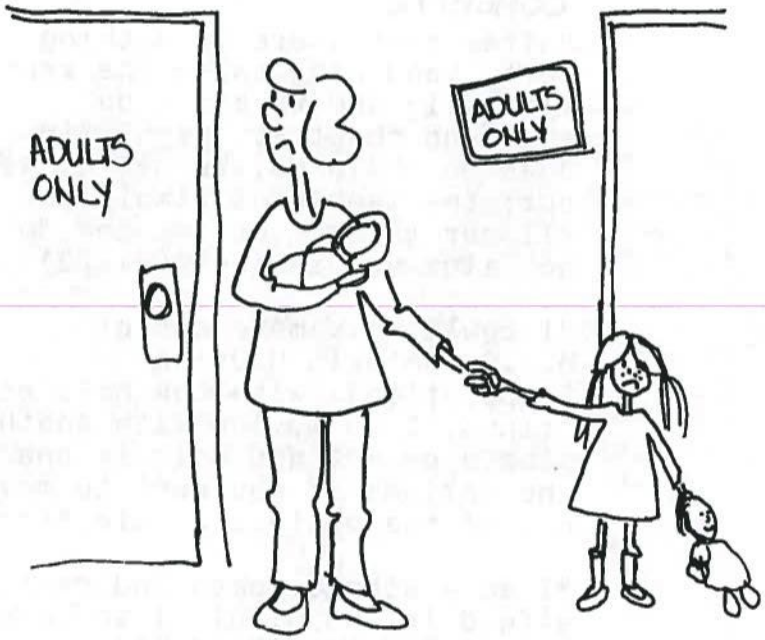
"People are so into this space thing and don't want to diminish their property values. They think that renting out will diminish their property values."(sc)

There are many people who are overhoused because the family once needed a single home; once the kids moved away, they don't want to leave their home."(sc)

"I have this old house, I know I should be duplexing; but I am worried about my tax assessment and whether I'll be taken in by building contractors and architects."(chl)

"When you improve or enlarge your home to accommodate more people your assessment goes up."(chl,ital,twt)

wouldn't it be nice if..



-"when I retire, I had a place where I can have a room of my own, but share a community room and kitchen with 3 to 4 others, as I will have very little money having made the mistake of staying home with my children too long."(iwd)

-"there were more means of helping people refit their homes so they wouldn't have to move - for example, of matching students in trades or architecture with homeowners." (sc)

-"our assessment did not go up when we improve our homes."(twt,ital)

affording a place

concerns

"After rent there is nothing left. Landlords raise the rent illegally and we can't do anything about it. Legal Aid does not help us. We get kicked out; the landlords simply put all our things outside and do not alow you inside."(sist2)

"I could only move out of O.H.C.(Ontario Housing Corporation) with the help of a friend. I am moving with another single parent and this is one of the options if you want to move out of the vicious circle."(dcc)

"I am a single woman and can't afford it (housing). I am very interested in affordable housing. I'm interested in co-op housing; but co-op housing takes a long time to develop. It seems like a wise and sensible housing option. There is a long waiting list for co-op housing."(chl)

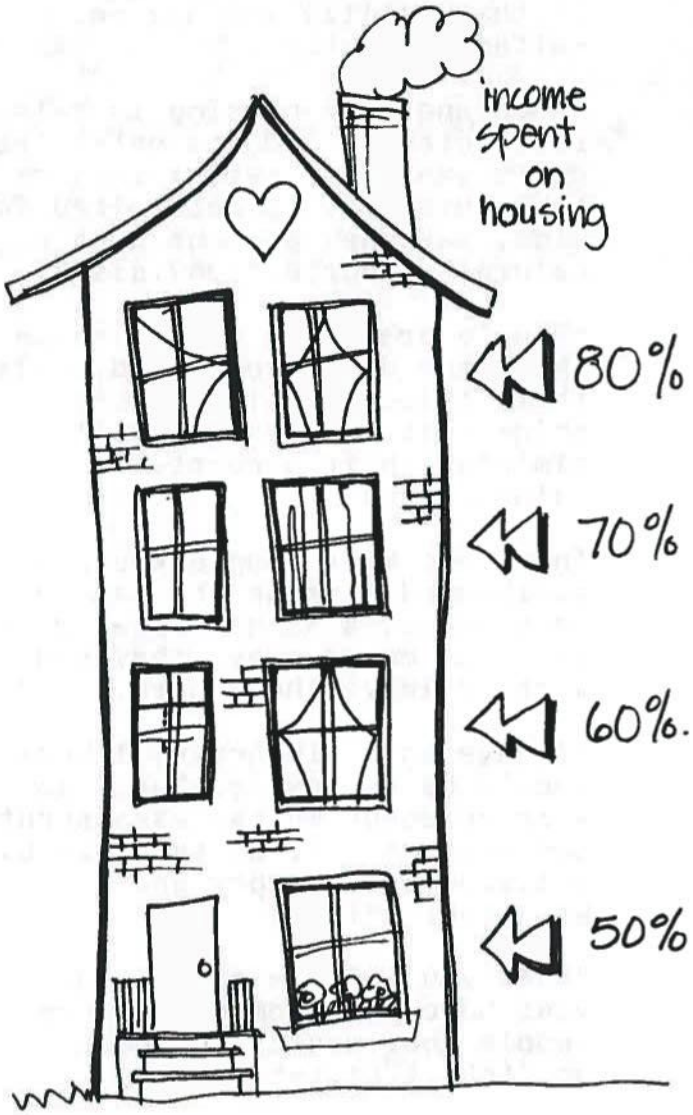
"The unsubsidized units (at the Constance Hamilton Co-op.) are relatively expensive; and many tenants pay up to 60% of their income for housing."(chc,nat,trc)

"If you are living off one pension you either have to use all your resources just to keep your house or sell the house and begin to live in a highrise which is hard at that stage."(dcc,stc)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"rent controls kept increases more effectively at lower rates."(twbc)

-"people had choices."(jfw,stc)



coping with housing we didn't design

concerns:

"Right now my house layout is based on the 1910 life style. Particularly the living room, dining room, kitchen and long corridor make for isolated activities and restriction. I don't want a dining room all the time, only when I have people; the rest of the time I want to use the space for other activities."(fes)

"I have so many steps that I can't avoid taking to get from one living space to another or one working space to another...I cannot get with my groceries from the garage to the kitchen without going through three doors and up two flights of stairs."(sc)

The lack of mudroom, porch or hallway is a problem; it creates heatloss at the entrance, makes it hard to preview someone before allowing entrance and it also causes mud to be dragged into the living room."(chc,twt)

"If houses were designed looking into the future: what are you going to do when you bring your mother to live with you for a few months and she is in a wheelchair."(dawn)

"I live on the 2nd floor of a house; I share with my sister; our family help each other." (nat)

wouldn't it be nice if...

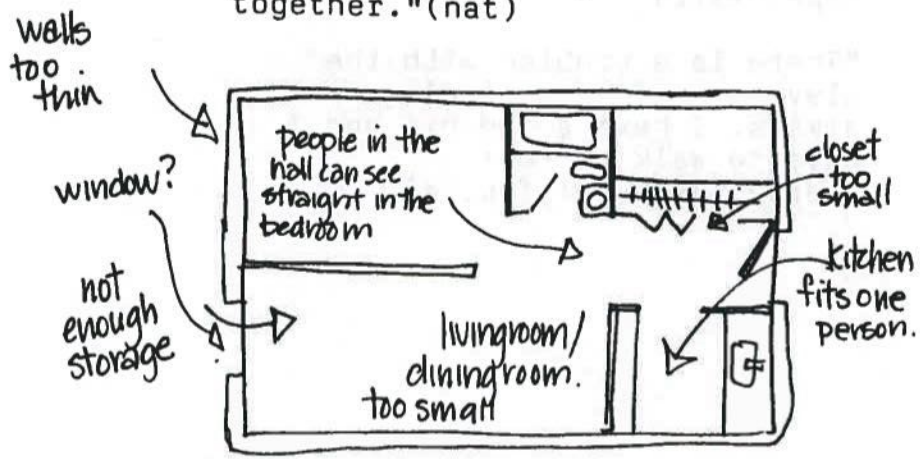
-"there were more understanding of the housing needs, not only of seniors but of all special segments of society."(stc,dawn)

- today's housing met the needs of today's households: disabled, single parent, co-parent, dual career, 3 generation, several sharing adults households, extended visitors and changes from one household form into another.

- such housing were integrated to allow for mutual support and interaction while also providing for privacy.

-"there were four to six units (in large developments) where family or close friends can live together and share a common area."(jfw)

-"families and singles could be housed more closely together."(nat)



Concerns:

"Doors are sometimes impossible to open; they are so big and heavy and the handles are too high. Windows are often difficult to open. Cupboards are high and I cannot store anything up there; its useless space."(ry,sc,rpssm)

"Apartment lobbies could be utilized more effectively; a lot of so-called party rooms are about the grimmest places you could imagine."(stc)

"Many apartments and houses have only one full bathroom, so that while someones takes a shower, company can't go to the bathroom.(spsp)

"So many houses have the bath upstairs and the kitchen down and for an older person with problems walking this is hard to cope."(stc)

"There is a problem with the elevators of our building - always. I have a bad hip and I have to walk up four stories."(sc,eel,foc,ea)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"party rooms in apartments or lobbies were more inviting and or used more effectively"(stc, rpssm,dcc)

-"there were grab bars in apartments which are not specifically designated to seniors; if there were showers in all units."(stc)

-"elevators were kept in better working order."(sc,eel,ea)

concerns:

"I live on the 3rd floor of a 3 unit dwelling; but every little move can be heard; and after 9.30 at night we have to be quiet. We are not allowed to have overnight guests. You have no private bath. Through the hot air heating system you can hear anything that goes on in the house.(sist)

"Poor sound-proofing creates conflicts with neighbours." (foc)

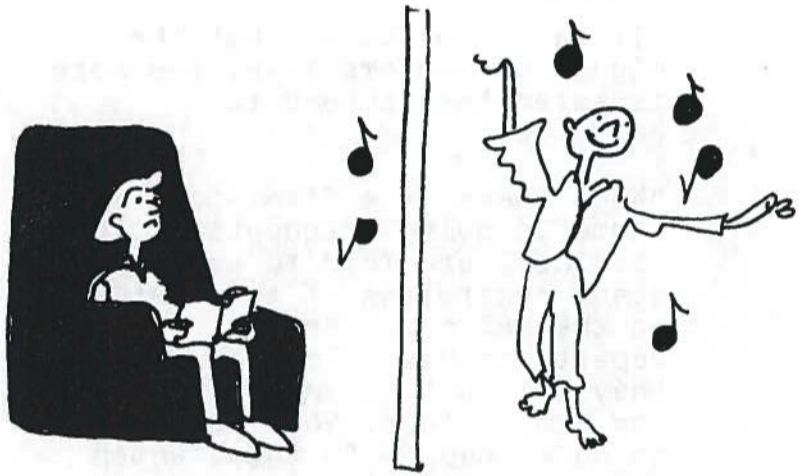
"Our kitchen was obviously designd by a man, in that there's room around the table for everybody to sit, provided you don't need to get at a stove or fridge or anything like that."(sc)

"Our units have many good aspects because they were designed by women; the 2-bedroom units have a large kitchen-dining area and a useful vinyl floor."(chc)

"The kitchen is too small; there's no way you can fit two people in there if you want to cook dinners or anything."(sc)

"There is not enough space to store things."(sc,twt)

wouldn't it be nice if...



-"you could sit in your house and not have to listen to your neighbour's stereo."(twt)

-"one room in each home was soundproof."(tabl)

-"women were involved in designing kitchens."(stc)

-"kitchens were bigger, with space for a couch ...or the main floor being just one big room encompassing the eating, living and kitchen areas."(tab2, spsp,dcc,fes,foc)

-"there were more storage spaces."(twt,sc)

concerns:

"It was found to be that the higher up seniors live, the more isolated they tended to be."(stc)

"When there is a fire - and there is quite frequently - they (seniors) are told to wait and stand regardless of the weather on the balcony. The fire department has told them that they will not go any higher than the tenth floor. Now what is going to happen to these women who are quite elderly? Some of them are completely bedridden, no families, no help of any kind and no-one is going to check on them any time.They are stuck into cubbyhole rooms we classify as bachelorettes...Facing you the minute you walk in the door is the bathroom...The entire size of the units is approx. 10 by 12 feet...This to me is real damnation."(sc,dawn)

"It is nice to participate with young people on your own terms, i.e. in programs etc.;but when it comes to my residence I am glad to have it quiet."(stc)

"I personally would just shrivel up and die if I did not have that mix of old and young within the building."(stc)

"wouldn't it be nice if there were assistance for seniors to adapt a house for sharing and/or subletting." (stc)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"seniors' residences were not higher then 5 to 7 storeys."(stc,sc)

-"the New Zealand social housing pattern were applied here: seniors and handicapped people were housed in two-storey buildings. They had their own individual little kitchens and their bed-sitting rooms... and if you didn't feel like cooking your meal, there was some of the residents that cooked the meal and served it in the main dining room."(sc)

-"there were more places like this (St. Clair O'Connor Community Centre). I like the feeling about this place. It is obvious that somebody cares about the building and the plants."(stc)

-"all the residences had this mix of older and younger people; they are in the other part of the building and there is no conflict."(stc)

-"more people participated in the Sharing Group, which is teaming up people with seniors in their homes, many of which have space for additonal occupants."(stc)

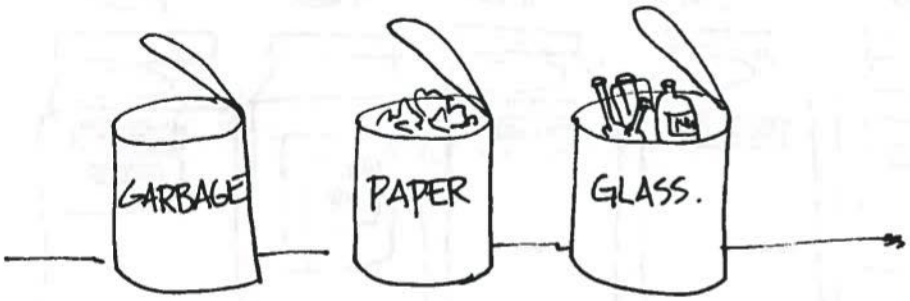
coping with chores

concerns:

"The one beef that I have is the way our appliances are designed. There are so many nooks and crannies that are almost impossible to get to, the switches on the stoves, the ridges and ledgers with all the dirt that collects there and the waste of time it involves."(dcc)

"I live in a small two room apartment; but it has only three electric outlets, which drives me crazy."(twt)

We have dishwashers. I don't understand why we don't have something like that for house cleaning. I am amazed that in 1986 house cleaning is such an issue and why."(ch2)



wouldn't it be nice if...

-"appliances were designed with cleaning and use in mind."(dcc)

-"fridges had strong wheels." (ch1)

-"free inspection of appliances, wiring, insulating, things you worry about but you don't have the money to have someone come in. Your furnace should be cleaned every year, a safety factor."(twt)

-"central vacuum systems were made part of the house architecture."(ch2)

-"there were electric outlets that move;"(twt) "that are higher from the floor."(stc)

-"windows didn't need cleaning, or windows were easier to clean, or the sick and disabled got free window washing."(twt)

-"if there were selfcleaning kitchens and toilets."(ch1,twt)

-"if there were three compartments in garbage containers, one for glass, one for paper and one for garbage."(ch2)

concerns:

"..and usually I would go down with my laundry and find that all of the machines are taken, even at the wee hours of the morning."(sc,jfw)

"I live in an apartment where the laundry is not functioning or locked frequently; with small children this is a problem."(foc)

"Laundromats are very expensive; I hate walking a whole block just to do laundry."(eel,foc,nat)

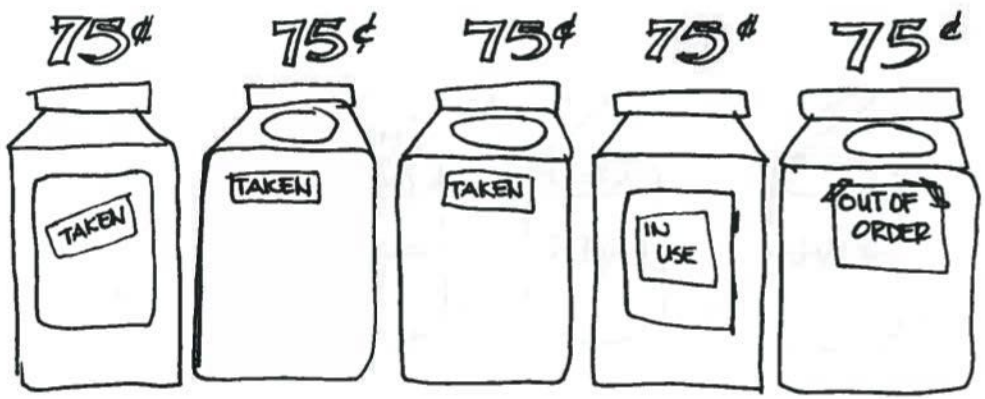
"I am now working full-time; I am also running into a lot of cleaning problems, laundry problems, all over again; there is no time for it."(chl,jfw)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"there were conglomorate rather than individual affordable housing where lawnmowers and such things could be shared; now it's so wasteful. I think the idea I am presenting for co-op housing is possible. You could have laundry service; you could employ people and you pay them well. I am not saying it can't be done in other apartment buildings where a lot of people live together."(chl)

-"cleaning products did not have those strong odours."(twt)

-"there were washers, driers and freezers for each unit, or each floor."(rpssm,jfw)



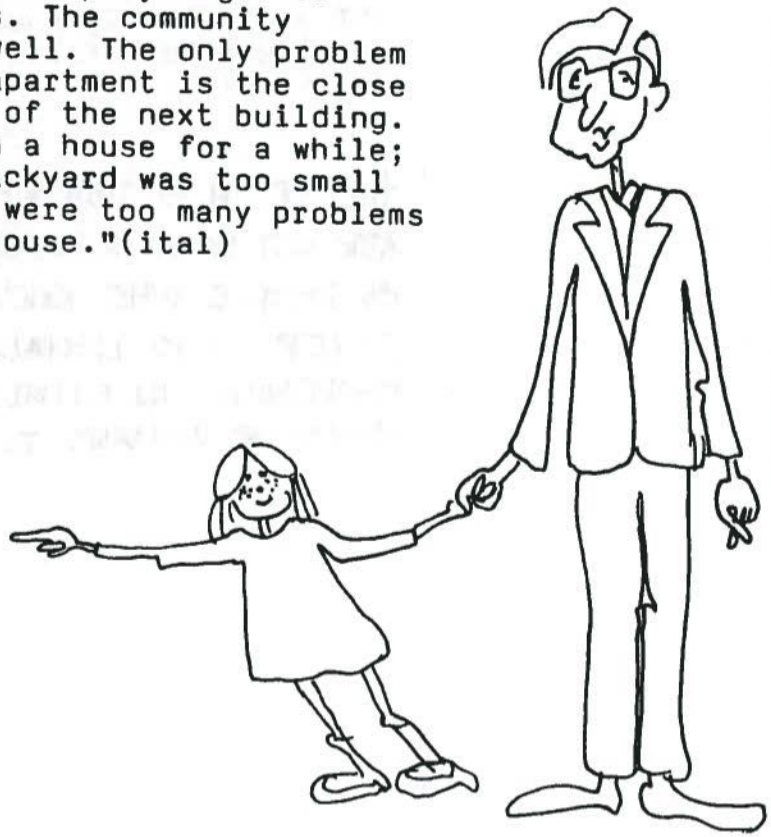
caring for children

concerns:

"My house has no play space inside; the street is not safe; the rooms are too small for both entertaining and family life; the living room and dining room are particularly small."(fes)

"The intercom does not work, yet the doors are locked; this is very hard on the kids."(foc)

"I live with my 5 children in an apartment. We have swimming, sauna, schools, church and all services very handy. I too use the recreation facilities in the building sometimes. There are many kids who play together downstairs. The community operates well. The only problem with the apartment is the close proximity of the next building. I lived in a house for a while; but the backyard was too small and there were too many problems with the house."(ital)



wouldn't it be nice if . . .

-"there were groundlevel contact for all kids in apartments."(foc)

-"all highrises which have children up to a certain age, i.e. 8, in the apartment had screened-in balconies and as the children pass beyond that age the screens could be moved to the next family with young children."(dcc)

-"apartments had recreational facilities and adequate soundproofing for children."(efoc)

-"children's playspaces both in and outdoors - kids like to play in front of houses - could be supervised from the kitchen."(tabl)

-"homes with children had toilets near the entrance."(tabl)

-"there were several sets of smaller stairs, carpeted; kids would only get slight bruises and learn much more easily how to climb stairs."(tab2)

" wouldn't it be nice if planners, as part of their training, had to live with a child for a day"(tab1)

needing a space for myself

concerns

I sometimes get very frustrated and feel like:'Hey, I don't fit in here. You know, I'm a member of this family; but there is no room for me.' It's a little thing, I guess, in that it happens in the concept of the design of the house. The area that I do my work, which is housework, laundry, sewing and mending and all those 'wonderful' things also just ends up to be the space which is left over which is beside the furnace."(sc)

"Lesbians are a little different; our own rooms are pretty important - our creative space. There is not the same assumption that the home is 'shared' yet the woman gets squeezed out until nothing is left for her except the kitchen and bathroom. We have a different expectation: one bedroom is automatically considered needed for each one of the partners. We all have a lot of input into our homes; it is shared and that's what makes us much more satisfied with our homes."(trc)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"the need for a woman's own space was more widely respected both in private and subsidized housing."(trc)

-"in buildings which do not have patios, terraces could be built on the top of the roof, sort of like sunroofs so that the light comes in; they can also be used for recreation spaces or just a private space where you can sit and relax."(ry)

-"your upstairs bedroom was warm at night."(twt)

-"I had a lovely round bathtub (eel) with a safelight over it."(twt)

" THE TRUTH IS THAT MOST RAPES ARE NOT WITH STRANGERS BUT BY PEOPLE WHO KNOW EACH OTHER. IT IS USUALLY HAPPENING IN EITHER THE MAN'S OR WOMAN'S PLACE "(trc)

my community

The section is structured as follows:

MY COMMUNITY
- coping with cities we didn't plan
- coping with distance
- coping with loneliness
- caring for children, before, at, and after school
- shopping and services;

The concerns in this section focus on the distances, the specialization and isolation which result from the way most cities and suburbs have been developed. For women who tend to have very fragmented time patterns, and limited transportation and economic resources this poses severe hardships.

coping with cities we didn't plan

concerns:

"We live on the outskirts of Weston; we are not in Weston and we always feel that we are just floating out in the neverlands. me have never had the feeling that we were part of an integrated community that had services and a feeling of identity. It's just 'burbia'".(dcc)

"Many of these things weren't a big problem until we had specialized areas of work like the downtown core and housing on the periphery."(ch1)

"I think that was inspired by men in many ways; they wanted to have a break from their work, an escape; and they have the means with their cars to do it. You know even yourself if you are employed you enjoy that retreat into your private world."(sc)

"We like it better here. It is more dangerous if there is a fire when housing and stores are in one structure. We like to have our backyards. We like to go to plazas, its like going out everthing is there."(ital)

"workplace, daycare, fitness classes were planned within walking distance from each other." (ch1)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"all Metro residents could have a feeling that they were part of a community."(dcc)

-"I could live and work and shop in the same community"(iwd)

-"we could rebuild Paris, France in Ontario. Paris is such a huge city; yet you can walk places and every street is beautiful. I think that is the most human city I know because everything is on such a scale of humanity, the buildings, the streets, the intimacy of contact and tremendous richness of interaction and functions and people."(sc)

-"there were a lot more integration of work and home; it would outweigh these anti-children kinds of things because children would be much more close to the workplace. It would also deal with some of the time pressures, transportation and safety issues. The shorter the distance you have to travel the less likely you are to run into problems. Most of us don't think anything about going to the corner drugstore at 10.00 at night. But when you are far away from home, you don't have that kind of connection and therefore confidence."(ch1,ch2)

concerns:

"The trend of placing seniors on cheap and therefore outlying land is still going on, yet seniors do like being where the action is, i.e. close to the centre of cities."(stc)

"There is nothing around my area; it is a new area we have no church, no plaza near by; in the winter there is no place to go; I don't go out. I am a little bit afraid."(ital)

"It's like living in a small European village; I adore it; it's like everybody, all my neighbours know each other. There's a good library and everything I need within three blocks of my house."(sc)

"Some of these things exist in smaller neighbourhoods and there is sharing and there are support groups."(ch1)

"It occurred to me after I had done this drawing that I could actually draw a physical border around my community: Bloor, Yonge, College and Dovercourt. Downtown is the area where I occasionally go to browse or where I go to show the city to out of town visitors."(fes)

"The noise from the airplanes is unbearable both in and outside of the house, especially for my husband."(ital)

"..if houses had not been permitted near the airport" (ital)

"..if they had small corner stores in suburban areas" (ry)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"new areas had support facilities provided before the people are allowed to move in."(ital)

-"greater land use mix was controlled to ensure that residential units would not be lost, then a greater integration of uses would be a good thing. Or if there was more community input in determining its own uses. Right now I don't know why a certain area is zoned the way it is. Every area should have a certain range of services such as daycare, a transition house or shelter or emergency facility as a rule which would override community input which might be overly fearful. This would be especially necessary in areas where middle class and subsidized units are integrated."(trc)

-"the provision of community services was written into the Planning Act of Ontario, or
- there were monetary incentives to provide them, or
- there were regulations that for every 50 residential units developers would have to contribute a certain fee for community services, or
- 10% of funds of any government-funded development had to go to social impact evaluation and amelioration."(ch2)

coping with distance

concerns:

"I resent spending so much of my day travelling everywhere: to work, to shop, to services, recreation and the community centre."(foc)

"The distances are too great; for a stranger it looks nice, the grass and trees and all that; but the consequences are that things are not accessible."(jfw)

"The problem gets back to the way the city is planned: the residential areas are very separate from the place of employment."(ch2)

"In many apartment areas there are no convenience let alone grocery stores within easy reach."(stc,foc)

"I am fearful that when Johnny will be asking for a cup of milk, I will have to say:'next week.' With the suburban stereotype you can't get anything without going into a mall. You cannot walk to a store."(ry)

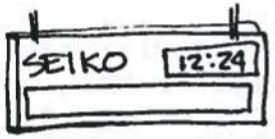
wouldn't it be nice if...

-"the schools, libraries and other services where closer together."(jfw)

-"there were more pedestrian malls instead of having to drive a car."(ry)

-"there were a more integrated downtown while preserving the residential areas."(twbc)

-"Now there are chunks of compartmentalized areas; you wrench yourself away from one thing to another (ch2)



-"there were more clocks in public places which showed the right time."(twbc)

coping with loneliness

concerns:

"My problem is loneliness."(dcc,ea,ital,)

"Women feel very isolated because neighbours are going out to work, and so you'll go three or four houses on either side and there is nobody home all day."(sc)

"I see sole-support mothers living in such isolation; we are so individualistic; we are so hep on privacy that we're ready to suffer enormously to gain our privacy."(sc,jfw,ea)

"When you live in an apartment building you don't want to get too close to people; I used to solve it by becoming friends with people on other floors. If your'e on another floor than at least they are going to phone first before they come down."(sc)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"your local plaza had something like a drop-in; there'd be daycare where you could leave your kids, or play with your kids, and talk to other people and participate around a table doing something like stuffing envelops or so."(sc)

-"the community centres became community centres rather than just recreation centres, where you can drop in and participate and leave when you want to and it was an extension of your home."(jfw,dcc,spsp,trc,ry)

-"more volunteering could be encouraged through tax deductions (on the basis of the minimum wage) and/or by volunteers being made aware of the positive impact they have."(sc)

-"there was cafes, taverns or women's community centres where you could drop in without getting babysitters first, and without being mistaken for prostitutes."(chc,twbc,fes,cc,trc,jfw,iwd)

-"good movie houses were better distributed throughout the city."(cc)

Concerns:

"Our background is one of extended families living together. Back home there were always neighbours visiting. Here people have no time to have dinner together; no one has time. The sense of togetherness is not what it used to be."(ea)

"My husband is retired and he stays most of the time in the house. Unlike women, he has nothing to do."(ital)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"where I live there was some place - not someone's apartment - where we could all get together - just a place where we could sit down and have a coffee or just a place that we could take over for a while." (sc,dcc,rpssm,stc,ea,jfw)

parks:
-"were places where people assemble and choose to be active or passive."(fes)
-"were little piazzas or pockets of relief in many areas, scattered, with fountains, street vendors, monuments etc."(fes,stc,twbc)
-" were not necessarily age specific."(fes)
-"had a sunroom, an indoor pool and play area"(cc)

-"there was an immigrant women's centre in Scarboro."(sc)

-"there was a post office within walking distance to keep us (immigrant communities) connected with our overseas roots."(ea)

-"there were places for men, and for women too, where members of the Italian community can get together and play boccie." (ital)

concerns:

"Human beings need to live in warm social units where there is proximity to other people and services, where there is interaction with others."(sc)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"when I made a mistake I could share it with others so that we could learn from each other."(dcc)

adult eduction:
-"there were classes for mothers in sewing cooking and art with charges related to income."(rpssm)
-"there were adult courses providing daycare, and not only downtown." (tabl)
-"there were general interest courses usually given at night available to seniors during the day time."(stc)
-"there were a university or observatory near hostels where we can learn at our own speed."(sist)
-"there were more challenging TV programs during the day and late at night when mothers are up with small babies."(tabl)

caring for children

concerns:

CHILDCARE

"Infant care, esp. quality daycare is a real problem. So many centres are in the basements of churches. York is relatively well served, but again unless you live or work at regular hours here, it becomes less then ideal. Co-ops are hard for two career families; one pays for the free time by putting in extra efforts at other times."(fes)

"When my first one was one and a half I started to look outside of the house because she wanted more than was inside the house. I couldn't find anything; there was nothing to do together for a reasonable price, everything was so expensive or so far away that I had to do with whatever I could do at home."(dcc)

"Many mom and tots programs are geared to just one age group, while many mothers have more than one child and inevitably need activities catering to different age groups."(dcc)

"There are all kinds of programs for kids and parents with kids yet there is nothing for parents who need a break away from their kids for a while."(rpssm)

"wouldn't it be nice if there was parent relief. It would certainly impact on alot of stress felt by mothers" (jfw,dcc)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"there were more subsidized day care spaces, both full time and with flexible hours, including nights, weekends and on P.A. days."(rpssm,twbc,spsp,dcc,iwd)

-"there was someone affordable to look after children when they are sick."(dcc, twbc)

-"eligible sick time when your kid is sick, or when there are parent interviews."(chl,twt)

-"daycare in the workplace, especially with flexible hours, such as at Riverdale Hospital."(tab2,twt)

-"the programs putting seniors and children together were extended."(stc,sc)

-"surplus school spaces and school buses during off hours were used for preschool and senior activities and short outings."(sc,dcc,ry)

-"there was enough space in each neighbourhood (school or community centre) to socialize and to have a child care room." (dcc, spsp,jfw)

concerns:

PLAYGROUNDS

"One problem I have with my area is that there is no play space for my child. The Oakwood - St.Clair area has not enough parks. Somebody has to dedicate 2 or 3 hours to the child to get everything organized and get there."(fes)

"Glass is another problem and dog shit. I have this fantasy of emptying a dirty diaper on one of the front lawns of some of the dog owners who donot scoop."(tab2)

"I think every child in the development has had stitches as a result of the concrete square under the swings and things the kids play on. There is no dirt or grass."(jfw)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"were more evenly distributed throughout the city."(fes)
-"had supervisors throughout the year"(cc,tabl)
-"were equipped for more age specific activities."(cc,tab2,tabl)
-"had benches for seniors and parents closer to the equipment." (stc,ea,tabl,tab2,dcc,jfw)
-"had more creative things to do."(tabl,tab2,dcc)
-"had proper drainage, esp. under the equipment."(tabl)
-"were separated from car parking areas."(rpssm)
-"had an area that was fenced in so that the caregiver didn't have to run around constantly chasing her toddlers."(dcc)

-"there was a nice park, an old-fashioned one. It doesn't need fancy playground equipment. The schools have that. A park where people can stroll through, feel comfortable, feel like it is their space; where you can have picnics, a park where that is allowed and where kids can run around.(jfw)

SCHOOLS

-"we learned how to understand each other."(eel)

-"people who worked with children defined their responsibility in relation to the needs of that child and not in terms of the stated responsibility for that job."(dcc)

-"schools made parents feel welcome and listened to what the parents think."(dcc)

-"teachers took the initiative to talk to their students' parents."(dcc)

-"there were a free media campaign saying:'your child's teacher wants to meet you.'"(twt)

-"there were more safe-arrival programs."(tabl)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"schools were able to accommodate children with various disabilities without making them socially isolated from other so-called typical children."(dcc and dawn) and disabled moms could go to their kids' parents night."(dawn)

-"there were better schools - student contolled."(iwd)

-"high school programs were designed with the needs of the community in mind, so that senior girls who were taking the family life courses, early childhood education and parenting could work for one or two mornings a week or after school, caring for the infants of women in the neighbourhood."(dcc,sc)

concerns:

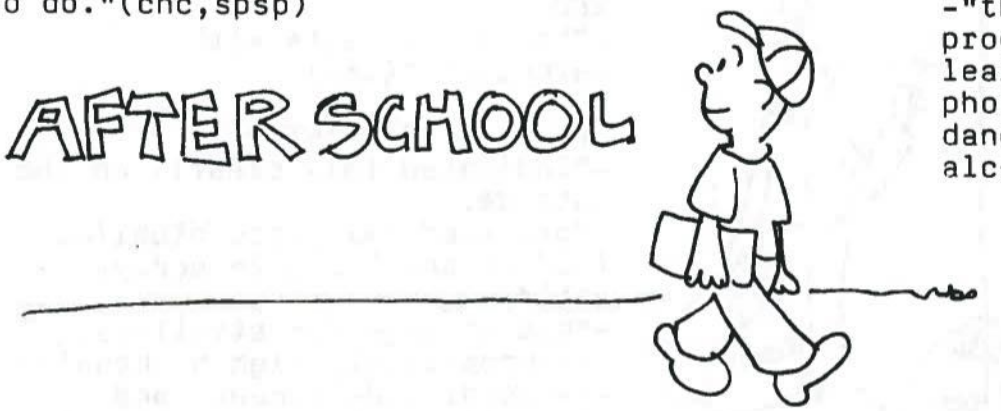
AFTER SCHOOL

"This area, if you have school aged kids is like jail; there is nothing for young children to do."(spsp)

"We used to have a lot of afterschool activities here and they have all been cut out...Cupboards would be wrecked, fishtanks broken, paint strewn around, because the community used it."(twt)

"In the summer there are a lot of teenaged boys hanging around until the early morning hours; their behaviour is often very noisy, aggressive and threatening to women residents."(chc)

"There is nowhere for teenagers to go. there is nothing for them to do."(chc,spsp)



wouldn't it be nice if...

-"on P.A. days the school or the community centres made provision for child care."(dcc,twbc)

-"school buses could pick up a bunch of these (disabled) kids and take them to (after school) activities."(dcc)

-"kindergarten rooms could be used after school."(dcc)

-"if my community stopped producing military toys."(iwd,10year old)

-"you could let your kids come to City Hall after school and you could give your kid a hug and kiss and say:'hi, how was your day?' and they could go to activities here."(ch2)

-"there were a centre and programs where teenagers can learn things like photography;"(chc) or to go dancing without drugs, or alcohol."(spsp)

shopping for services

concerns:

"Just when women start needing it, all grocery stores stop delivering."(sc,twt,dcc)

"Pedestrian access with children to shopping plazas across parking areas is dangerous." (dcc)

"My child had 2 toys in the bank and about 6 kids were on the floor entertained with them. Yet people gave them dirty looks as if expecting these children to stand obediently in line too." (tab2)

"Places like sick kids, government services, such as unemployment insurance, banks etc. will not make (time specific) appointments so that you have to take a whole day of."(twt)

"Doubledoors, heavy doors, turnstyles, shopping carts without restraining belts, uneven flooring are a great problem when you have young toddlers and strollers." (tabl,2)

"...if banks, post offices provided kids with toys or some devices which could occupy them while their parent is waiting." (tab2)

"grocery stores delivered" (sc,twt)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-all agencies, trade and professional services made time specific appointments.

SHOPPING CENTRES:
-"had clearly indicated elevators,
-"a parking place for strollers,
-" play centres for kids,
-"seating for parents and seniors,
-"flooring which is easy on strollers,
-"lower railings for kids,and
-"a safe and comfortable pedestrian access from the street to their entrance." (tabl,tab2,dcc)

STORES:
-"had their check-outs designed without candy displays,
-"had check-outs wide enough for strollers, without turnstyles, and
-"had a few carts with harnesses."(tabl)

FAMILY RESTAURANTS:
-"indicated this clearly on the outside,
-"provided immediate nibbling food or something to occupy children,
-"had storage for strollers,
-"appropriately high highchairs,
-"special kids menues, and
-"special sections for parents with kids."(tabl)

staying healthy

Concerns

"I spend a lot of time here (Ryerson). The lack of natural light bothers me...Another thing I am very concerned about is the air from smoking. Everywhere I go I can't get away from it."(ry,sc)

"Why should bank employees be allowed to smoke when customers are not. We and our kids are exposed to all the smoke while standing in long line-ups." (tab2)

"My apartment shakes everytime a train goes by, which draws my attention to the risk of chemical spills."(chc)

"The high voltage transmission line adjacent to the tracks, Canadian General Electric's intention of burning high level P.C.B's. on site, and the proximity of the Junction Triangle are a further health hazard."(chc)

"My worst complaint in the area is Colgate-Palmolive. I don't see why they can't move. There shouldn't be this smell. It is a health hazard; so are Canada Metal and the lead driven cars." (tab2)

" with all the unknowns about our water supply one questions the city's priorities in spending $25 million on the domed stadium." (chc)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"we had clean air"(10 year old at iwd)

-"there were more smokefree environments."(twbc,tab)

-"there was an international pollution index; when the index reaches 12 then industries had to operate at half capacity; then we'll find that sulphur dioxide will come down. Certainly the technology is there. They are costly but the alternative costs are never considered. Women and children just end up paying the cost of drugs to ameliorate environmental problems. I am paying $200 a month on drugs just for one person. I would like to see these things incorporated into planning."(ch2)

-"a number that everybody could call who has a headache or sinus related problem on the same day. The air here is abominable." (ch2)

-"workplaces were healthier in every respect."(iwd)

-"there was a sauna for those of us who suffer from arthritis." (rpssm)

The largest portion of session time focussed on the issue of getting around. The cost and design of public transit presents an enormeous obstacle for almost all groups of women, esp. those on low incomes, the elderly, mothers with young children and women with disabilities. Several groups called for safer biking facilities to imporve their mobility.

Next in importance is the women's fear for our safety while being in public places or on the road. Women are apprehensive almost everywhere. The younger the wmen, the more unwillingly they seem to accept restrictions as a trade-off for safety. Better lighting, policing or more people presence are suggested. Yet the experiences listed would indicate that solutions will have to be more complex.

Almost every session has raised the need for more, better designed and located public washrooms. This is an issue of considerable importance to women, yet it has tended to be ignored and/or dismised.

The section is structured as follows:

Getting Around - safely, on foot, transit by car
- with diabilities
- on foot
- by bike
- by car
- on transit
- on transit and paying for it
- on transit with children
- when you need a washroom

getting around

getting around safely on foot

concerns:

"During a recent trip to a shopping centre I kept being followed by a man. Everytime I stopped he did too; this went on for three hours."(sist)

"In terms of safety they always tell you if you think you are being followed, 'go to the nearest police station.' Well, I wonder how many of you know where any police station is; they are the best hidden secret."(ch2)

"I don't like to have to feel my stomach clinch every time I walk home. I rather go up Bay than Yonge because on Yonge I get a lot of comments. I rather stay away from places where men hang around, I feel safer."(fes)

"Public spaces are men's spaces at night. I don't go to parks at night. Shopping malls are men's. A lot of women are picked up in malls and then taken to cars or outside. I talked to many young women who were raped there. This is both during day time, at lunch breaks or immediately after school." (trc,sist)

"We feel safe to go whenever and wherever we want to." (ital,rpssm,tab2)

"it is dangerous to walk around at night." (fes, foc, trc, twbc, tab1, sist 1)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"public spaces were safer because men were nicer."(twbc)

-"men were curfued after dark." (ch2)

-"men could learn how to better control their aggression."(cc)

-"there were more self-defence courses for women in schools." (cc,chl,trc,fes)

-"there were neighbourhood vigilante groups to protect women."(cc)

-"there were more store front police stations."(ch2)

-"there was a kind of block parent system for women."(trc)

-"there was a buddy system where partners inform each other of their whereabouts and when they are safely home."(trc)

-"there were smaller shops and cafes open late at night and you wouldn't feel uncomfortable walking; everything but donut shops are closed and you know the weirdoes that are in there." (ry,fes,iwd)

-"there were parks you culd walk in at night."(cc,eel,trc,fes)

concerns

"If you can't see or hear and the area is strange your danger signals are all screwed up; visibility and knowing are very important for a sense of safety."(trc)

"The road system tends to accommodate the motorist above anybody else; there are too many curb cuts for drive ways and they make you feel insecure; also the difference in elevation between one slab of concrete and another have made me stubb my toes quite often."(stc)

"I nearly got knocked over several times by bikes riding on sidewalks."(stc)

"The street lighting is pityful, esp. on certain streets, and as you get older you can't differentiate as well any longer between light and dark. Luminescent stripes along paths and stairs are important."(sist,stc,twt,ry)

"The city won't fix a light as quickly in a poorer area as in other areas."(trc)

"The underpass under the railroad is very scary; a young boy was seriously assaulted there."(chc)

"In winter sidewalks are not adequately cleared, esp. by industrial and absentee owners." (stc, tab2, twt, ry, tab1)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"snow removal bylaws were more effectively enforced." (twbc,dcc,stc,ry,twt,ta bl)

-"there were more of the 'eating' ploughs which did not just push the snow from the road back onto the sidewalk."(stc)

-"they cleared the snow as they do in Montreal; the night before they put up signs that say that this area will be cleaned at 7.oo, so people move their cars 2 or 3 blocks away; and then they come along with a bunch of snow ploughs and it's cleared in five minutes, the sidewalks included. They also have winter parking where back yards are used temporarily to increase off-street parking; it's part of a co-operative thing."(twt)

-"more street lights, one every 10 meters."(cc,stc,trc,sist)

-"steps were delineated with glowing white."(stc,sist)

-"there were a kind of alarm system which women could use in public spaces."(trc)

getting around safely on transit

concerns:

"We are afraid of getting lost on the T.T.C., esp. when it comes to changing buses. What would we say; who would we call? Subways are more intimidating and escalators are scary. Most of our destimations are indicated as street addresses and not as subway stops or bus lines."(ea,tial)

"There is a problem with transit stop related harassment, of being followed out of a T.T.C. vehicle and/or after getting off.(trc) esp. for shift workers."(ch2)

"We have a bus shelter nobody really stands in because it is made of this plastic and it billows in and out and your'e frightened that it is going to take off and you'll be going to the world of Oz like Dorothy did."(sc)

"Access to the Christie and Bathurst subway parking lots is very poorly lit, esp. since the access to one of them is through an equally unlit alley. Two co-op women were physically threatened there."(chc)

"Something should be done about overcrowding subway stations, esp. at Yonge and Bloor and St. George before someone gets pushed accidentally in front of a train."(twbc)

"there is a lack of mirrors within subway stations which would allow women to see what is around corners." (chc)

wouldn't it be nice if....

-immigrants could use the transit information service in their own languages.

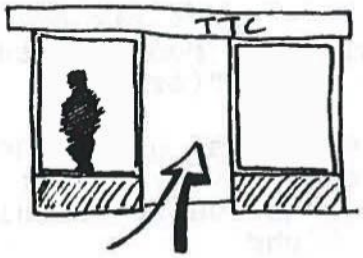
-safety at transit access points were improved by more careful location, design, lighting; i.e. two entrances to T.T.C. shelters and/or an alarm system.

-"there were a mini-bus service in the evenings at York University or escort service for women, or transit service to the entrance of buildings after hours."(fes)

-"there were door to door bus service after hours."(stc)

-"there were better all night transit."(cc,sc)

-"more mirrors within subway stations which would allow women to see what is around corners." (chc)



"Bus shelters which have only one entrance are real traps." (trc,stc,sc)

getting around safely by car

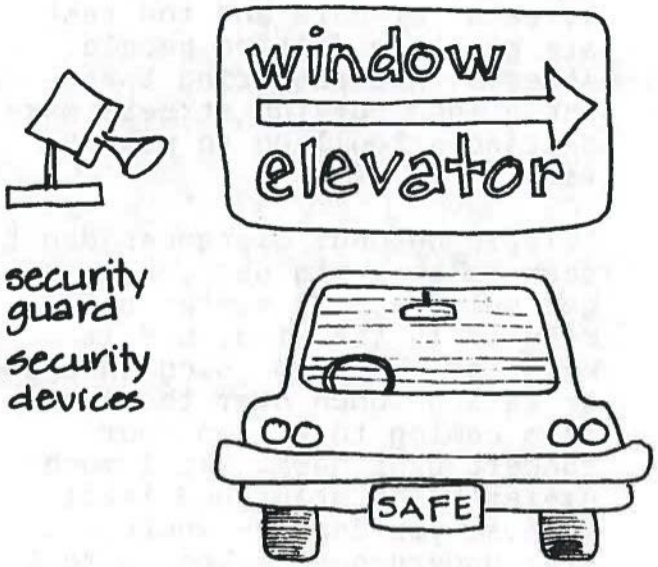
concerns:

"Underground garages are so pityful I avoid them at all cost - which is often a lot. Even during the day time I avoid them. The staircases are scary too, and the elevators too. I have a list of bad garages in my mind: The Eglinton Centre, the Greenwin Building near Sherbourne and Bloor, the City Hall garage and the one across from the Royal York. If you did not have stacked garages fewer rapes would occur." (fes,twbc,tabl,trc)

"Disabled women are seen as victims. Taxi drivers take advantage of you; it happens all the time. They harass able-bodied women, obviously theyr'e going to harass disabled women - a minority, but it's done."(dawn)

"Cars are still significant, espcially for incidents with strangers, because to the stranger-assailant his car is a safe place."(trc)

wouldn't it be nice if..



- security guard
- security devices

-"underground garages were guarded round the clock, possibly with video cameras, and sensitive sound and listening devices, and had elevators with windows which allowed for full visibility both into the elevator and over the parking area."(fes,twbc,twt,ry,jfw)

getting around on foot

concerns:

"Planners felt:'we'll have main streets for cars and the rest are going to just be people streets' not realizing that these long curving streets make distances too long to walk." (sc)

"Little outdoor distances don't seem to be a big deal, but you get out there in winter or in rain or in the wind, and it keeps people from going shopping or eating lunch over there or from coming to a noon-hour concert over here. Yet I much prefer being at ground level because you can see where you are; underground makes us feel like we're in tunnels or holes." (sc)

"I always have to lug groceries for about 4 blocks, and I never have any good bargains; the other areas that I can go grocery shoppping at I have to take three buses to get there." (sc)

"The problem is that we have competition on sidewalks from dogs."(stc)

... if laws were made giving priority to pedestrians. (sts,iwd)

wouldn't it be nice if ...

-"the repetition of the wind tunnels created by high buildings were prevented."(sc)

-"there were protected above grade pedestrian passages."(sc)

-"grocery stores delivered." (dawn,sc,twt)

-"there were better sidewalk grids, especially on King St." (twbc)

-"there were regulations against people throwing paper on the streets."(eel)

-"stoop and scoop by-laws were enforced more effectively; or if dogs had address tags so any victim could find out who the owner of the dog is and either inform the authorities or return the leftovers; or if there were more doggy comfort stations." (twbc,eel,stc)

-"we could get rid of pantihose and have sensible winter clothing for both getting to work and being in the office." (chl)

getting around with disabilities

concerns:

"Often wheelchair accessibility is indicated and when you get there the devices don't function, or are not found, the entrances are at the back of a building in isolated spots, you are forced to use freight elevators with control buttons out of reach; elevator doors, if wide enough, shut on you; the washrooms are inaccessible, and/or you depend on security guards' assistance."(dawn)

"You have to request a ride one week ahead and are not assured that your request will be met until 24 hours before the ride."(dawn)

"I remember I was at a meeting at Parliament and Adelaide; my pickup was at 9.30pm but the library locked its doors at 8.30pm; I had to sit out there for an hour waiting for a drive."(dawn)

"The streets don't have any benches or anything.. and if once you do see a bench there is little place to sit down. It's terrible for the elderly." (dawn,stc)

"For visibly impaired persons street signs and street maps are very hard to read."(eel,stc)

"wheeltrans has injured people..I have fallen off" (dawn)

"Traffic lights are very often not slowly enough timed to allow someone with a wheelchair to cross," (dawn)

wouldn't it be nice if ...

-transit were fully wheelchair accessible.

-"may be the first and last car of subways should be reserved for handicapped and women and children."(trc,ch2)

-"there were perfectly environmentally controlled underground networks."(dawn)

-"elevators calling out the stops."(dawn)

-"use of colours and lights indicated entrances, bus stops etc."(dawn)

-"crossings had signals that beep; curbcuts were uniform, and curbedges were painted with darker colour and/or specially textured."(dawn)

-"there were better and bigger signs and street maps." (stc,eel,twbc)

"where there is only one curb-cut around a curb it often faces into the middle of the intersection and is very dangerous." (tabl,dawn)

getting around by bicycle

concerns:

"The city is not set up for bicycles."(fes)

"I have a bicycle and can reach everywhere I need to go by bike. I was hit by a car on the bike earlier this year. It involved a stay at the hospital because of a prcussion. But I regard this as a calculated risk. I have purchased a better helmet; I drive on quiet streets."(fes)

"I always ride on the sidewalk; I never ride on the road. If I was a teenager I would be stopped for sure. There is a problem with carting bicycles up elevators. People really look at you strangely; but lots of bikes are stolen."(jfw)

"It's funny I feel quite safe on my bike even at night on dark streets; but I wouldn't walk there."(fes)

"The bike is too risky, esp. on the Danforth; also it is not feasible with a child."(fes)

"Better bike locks are needed; the rigid cryptonite locks are too small for trees; for some years unrealistic bikes were pushed on women, i.e. skinny wheeled 10-speed bikes which make you bend over too much. Women need proper information."(fes)

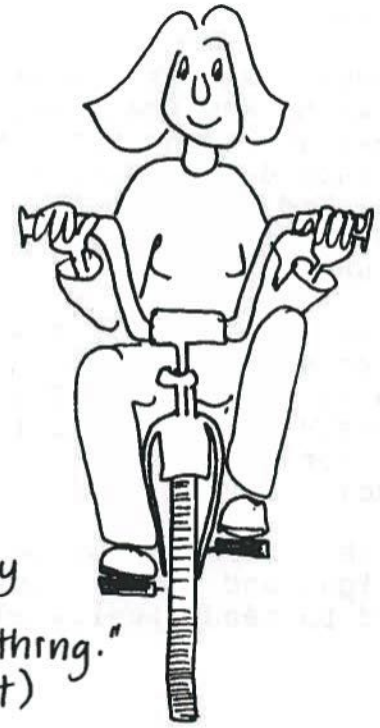
wouldn't it be nice if...

-"there were more bike paths in the city, not recreational bike paths but working bike paths." (ch2,eel,twbc,fes,jfw,twt)

-"bike racks were in safer places."(iwd)

-"there were adult tricycles with which we could also carry children and shopping."(fes)

-"women purchasing bicycles had proper information."(fes)



"I like going by bike; it's not costing me anything." (s1st)

getting around by car

concerns:

"We go shopping by car because the bus is too expensive."(ital)

"The thing that frustrates me most about the car is trying to park it and its costs; yet it becomes a necessity especially with kids. So you have to prioritize it and its costs. It is a hazzle to secure a car; they get vandalized or broken into if you leave them alone long. You are vulnerable when you try to unlock a car." (trc,chl)

"I can't really get anywhere without a fifteen minute car drive. My home, my recreation and my office are spread out and they are all a car drive apart." (sc)

wouldn't it be nice if...

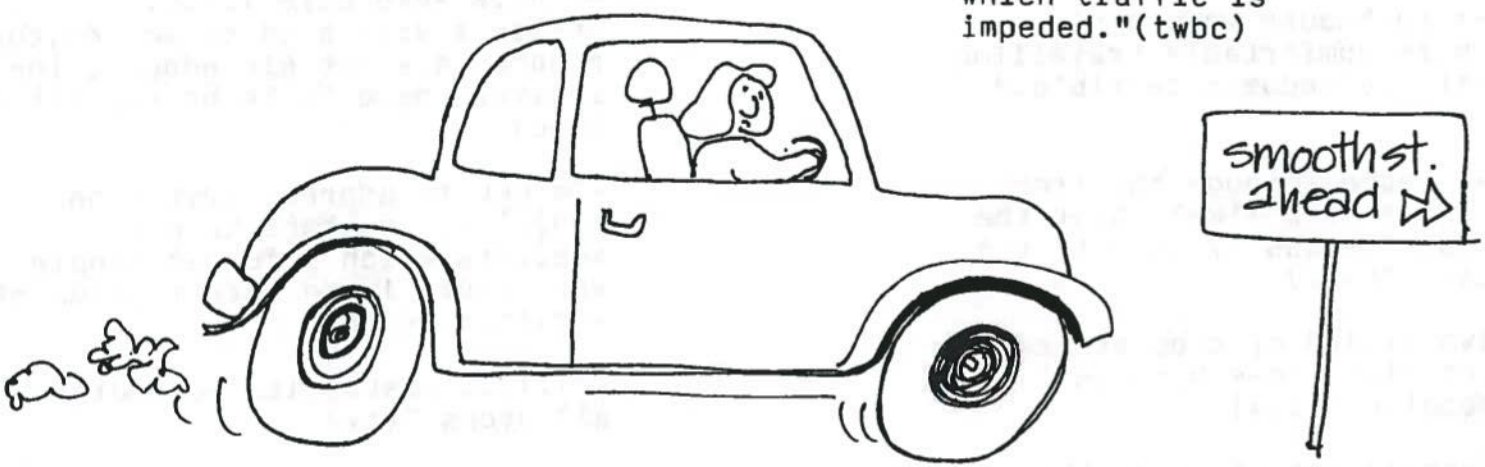
-"taxi drivers in their off-hours would go and take people that didn't have a car, or had small children shopping or to doctors' appointments for a reduced amount - subsidized taxis -."(sc,twt)

-"cars which people could rent for 2 hours every week to do their weekly shopping."(ch2)

-"more and cheaper car parking."(twbc)

-"street names were posted 50m before the street; (ry) better and larger street signs."(stc,eel)

-"more road construction during the night to reduce time during which traffic is impeded."(twbc)



getting around on transit

concerns:

"I have to wait 30 minutes to an hour and sometimes depending where it is I feel afraid."(ital,ry)

"Often I got to be at work at 6 am, most of the system doesn't operate before then.."(ch2)

"Bunching up of streetcars and buses is annoying."(stc)

"Buses are always crowded; I never get a seat and it always takes forever and sometimes there is a backup somewhere along the line so I'm again late; and I plan two hours for what would normally take an hour's ride and try to crowd it with readings and whatnot."(sc)

"After rushhours when seniors feel more comfortable travelling the service becomes terrible." (sct)

"If we leave through the front door it is more likely that the front of the bus is snug to the sidewalk."(stc)

"I have missed my stop at least four or five times because I was reading."(fes)

"The escalators often go the wrong way."(chc)

"The college car is terrible, slow, rotten, irregular and infrequent;" (fes) Jane and Finch lines were equally mentioned.

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"the price of gas were really high we should have the most incredible rapid transit system. It would deal with children being transported short or long distances, transportation could incorporate a lot of other services, grocery store stops, send them to our home, all kinds of hours, clean, safe, goes practically to every door. I think there should be immense pressure by people on government to create this. It is not going to happen so long as we limp along."(ch2,twt,eel,sc,ital)

-"there were an up and down escalator in every station." (dcc,sstc,ch2,ry)

-"there were more T.T.C. shelters with a bench inside;the benches are not big enough; the shelters need to be better lit." (stc)

-"a public address system on vehicles, in stations and shelters which informed people when there is an interruption of services."(stc)

-"T.T.C. posted its schedules on all stops."(ry)

-"there were a shuttle bus from the St. Lawrence Market to the subway."(ch1)

... and paying for it

concerns:

"I work near the airport and have to pay another ticket at the Metro border; for a person who earns only $4 an hour this is quite a lot of money."(tal)

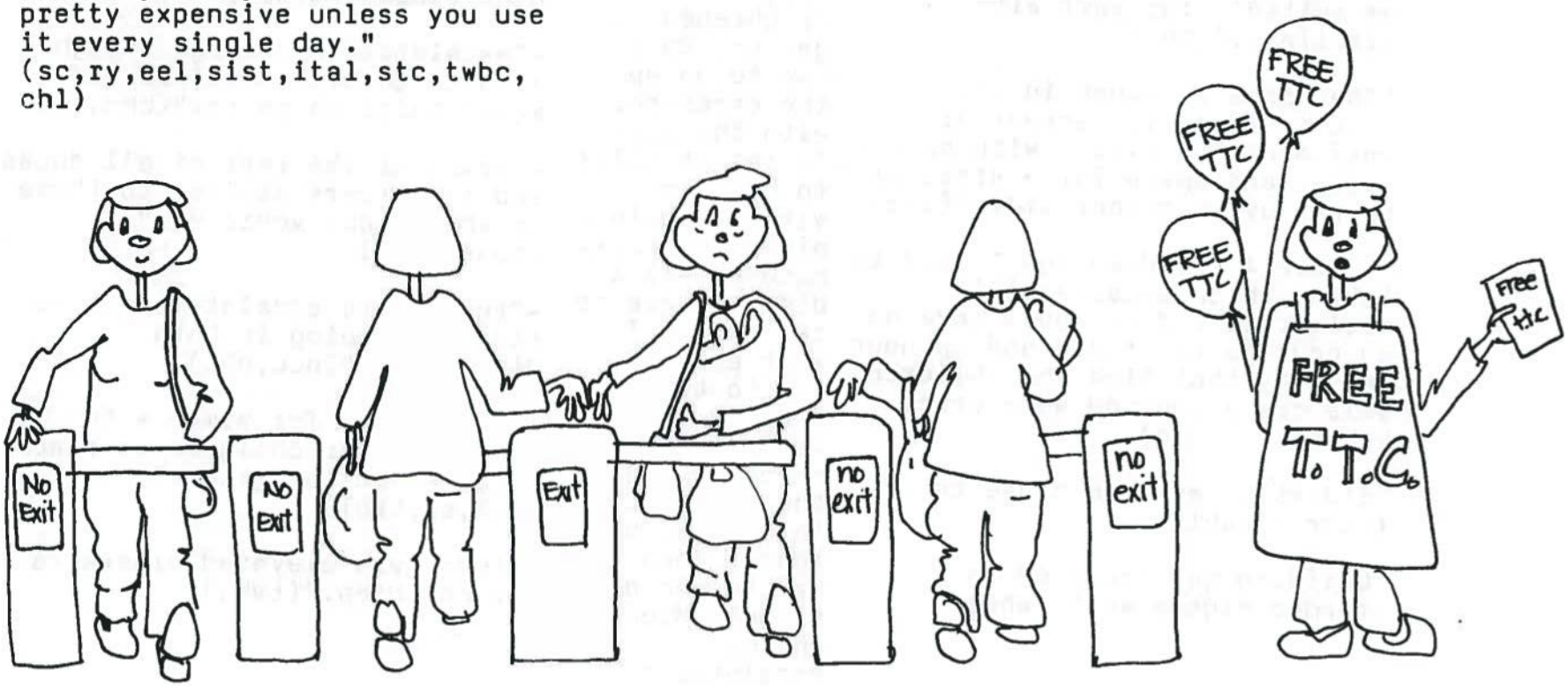
"I walk from Landsdowne to here (Bathurst and Dundas) practically every day - we cannot get more than one token at a time."(sist)

"You pay every time you get in and out unless you buy a pass and if you buy a pass it's pretty expensive unless you use it every single day." (sc,ry,eel,sist,ital,stc,twbc, chl)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"transit were free and supported by our taxes so that we didn't have to pay fares. If that happened it would be supported by people according to their incomes;(eel,chl,sc) for people below the poverty line or just slightly above it; (stc,ital) cheaper for kids and single mothers;(twbc)

-"there were multiple stop tickets or day passes."(fes)



getting around with children

concerns:

"I have been refused help with the stroller 4 times. If they (drivers) get hurt they don't get compensation. Another driver got sued by a parent for helping because the stroller dropped and the child got hurt."(tab2)

"'Fuck',said a mother ahead of me; she had 2 kids a bundle and was trying to climb up those stairs."(chl,eel,iwd)

"Escalators go often the wrong way and have too small lips to be suitable for moms with strollers."(chc)

"That pole is stuck in the in the middle (of streetcar entrances and exits) with barely sufficient space for a stroller to get by on either side."(trc)

"I have 4 children and I used to take them to after-school activities and it would take me an hour to get there and an hour back; by that time the children were crazy and you were crazy yourself."(dcc)

"Sidewalks are too close to roads."(tabl)

"Children get trampled on crowded sidewalks."(twbc)

"One day I got to the escalator in Gerrard Square to take a sick and dying guinea pig to the vet. Michael (4) was holding the guinea pig and put the box down on the escalator. He himself, however got suddenly too frightened to get on. So I had to go up the escalator with the baby in the stroller to catch up with the guinea pig in the box. Michael still did not dare to get on. So I went all the way to the top, leaving the baby in the stroller and the guinea pig in the box up there. Then I had to run down to help Michael on the escalator." (tab2)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"drivers had to help mothers with strollers in getting onto buses or streetcars."(tabl,tab2)

-"there were belts for kids." (iwd)

-"there were bag hooks, newspaper racks, garbage containers, and hooks or places where you can store the baby buggy."(chl)

-"women with children could use the parking spaces reserved for handicapped."(tabl)

-"escalators had large enough lips to enable strollers and wheelchairs to go on."(chc,stc)

-"ramps at the rear of all buses and streetcars similar to those on wheeltrans vehicles." (rpssm,chc)

-"there were escalators and/or elevators going in both directions."(dcc,chc)

-"wheeltrans for women with children; for children to reach after school programs." (ch2,sc,tabl)

-"there was elevated sidewalks for children."(twbc)

when you need a washroom

concerns:

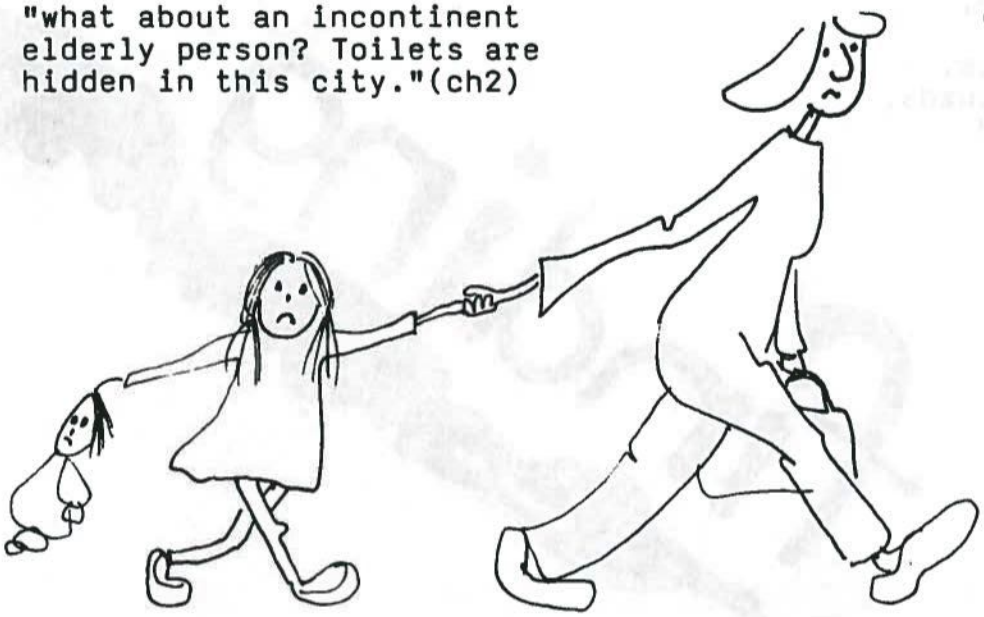
"I ran all the way to Woodgreen Community Centre to go to the washroom."(sistl)

"There are not enough publicly accessible washrooms."(ry,stc, tabl ,chc,chl,ch2,twbc,eel,tab2)

"You either have to change your kid in the sink or on the gross floor, or carry a poopy kid around with you all day." (eel,tab2,chl)

"Both public and semi-public (in restaurants, offices and theatres) washrooms for women are fewer, smaller (with fewer spaces) and in poorer locations than those for men. This is inspite of the fact that women tend to require such facilities more frequently than men."(chc)

"what about an incontinent elderly person? Toilets are hidden in this city."(ch2)



wouldn't it be nice if...

-"there were more public washrooms in general." (stc,twbc,chc,chl,ch2,ee 1,twt)

-businesses with washrooms were given an incentive to make these publicly accessible and to give clear indication as to their availability, location and facilities.

-"there were counters in public washrooms and diaper dispensers where I could change my kid." (eel,tab2,tabl)

-"there were washrooms for children with or without parents, with seats which are the right size for children." (tabl,tab2,chc)

-"washrooms had separate sections for putting on makeup etc. and had a couch or chair for relaxing."(ry)

This section encompasses such concerns as:

- the blatant and deeply felt discrimination against native Canadian women,
- the stereotyped attitudes towards seniors, disabled and women in general,
- the sense that this society does not value mothering or children,
- the bewildering jungle of regulations and officialdom facing economically dependent sole support mothers,
- the difficulty of obtaining information not only for newcomers but for seniors and many other women,and
- last but not least, the incredible tensions born by dual role women trying to reconcile household, childcare and job responsibilities.

The responses to these issues are both general and specific. The need was expressed for better information sharing, greater flexibility of rules and regulations, and a more sensitive and wider range of support services. The general consciousness issue is not addressed specifically and will require attention at the June 14 Workshop.

The section is structured as follows:

FINDING UNDERSTANDING AND SUPPORT -
Coping with - discrimination, stereotyping, and lack of information
- lower wages and higher prices,
- bureaucratic rules and attitueds,
- hostels and humiliation, and
- the eight-hour workday

understanding + support

coping with discrimination...

Concerns:

"It's my impression that children are not valued in this country and mothering is not either."(dcc)

"Every day we have to deal with racist landlords, neighbourhoods and racist employers."(nat)

"The whole myth that disabled people are over here and other people are over there is ridiculous; there is not really a line between the two; at some point in your life you are going to be disabled too."(dawn)

"You go in a wheelchair to a hospital to have a baby, a c-section is almost always assumed. The doctor refers to you as the 'paraplegic who is having the baby'. Viewing room doors are often too narrow to allow you to see your baby. Washroom doors are too narrow to get in, the beds too high for a spinal cord injured woman to get into."(dawn)

"Women aren't expected to be aggressive. If you are, you are considered to be a noisy bitch, whereas with men it's considered a positive trait."(ry)

"They make us feel that because we live in subsidized housing we also have to live a substandard quality of life."(dcc)

"they think you loose your marbles when you are 65." (st.c)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"each woman could do what she felt she had to do without being put down and feeling deficient." (dcc)

-"there was an area in Toronto with a Native Canadian identity, similar to Chinatown, or other ethnic areas; where native artists could practice, where native women could tan hides, and where we could be free from discrimination."(nat)

"Start public education! The best education is having a disabled person everywhere." (dawn)

-"there was less stereotyping." (cc)

-"women did not have to fight for everything they need. You always have to push and pull."(dcc)

-"more women were doctors."(cc)

-"more judges were women." (rpssm)

-"women stood up and took a position on things that mattered to them; it would be 50% of the population.(sc,ry)

stereotyping .....

Concerns:

"'You are a woman; what do you know about it?'was the response when I confronted a meeting with data indicating the LRT(light rapid transit) line would be more costly than an extension of the existing T.T.C. line."(sc)

"I am sitting with 3 men at this sales meeting. It's three men talking; as far as they're concerned I'm not there. I find that women are taken advantage of as far as jobs go; they seem to have their fingers in lots of different areas; but they don't get the title."(sc)

"I think police are overall sexist. If there was a man and a women on a beat together I would feel safe; but one cop in a car cruising does scare me as much as some guy, because you see them all the time harassing prostitutes and women on the streets. They are more property oriented."(trc)

"The policemen can do anything they want. Nothing gets done about it because they protect each other so strongly. In 9 out of 10 situations the criminal was protected not the victim. In any sexual assault, if you don't want to go through all the hassles they threaten you with a charge of public mischief." (sist)

wouldn't it be nice if...

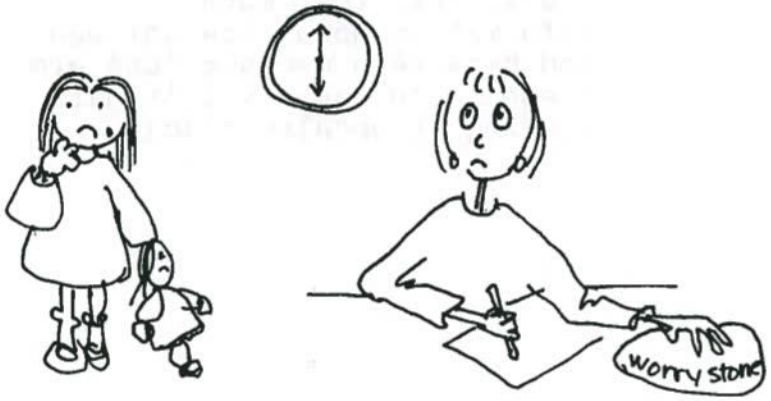
-"women weren't insinuated as having provoked harassment everytime we launch a complaint."(rpssm)

-"there were stricter laws against men who abuse women." (eel)

-"police were to patrol buildings where there is a known high rate of battering."(rpssm)

-"police spent more time protecting the neighbourhood instead of handing out parking tickets at 2 am."(twt)

-"police gave courtesy tickets."(twt)



"It's a male world of career advancement; they can stay two hours longer while your world is falling apart if you don't get to the daycare centre in time."(ch2)

and lack of information

concerns:

"We (this society) are in the process of proving might is right and not the other way." (sist)

... AND LACK OF INFOMATION

"When I first came up here, I was really protective and nervous. It really helped me to learn that for West Indian youths to hang out was a natural thing to do. This has really relieved my anxieties for me." (jfw)

"The communication is very difficult.. The information service in Toronto doesn't really have that much information about Scarborough and because human services are changing so rapidly it's hard keeping it updated."(sc)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"women were better informed about what their rights are." (dcc)

-"we had a welcome house where new people moving in would get a visit from people in the community explaining where things are."(jfw)

-"I could go to one place and had my problems answered without having to go to 10 different places."(dcc,stc)

-"immigrants could use the service in their own language." (ea,sc)

-"there was an information service that included the 'little territories'.. that was computerized and could be changed rapidly because things do change rapidly."(sc)

coping with lower wages & higher prices

concerns:

"I think women are still not equal as far as pay goes, and that's why we have to take public transit."(sc)

"More and more companies are using temporary help who don't get O.H.I.P. or any other benefits."(chl)

"Stores have such high prices because they know that the people in the area don't have cars and can't go elsewhere. Food such as hamburger meat is listed higher here than in higher income areas."(dcc)

"Because we don't bring in an income we feel we are a burden on our families."(ea)

"Laundromat prices are going up all the time and you have to do your laundry."(eel,foc)

"There is something very wrong about a department (agriculture) that pays farmers to cut back on the surplus of their stock to keep prices up."(sistl)

wouldn't it be nice if..

-"there were equal pay for work of equal value."(ch2,sc)

-local consumer groups could regularly provide feedback to stores, local merchants, professionals and services.

-"there were more competition between stores."(jfw)

-"we would like to do something in our apartments just something to do like putting labels on packages, to feel less dependent on our families."(ea)

-"there were cheaper laundromats."(eel)

-"the farmer and purchasing public in general could benefit from the surplus stock."(sistl)

coping with bureaucratic rules & attitudes

concerns:

"Metro treats us not like human beings but like pigs."(rpssm)

"We need faster transfers (from one apartment to another).I have a sick daughter and been waiting for a transfer for 1 1/2 years." (rpssm)

"Running our own housing project is important not only for satisfaction with our housing, but also for the self esteem and skills we have gained."(chc)

"Ontario Housing Corporation(O.H.C) regulations allow a mother with a son 2 bedrooms but a mother with a daughter only 1 bedroom." (dcc,rpssm,trc)

City Hall-
nobody in; they are there but nobody is listening (sist)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"workers in such agencies talked to us as if we were people and not objects."(dcc)

-review and change i.e. reduce rules to allow clients more judgement, even at the risk of misuse.

-"planners as part of their training had to live with a child for a day."(tabl)

- regularly scheduled feedback to all agencies from those "served" by them.

- agency staffs to live the life of their clients for a certain time.

- clients shared in shaping rules and policies which will affect them in such agencies as O.H.C., Family Benefits Allowance, General Welfare Assistance and Metro Housing Company and Authority.

-"I call a housing or government agency and there was a friendly and understanding person on the other end."(dcc)

-"people living in public housing were able to complain about such things without being afraid of loosing their place." (dcc)

concerns:

"Family Benefits Allowance (F.B.A.) - you shouldn't have to identify the father if you are pregnant. The F.B.A. is too nosey. F.B.A. workers shouldn't have the right to ask you personal questions such as when you slept last with a man." (rpssm)

"It's very hard to get out of the F.B.A. dependence. A woman is allowed to earn $140 + $25 per child; she is allowed $250 incentive grant to cover clothing. Yet very few know about this. Once she starts earning she is cut off from the Ontario Hospital Insurance Plan (O.H.I.P.), free drugs, glasses and daycare which is a very substantial loss in security." (dcc,rpssm,foc)

"If you end up on unemployment and welfare you have to go out every day looking for work regardless of emergencies among children."(rpssm)

"I find the system is self-defeating; you get very little help from the people who can help you; I am sad to say that women are the ones who screw women."(dcc)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"F.B.A. was fully indexed." (rpssm)

-"you did not need to prosecute your husband in order to get F.B.A."(rpssm)

-"you could take the programs leading out of F.B.A. dependency on a part-time basis."(dcc)

"In our area it was originally all single family homes. When our son got married we were told that we couldn't have him live in the basement at the time; but if it was our daughter who got married it would be o.k. because her name would be different."(sc)

coping with humiliation

concerns:

"I had a worker who laughed at me when I told her I was about to be evicted; and when I asked her what I could do if there was a screw-up in the computer the folowing month, she laughed and said:'I guess you start over in the hostel.'"(sist)

"The landlords come and snoop around while you are out or knock at your door when you are in. They can do anything they like with you. They impose curfews on you. I got told off for coming home late one day because I was working."(sist)

"People stigmatize Metro Housing. They drive by and point their fingers and label the area. Ontario Housing Pouts all the poor together; it keeps them poor with little facilities." (dcc,foc,jfw,spsp)

"I am a master student at U. of T. (University of Toronto); but a year ago last June I jumped in front of the subway. I was depresed and menopausal, but I was not mad. Yet the people around me treat me as if I were mad and this makes me angry." (sist)

"I think in all these issues the crux is that we want a choice." (stc,jfw)

"wouldn't it be nice if we lived in places that felt like a home environment + not a temporary living space; people just don't feel settled down." (jfw)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"if battered women had the right to kick out the man who batters them."(eel)

-"a lot more women were able to develop leadership skills to get out of this log of passivity that's so common among women, unfortunately. Wouldn't it be nice if we could develop the self-esteem necessary to do it."(sc)

"The only thing that would help is the ability to defend ourselves."(sist2)

-"O.H.C. maintained our project better; (rpssm,jfw,dcc) balcony doors need to be double glazed, wndows fixed, weatherproofing is needed."(rpssm)

-"wouldn't it be nice if people living in public housing were able to complain about such things without being afraid of losing their place."(dcc)

-"they subsidized you wherever you are not where they want you to go."(spsp)

-"every block had a certain percentage of subsidized housing and these units would not look any different."(trc,rpssm)

-"there was no abuse - emotional, sexual, verbal - (iwd 10 year old)

coping with hostel rules

concerns:

"The family hostel on Spadina forces you to go outside with young children, unless you can provide a doctor's certificate that they need stay inside; and at that they are expected to sit quiet all day. They can't have the T.V. on, yet there is absolutely nothing for them to do, and they wouldn't even let me do laundry... It is very difficult to find an apartment or a job when you have to take your children with you everywhere... You have to fill in sheets that you have investigated 10 apartments and jobs; but you are not provided with money for bus fares or telephone calls... Welfare workers are not allowed to visit you in the hostel... You can't get welfare while in a hostel so you can't make a deposit for a room or apartment. In today's rental market this tends to create a catch 22... You are only allowed to stay two weeks...unless you suck up to staff."(sist2)

" if we had more homes not domes"

wouldn't it be nice if...

HOSTELS:
-"were smaller,(eel)
-"had floors for men and floors for women;
-"had a roof for sitting outside;
-"had smoking only in designated areas;
-"allowed pets;
-"had rules made by those living there;
-"had a lobby for visitors, socializing and for welfare workers to come to;
-"had an eating and cooking place;
-"were places where chores could be shared according to skill;
"where places where you could stay for more then 2 weeks, up to 6 to 12 months, as long as is needed to get permanently settled;
-"were near downtown where there are benches and stores;
-"near a learning place or with a learning room inside;
-"had childcare;"(sist1,2,nat)

if the community provided more permanent housing with support services, so that fewer hostels were needed; and women now in hostels had an input in shaping housing.

coping with 40 hour workweek

concerns:

"Flexibility from the 8-hour workday is required for both men and women. It desensitizes men from family life while making women prisonners of it."(sc)

"The services are all closed in terms of doctors, post offices after five o'clock; so if you have to do something you have to use your work time... I know that people have lost jobs over this." (ch1)

wouldn't it be nice if...

-"jobs were more flexible and men could work part time so couples could do time sharing, be parents and work too. Somehow a woman should be able to work and be mother too."(eel)

-"there were more options in terms of permanent parti-time and worksharing."(ch1,twt)

-"people were able to work part-time and still make a decent living of it."(fes)

-"there were more staggered work hours so that I wouldn't have to go to work in the rush hour." (eel)

-"couldn't City Hall in fact be open from 8 am to 10 pm, with two shifts and some flexibility about the way you arrange these shifts."(ch2)

-"services had more flexible hours."(ch1)

-"more doctors made home visits."(sc)

-"groceries were delivered to our door."(sc,twt,ch1)

-"Telidon was designed for consumer not only service needs."(ch2)

Planning Implications of Women Plan Toronto

by Regula Modlich, MCIP

Plan Canada. JULY 1988

Introduction

As a group, women have their own particular needs with respect to the environment in which they life. What are these needs? How can they be addressed? These were the questions that prompted the formation, in May 1985, of *Women Plan Toronto* (WPT) - a qualitative research project to explore how women feel about the urban environments in which they live, work, raise children and grow old.

WPT did not start out as a typical participatory research project, where a grassroots group identifies the issues and provides the initial momentum. Instead, it was initiated and sponsored by Women in/and Planning, a Toronto based group of urban planning, design and service professionals. The group modeled WPT after Women Plan London (England), described in Women and Environments.[1] WPT is funded by both the Ontario Women's Directorate and the Secretary of State, with office space being provided by the City of Toronto Planning and Development Department.

An increasingly broad and non-professional group of women is now starting to direct and share in the ongoing activities of the project. Community women have started to approach the group with issues and action ideas. With the support of WPT, more women are conducting investigations, preparing submissions and helping build awareness, expertise and confidence.

This paper links the issues raised by women, during WPT research sessions, with urban planning. WPT 's publication, entitled: *Women Plan Toronto - Shared Experiences and Dreams*[2] lists both the issues and the ideas of 25 diverse women's groups in Metropolitan Toronto. Analyzing these issues, in terms of planning, raised questions about such fundamental practices as land use based planning. These are discussed in the first part of the article. The second section deals with two important aspects of the planning process: social research and public participation. Finally, the article focuses on housing, transportation and urban design - three particularly relevant planning areas for women.

Land Use Planning

Current municipal planning is still largely based on land use planning, and is rooted in the social, economic and technological realities of the 1950s. At that time, it seems, the ideal plan provided garden cities or suburbs where women were full-time wives and mothers. Downtown was where men and single women were employed. Mothers would go downtown to have their babies, and to do their Christmas shopping. There was no need for social agencies in suburbs, because everybody was happy, prosperous and busy. Older more integrated cities were considered unfortunate anachronisms, which needed to be recreated in the image of the suburban ideal. Urban renewal, and elimination of strip commercial and non-conforming land use designations, were just a few of the tools to remove anything that disturbed the uniformity of the scenery, or the real estate values.

Needless to say, social realities and expectations have drastically changed. Indeed, it is questionable if the above picture ever transcended a simplistic myth. Today's women told us:

- My problem is loneliness.(Sessions with Delta Child Care, North York, East African Women's group in Thorncliffe, Italian Women's group in Rexdale)
- Women feel very isolated because neighbours are going out to work, and so you'll go three or four houses on either side and there is nobody home all day. (Scarborough Session)
- The distances are too great. For a stranger it looks nice, the grass and trees and all that, but the consequences are that things are not accessible. (Session with Jane Finch Community Workers)

• Many of these things weren't a big problem until we had specialized areas of work like the downtown core and housing on the periphery. (Session with City Hall employees)

They said:

• Wouldn't it be nice if I could live and work and shop in the same community? (International Women's Day comment)

• Wouldn't it be nice if all Metro residents could have a feeling that they were part of a community? (Delta Child Care session)

Planning which aims to segregate land uses maximizes distances and minimizes access to social, economic and community foci. We need to ask ourselves, today, if rigidly defined land use categories, densities, set-backs and design controls remain relevant and meaningful planning tools. Interestingly, in many rural areas, the agricultural planning and zoning designation includes what urban planners would consider totally incompatible activities: residential, industrial and commercial. Should, and indeed could not, planning be based on criteria evaluating ways or quality of life, economic impact, sense of community, accessibility, protection of the natural environment and aesthetics.

In different parts of cities, some of these criteria could be defined and weighed differently, relating to the needs of local communities. Priorities could be frequently and openly revised through the political process. Planners would assist with information gathering, analysis and distribution. They would also facilitate the communication and problem solving processes, and help to implement the resulting planning policies.

For example, someone wants to run a workshop or store in a currently residential neighbourhood, or to add several apartments over a commercial plaza. The local community could evaluate such a proposal based on their own community criteria. These would likely include economic benefits to various groups in the community (including the owner), effects on housing, traffic, the environment and quality of life, while recognizing constraints such as the capacities of sewers, roads and watermains. With today's technology, it should be feasible to work with such values and criteria. Nonetheless, local plans and changes would have to be consistent with the values and goals set out in city-wide official plans and human rights codes, to guard against discriminatory or protectionist policies.

Planning for quality of life requires that social and physical planning be integrated. The Planning Act of Ontario states:

> "official plan" means a document approved by the Minister, containing objectives and policies established primarily to provide guidance for the physical development of a municipality or a part thereof or an area that is without municipal organization *while having regard to relevant social, economic and environmental matters*; (emphasis added by author).[3]

While the sections of Ontario's Official Plan, dealing with economic and environmental matters, have received Ministerial approval, sections dealing with social matters have been deleted. This interpretation of the Act has caused serious social service problems in many suburban communities, as described in *Metro's Suburbs in Transition*.[4] The separate existence and operation of municipal social planning agencies, without strong and ongoing links to municipal physical planning bodies, almost certainly precludes optimal supply, location and accessibility when services finally are provided. Planning the physical bases of our communities' social support systems needs to be legitimized. This does not even require a change in the Planning Act, but only a reinterpretation by its bureaucratic guardians. Planners have working ratios for retail or open space areas per thousand population, yet they do not have such ratios for pre-school child care spaces or social service requirements. Why can't there be a working formula for the number of child care spaces per thousand population, or a "community space dedication" in commercial projects to provide space for social services and indoor recreation?

This approach would certainly affect planning and zoning as we now know. Yet, goals, objectives and policies expressed in official plans would take on far more significance. Is this not where priority is meant to be in the first place?

Planning Processes

Social research, surveys and public participation are important components of planning. The Women Plan Toronto research contains some relevant insights.

Social Research

Social information gathering still strives to apply the same "scientific" and "objective" data collection methods as chemical lab tests. Such statistics and data often become either too general of too specific to be useful. Questionnaires are frequently developed by persons with very different backgrounds from those to be surveyed. They can miss unique and/or critical factors in a group, and thus fail to lead to an optimal solution.

Here, qualitative and participatory research can fill an important gap. As community development is becoming an increasingly important focus of community planning, the theory and practice of participatory research will become more relevant. Budd Hall defines participatory research as:

> a method of social investigation involving the full participation of the community; it is an educational process; and it is a means of taking action for development.[5]

Qualitative research recognizes the validity of individual statements made in group sessions, especially where these were shared and supplemented by others in the group. In this respect, Women Plan Toronto is an example of qualitative research. During the casual free-flowing process of our participatory research sessions, women were on their own turf with others they knew and/or felt comfortable with. As a first step, the women were asked to draw the community they experienced during a typical week, and to note those aspects which satisfied, and those which frustrated, them.

During the next step, each woman shared her impressions with the group. The sessions culminated with "wouldn't it be nice if..." ideas as positive reflections of the women's aspirations for solutions and change. Thus, the women had the opportunity to first visualize and examine their environment for themselves, and then compare notes with others before being invited to comment and suggest changes.

After the first woman ventured an opinion, others joined in with related comments, releasing a wonderfully supportive and creative process. Many women realized, for the first time, that they were not alone with their experiences, concerns and aspirations concerning their environments. This process generated important insights, not only for the data collection or survey stage of planning but, as can be seen later, *towards solutions*. The community needs identified in this way differed greatly from those generated at ratepayer or legally required public meetings, in which residents respond to proposed changes, or to a specific issue, strictly within conventional parameters.

Public Participation

The following are voices recorded during *Women Plan Toronto* meetings; they are still rarely heard at public meetings concerned with planning:

- City Hall- nobody in; they are there but nobody is listening. (Session with Sistering, a drop-in Centre for homeless, hostel and rooming house women.)
- I do like to be asked about what we are looking for. Who would ever ask us any other time in our life. It is difficult to get into that frame of mind to be able to speak freely, and after this I have to go back into that other world again and I have to go back and forget about all I have dreamed today. (new Canadian with Delta Childcare session)
- Metro (Metro Housing Authority) treats us not like human beings, but like pigs. (Session with Regent Park Sole Support Mothers)
- Wouldn't it be nice if planners, as part of their training, had to live with a child for a day?(Take-A-Break mothers' group)

A sense of alienation from the processes and decisions affecting their lives emanates from these statements. These women lack not only information, but also confidence in their own concerns, ideas and strengths.

Traditionally, there have been two avenues for planners to relate to their "public." First, there is the well-trodden road based on legal requirements in planning acts and other laws ensuring the public their "democratic" right to be informed and consulted. These processes are based on communication patterns and technology which are fifty years out of date. We therefore still have announcements like Figure 1 from the Globe and Mail (actual size illustration).

If you want to know what is going on you have to be able to decode the small type, planning jargon and frequently very poor and small-scale reproductions of maps. In other words, you have got to be highly literate, preferably a lawyer, planner or surveyor, and have a microscope, an English background, and of course the mobility, money and/or library to get a newspaper. Predictably, the "public response" is limited primarily to those in the field, professionals, developers and property owners reacting to any change which might affect their vested interests. Ironically, this is traditionally perceived as the only "representative" and valid public consultation.

The second form of citizen' participation has somewhat subsided since the sixties. In Toronto, those were the days of advocacy planners, with citizen - planner working committees meeting until midnight in local community centres and site-offices rather than in City Hall. Unfortunately, few of these experiences were felt to be sufficiently important to merit incorporation into the revisions of the Ontario Planning Act (R.S.O., 1983).

The participatory research process described above could supplement the existing public input into planning and relate to groups who have so far not participated, or who have participated only through others speaking on their behalf. This process can reach not only women but many ethnic, age and other subgroups in society. First, however, the legitimacy and therefore responsibility for seeking such input has to be more widely accepted.

There are precedents of planning for specific user groups. In the Netherlands, ad hoc groups of women, similar to the status of women advisory bodies here, consult various national and local departments, including planning, on issues concerning women.[6] In Great Britain, based on the work of Women Plan London, several London Boroughs are hiring "women co-ordinators" into their planning departments.[7] These planners are specifically hired to ensure that the needs of women are considered in the Boroughs' ongoing planning work.

Closer to home, the City of Toronto Planning Department is also responding to different subgroups. One planner scrutinizes plans to ensure the needs of people with disabilities are met, another planner works on the needs of cyclists and two more facilitate the provision of workplace child care. Planning departments can thus hire or train staff to bridge the gaps between planning and those subgroups who have so far not been sufficiently recognized in planning decisions and processes.

figure 1:

Ontario

O 870073 O 870095
O 870074 O 870077
Z 870034 M 870084

Ontario Municipal Board
Commission des affaires municipales de l'Ontario

IN THE MATTER OF Section 17(11) of the Planning Act, 1983

AND IN THE MATTER OF a referral to this Board by the Honourable Bernard Grandmaitre, Minister of Municipal Affairs, on a request by T. W. Pellew, Bob Yuill, Albert Wm. Coles, William Campbell and others for consideration of Amendment No. 277 to the Official Plan for the City of North York, Minister's File No. 20-OP-4011-277, O.M.B. File No. O 870073

AND IN THE MATTER OF a referral to this Board by the Honourable Bernard Grandmaitre, Minister of Municipal Affairs, on a request by Mr. and Mrs. Albert Wm. Coles for consideration of the following portions of Amendment No. 269 to the Official Plan for the City of North York, Clauses 1 to 6 inclusive; Definition of "Collector Roads" Item 8, Clause 1; Item 9, Clauses 1 and 2, Section 3. Road Network, 3.1.0, 3.2.0, 3.2.1, 3.2.2, Section 4.1.0 Transit, 4.2.0, 4.3.0, 4.4.2, 4.4.3, Section 6. Parking, 6.1.0, 6.2.0, Section 6.5.0. Yonge Street Centre Area, Section 8. Highway Widenings to be Acquired through Site Plan Control 8.1.0, 8.2.0, Table AP-1 Typical Standards Applicable to Road Classification Map C.7.1

AND A REQUEST BY Mr. T. W. Pellew for consideration of the following portions of Amendment No. 269, Clause 1 Section 3.2.1; and Map C.7.1

AND A REQUEST BY Concerned Citizens for Civic Affairs in North York Inc. for consideration of the following portions of Amendment No. 269 to the Official Plan for the City of North York, Section 1.6.0; Section 2.6.0; Section 3.2.0; Section 7.1.0; Table AP-1 and Map C.7.1

AND A REQUEST BY Mr. J. E. Dovoston and Miss Ebelitie M. Davids and Mrs. Amegien Davids for consideration of Amendment No. 269 in its entirety, to the Official Plan for the City of North York. Minister's File No. 20-OP-4000-269 O.M.B. File No. O 870095

AND IN THE MATTER OF a referral to this Board by the Honourable Bernard Grandmaitre, Minister of Municipal Affairs, on a request by Concerned Citizens for Civic Affairs in North York Inc. for consideration of Amendment No. 280 to the Official Plan for the City of North York, Minister's File No. 20-OP-4011-280 O.M.B. File No. O 870074

AND IN THE MATTER OF Section 22 of the Planning Act, 1983

AND IN THE MATTER OF a referral to this Board by the Honourable Bernard Grandmaitre, Minister of Municipal Affairs, on a request by North American Life Assurance Company for consideration of an application to amend the existing Yonge Street Centre Area Plan (amendment D-11-48) of the City of North York by redesignating the properties located on the south side of Byng Avenue and the North Side of Church Avenue from "Residential Density One" to "Yonge Street Commercial/Residential" to permit the expansion of the shopping centre site. Minister's File No. 20-OP-4000-A64, O.M.B. File No. O 870077

AND IN THE MATTER OF Section 34(11) of the Planning Act, 1983

AND IN THE MATTER OF an appeal to this Board by North American Life American Assurance Company Limited for an order amending By-law 7625, as amended, of the City of North York, to change from C4 (Restricted Commercial) and R4 (One-Family Detached Dwelling) to C3 (District Shopping Centre) the permitted use of lands on the east side of Yonge Street between Byng Avenue and Church Avenue, to permit the redevelopment of the Northtown Shopping Centre site with an enclosed two-level shopping mall, including two department stores and a supermarket. O.M.B. File No. Z 870034

AND IN THE MATTER OF Section 40(12) of the Planning Act (R.S.O. 1983)

AND IN THE MATTER OF an appeal by North American Life Assurance Company to settle the terms and conditions of a site plan with respect to the development of a two-storey shopping centre with associated service areas and parking on lands comprising part of Lot 19, Concession 1, in the City of North York and known municipally as 5385 Yonge Street. O.M.B. File No. M 870084

APPOINTMENT FOR MOTION

THE ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD hereby appoints the 27th day of October, 1987, at the hour of ten o'clock (local time) in the forenoon at the Board's Chambers, 180 Dundas Street West (8th Floor), Toronto, for the hearing of all persons in respect of a motion for directions concerning the above matters

If you do not attend and are not represented at this motion, the Board may proceed in your absence and you will not be entitled to any further notice of the proceedings.

DATED at Toronto this 5th day of October, 1987.

J. G. MALCOLM
SECRETARY

EXPLANATORY NOTE

Official Plan Amendment 277 O.M.B. File O 870073

Amendment No. 277 proposes to establish revised official plan policies to guide development in North York Yonge Street Centre Area. It extends along Yonge Street from Highway 401 to Cummer/Drewry Avenues north of Finch Avenue. There are two separate areas: the Downtown (focused on the Sheppard and North York Centre subway stations) and the Uptown (focused on the Finch subway station).

The amendment adds three new parts to the official Plan as follows: Part D.1: General Concept and depictions for the Downtown and Uptown Areas; Part D.2: Downtown Plan; Part D.3: Uptown Study Area

Part D.2 contains a revised set of density and other development policies for the Downtown. Part D.3 contains provisions guiding Official Plan and Zoning Amendments during a further period of review of the policies for this area.

Official Plan Amendment 269 — Transportation Policy

Official Plan Amendment 269 O.M.B. File O 870095

Amendment No. 269 proposes to replace the existing transportation policy as contained in the present Official Plan with a new transportation policy. In addition, the Major and Minor Transportation and Utilities category is deleted and replaced with a new Public Utility (P.U.T.) District, and the classifications of all roads in North York are now identified on a new map C.7.1. Transportation.

Official Plan Amendment 280 O.M.B. File O 870074

Amendment No. 280 proposes to modify North York Official Plan Amendment No. 277 (above) by establishing surface and underground pedestrian routes in the downtown area. The amendment establishes the Yonge Street sidewalks as the principal surface pedestrian routes and provides for the widening of the boulevards to accommodate these sidewalks.

The amendment also deals with other related matters including the relationship of retail uses to pedestrian routes and the encouragement of comprehensive development in particular locations to facilitate the implementation of the pedestrian route system.

The amendment would also insert a new policy on comprehensive development as a means of ensuring that the necessary road allowance is dedicated along the west side of Doris Avenue for the Downtown collector road.

Proposed Official Plan Amendment A64 O.M.B. File O 870077

Amendment A64 proposes to redesignate certain lands bounded by Yonge Street, Byng Avenue, Kenneth Avenue and Church Street, Yonge Centre Commercial/Residential. The amendment would permit the rounding-out of the Northtown Shopping Centre site in conjunction with a proposal to redevelop the site with an enclosed shopping mall.

Proposed Amendment to Zoning By-Law 7625 O.M.B. File Z 870034

The proposed by-law applies to lands on the east side of Yonge Street, between Byng Avenue and Church Avenue. The majority of the subject lands are curently zoned C4 (Restricted Commercial) by by-law 7625 as amended. The remainder of the subject lands are zoned R4 (One-Family Detached Dwelling) by by-law 7625 as amended.

The proposed by-law will rezone the subject land to C3 (District Shopping Centre), subject to a number of site specific provisions regarding gross floor area, coverage, setbacks and parking. The purpose of the rezoning is to permit the redevelopment of the Northtown Shopping Centre site with an enclosed two-level shopping mall, including two department stores and a supermarket.

Appeal by North American Life Assurance Company — O.M.B. File M 870084

To settle the terms and conditions of a site plan with respect to the development of a two-storey shopping centre with associated service areas and parking, known as the Northtown Shopping Centre site.

THE PURPOSE OF THE MOTION IS TO CONSIDER PROCEDURAL ASPECTS RELATING TO THE ABOVE MATTERS. IT IS NOT INTENDED TO LEAD EVIDENCE AS TO THE MERITS OF THE MATTERS. A SUBSEQUENT HEARING OR HEARINGS WILL BE SCHEDULED BY THE ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD FOR THE PURPOSE OF DETAILED CONSIDERATION OF THE VARIOUS MATTERS, AND NOTICE OF ALL SUBSEQUENT HEARINGS WILL BE PUBLISHED. FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT THE CITY OF NORTH YORK PLANNING DEPARTMENT (224-6126) AND ASK FOR MR. YOUNG, MRS. LAMBE OR MRS. BIESMA. WITH REGARD TO THE APPEALS BY THE NORTH AMERICAN LIFE ASSURANCE COMPANY, INFORMATION IS ALSO AVAILABLE FROM MR. CHEESEMAN, WEIR AND FOULDS, BARRISTERS & SOLICITORS (365 1110)

Implication For Specific Planning Areas

The following planning areas emerged as particularly relevant to the issues women raised in the WPT participatory research project.

Housing

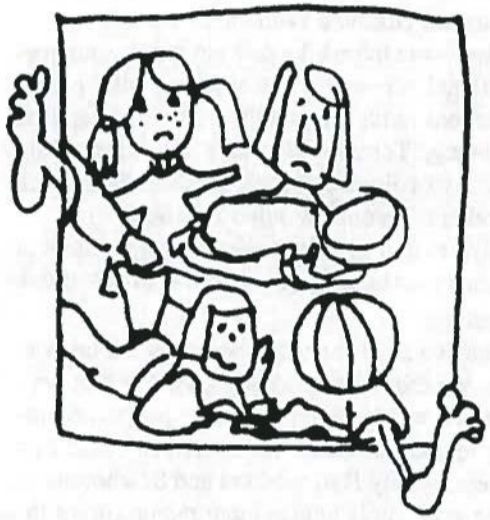
Women's comments on housing reflect both their aspirations and desperation concerning this issue.

- Good housing is a fundamental first step enabling an individual or family to pull itself out of a low. (Session with Constance Hamilton Co-op)
- Wouldn't it be nice if there were more understanding of the housing needs, not only of seniors but of all special segments ot society? (Session with St. Clair Community and Disabled Women's Network)
- Wouldn't it be nice if the need for a women's own space was more widely respected both in private and subsidized housing? (Session with the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre)

The right to shelter, let alone the right to decent and appropriate housing remains elusive. *The commonly accepted guideline that housing should not absorb more then 25 percent of an average household's income is becoming an unattainable hope for the vast majority of the population, and particularly for women led households with their substantially lower average incomes.*

The public commitment to housing is still seen as a temporary, fluid and minimal supplement of the market, which is expected to meet all housing needs. All three levels of government are devising ever more complex programs with ever more cumbersome bureaucracies to assist the market to fulfil this expectation. Yet, it is becoming increasingly obvious that only co-operative and private or public non-profit agencies can provide decent, secure and affordable housing for the majority of households who no longer can afford to buy a home. It will take a vastly increased scope and funding of these agencies to alleviate the housing crisis.

The "goals and objectives" sections of official plans



provide an excellent opportunity to state the goal of affordable and decent housing for all. Policy, housing and municipal planners need to refine these goals, and to develop strategies for implementation. Detailed or area plans can then outline specific guidelines for location, types, phasing and numbers of affordable units within the context of a balanced housing supply in each community.

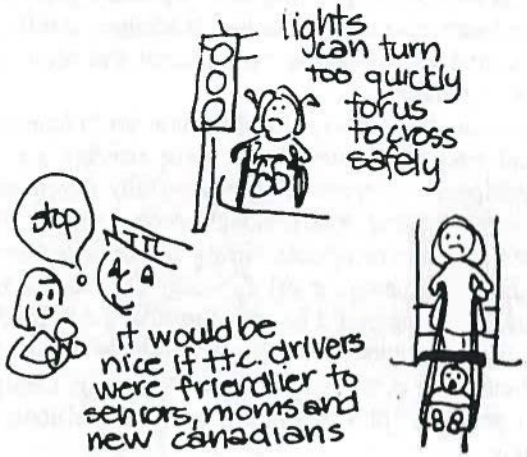
Non-profit housing can range anywhere from hostels to co-ops, from public family housing to group homes, and from subsidized rental apartments for handicapped to emergency shelters for battered women. As with the group home policy, the requirement for a balanced housing policy has to be province-wide. Only in this way would all communities have to comply - the Parkdales as well as the Erindales. Municipal planning and/or housing staff would be responsible for implementing the housing policies. As part of the periodic planning review process, planners would also reassess the housing guidelines to reflect the continually changing composition and needs in each community.

There are several ways in which non-profit housing could become economically more feasible for a municipality. A community with a fully developed balanced housing policy should become eligible for federal and provincial cost sharing for site acquisition, similar to urban renewal funding. Developers of market housing could be asked to give a non-profit housing dedication, either in sites, units or payments in lieu at the discretion of the municipality. Lastly, non-profit should be eligible for a meaningful density bonus.

Advertising images, which are unrealistic for most people, and cumbersome zoning constraints have guided the North American housing industry. For example, there are detailed parking requirements for all types of housing, yet there is not a word about the provision and location of laundry facilities and storage for baby carriages, trikes and bikes, let alone wheel chair ramps. Landscaped open spaces reflect more what looks good on models and blueprints than what is appropriate for children, or what ensures a sense of safety for women.

More quantitative and qualitative data on actual user needs have and can be obtained with today's technology. Such information could provide better insight into the needs of special user groups. Relatively little is known about the locational, design and income constraints of households with seniors, single and co-parenting, handicapped, immigrant, ex-psychiatric patient, three-generation or dual-career members. Cluster size, integration of different households and the relation to other urban functions needs more research and innovation.

Public housing agencies and shelters use management patterns and rules which seem to be remnants of a patronizing if not penalizing era. All tenants, especially those in non-profit housing, would greatly benefit from the skills and confidence building experience of co-op management.



Transportation

The private car is still the most important factor in transportation planning, despite the limits in energy supply, increased traffic congestion, travelling time, cost and environmental damage. Public transit authorities are reluctant to commit their resources much beyond their traditional mandate of moving wage-earners to and from downtown during rush hours, while trying to cover operating expenses through fare collection. The women spoke of the many hardships these policies bring with them:

- I can't really get anywhere without a fifteen minute car drive. My home, my recreation and my office are spread out and they are all a car drive apart. (Scarborough session)
- Planners felt: 'we'll have main streets for cars and the rest are going to just be people streets,' not realizing that these long curving streets make distances too long to walk. (Scarborough Session)
- I walk from Lansdowne to here (3km) practically every day - we cannot get more than one token at a time. (Session with Sistering, drop-in center for homeless and rooming women)
- We are afraid of getting lost on the T.T.C...(Sessions with East African and Italian women's groups)

Wouldn't it be nice if...

- laws were made giving priority to pedestrians? (Session with St. Clair Community, and comment during 1986 International Women's Day)
- transit were fully wheelchair accessible? (Session with Disabled Women's Network)
- there were more bike paths in the city, not recreational bike paths but working bike paths? (sessions with City Hall workers, East End Literacy, Toronto Women's Breakfast Club, Faculty of Environmental Studies, Jane Finch Workers, Toronto Women Teachers)
- drivers had to help mothers with strollers in getting onto buses or streetcars? (Take-A-Break Sessions)
- transit were free and supported by our taxes so that we didn't have to pay fares? If that happened it would be supported by people according to their incomes. (Sessions with East End Literacy, City Hall workers and Scarborough).

These statements indicate that major groups in our communities have not been properly considered when public and private transportation decisions were made. As these groups are restricted in their mobility, their ability to participate in the decision-making processes affecting their lives and environments is curtailed, resulting in a most stressful "catch 22" situation.

Most of the "wouldn't it be nice if, ideas" are not beyond our technical or financial capacity. Indeed, many of the women's suggestions are effectively operating in other cities around the world:

- steps and sidewalk edges delineated with glowing white
- beeping pedestrian signals
- meaningful fare reductions or passes for economically needy, including multi-stop day passes
- better provisions for bicycling, especially bike lanes,
- larger lettering on street and traffic signs
- a two-way communication system, possibly public telephone system
- phones at transit stops
- transit information service in the languages of major immigrant groups

(for a more detailed list refer to the Women Plan Toronto Report)

New systems can incorporate such suggestions, including full accessibility for handicapped, more cost effectively and efficiently than retrofitting later on.

More than men, women need *publicly accessible washrooms*. This applies especially to women who are pregnant, with children, or elderly. *All 25 groups* raised this problem - one of the very few gender specific ones.

- I ran all the way to Woodgreen Community Centre to go to the washroom. (Session with Sistering)
- You either have to change your kid in the sink or on the gross floor, or carry a poopy kid around with you all day. (Sessions with East End Literacy, Take-A-Break Groups, City Hall)
- Both public and semi-public (restaurants, offices and theatres) washrooms for women have fewer spaces in poorer locations than those for men. This is in spite of the fact that women tend to require such facilities more frequently than men. (Session with Constance Hamilton Co-op)

Wouldn't it be nice if...

- there were more public washrooms in general? (all 25 group sessions)
- there were washrooms for children with and without parents with seats which are the right size for children? (Sessions with Take-A-Break Groups, Constance Hamilton Co-op)
- washrooms had counters and diaper dispens-

"I like going by bike; it's not costing me anything." (s1st)

ers, and a couch or chair for relaxing or feeding a baby? (Sessions with East End Literacy, Take-A-Break Groups, Ryerson)

In terms of transportation planning, these comments and suggestions substantiate the need for more gender and user (and for that matter, non-user) specific feedback. In this way, a far more finely tuned and flexible transportation system could evolve. Again, maximizing accessibility for all sectors of a community would appear to be a legitimate goal for inclusion in an official plan.

Although the Toronto Transit Commission firmly asserts "we are not a social welfare agency," all social costs and benefits should have to be considered when improvements and changes to transportation systems are evaluated. The real cost of stress, isolation and immobility, in terms of mental, emotional and economic suffering amongst many dependent or deprived groups is likely staggering. Subsidizing the fare box may well prove to be a cost effective investment in the broader social context. As C. Weir stated : "We have to remember that it all comes out of one pocket or another from one common public purse."[8]

Urban Design

Urban Design seems to be the product of the aesthetic talents of individual project architects, local official plans and zoning by-laws, the limited scope of site plan controls and some unofficial negotiations. Conscious and explicit design goals and policies tend to be missing. The sense of well-being and safety which an urban environment generates, especially for women, children or any one else, is still largely left to chance.

Complex social, psychological, economic and moral factors determine crime and the fear of it. Urban and transportation design, land use and density regulations create a street life which can either transmit a sense of welcome safety and community, or intimidation, alienation, and fear. This fear of sexual and/or physical assault and robbery severely restricts women and children in many areas of our communities, especially after dark.

• It's dangerous to walk around at night. (Sessions with the Faculty of Environmental Studies, Focus on Change, Toronto businesswomen, Take-A-Break groups and Sistering)

• I don't like to have to feel my stomach clench every time I walk home. (Session with the Faculty of Environmental Studies)

• Public places are men's spaces at night...Shopping malls are men's. A lot of women are picked up in malls and then taken to cars or outside... (Session with the Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, Sistering)

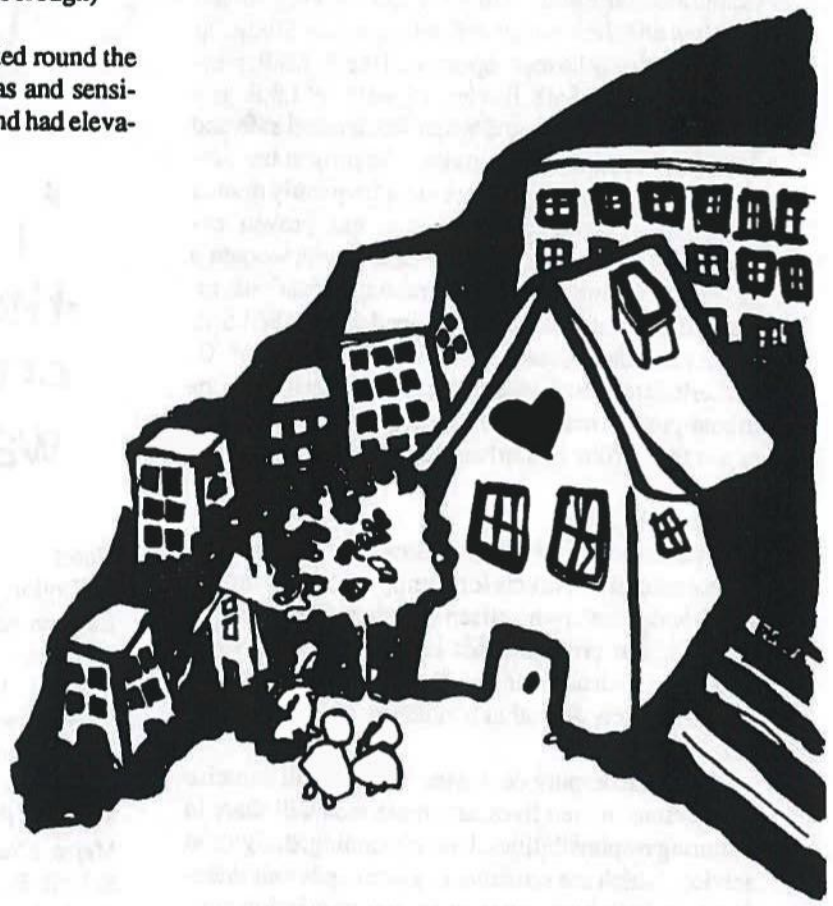
• Bus shelters which have only one entrance are real traps. (Sessions with Toronto Rape Crisis, St. Clair Community Centre, Scarborough)

Wouldn't it be nice if...

• underground garages were guarded round the clock, possibly with video cameras and sensitive sound and listening devices, and had elevators with windows which allowed for full visibility both into the elevator and over the parking area? (session with the Faculty of Environmental Studies)

• there were better all night transit? (Sessions in City Hall and Scarborough)

• there were parks you could walk in at night? (Sessions with students from Central Commerce, East End Literacy, Toronto Rape Crisis Centre, Fac. of Env. Studies.)



In all our group sessions, *safety was a major focus of women's comments and suggestions.* Visibility, familiarity, light, clarity of design, potential escape and/or access to help were felt to project a sense of safety. Urban design should therefore avoid obscuring plantings, niches or places which could harbour an assailant, especially in dark and deserted areas. People who are perceived as potential help include residents within seeing and hearing distance, police, and other pedestrians with whom one can identify either by gender or appearance.

Systematic research is still in its infancy. Women Plan Toronto, together with the Metro Action Committee on Public Violence against Women and Children and the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University have co-sponsored the W.I.S.E. project (Women In Safe Environments).[9] W.I.S.E. has identified why, where and when women feel safe and unsafe in Metropolitan Toronto. The project has prepared a video depicting the six most frequently quoted "frightening scenarios." The tape has proven extremely effective in further discussions with women's groups. Planning and design recommendations remain still to be developed. It is hoped that the W.I.S.E. project and the research of York University Prof. G. Wekerle into actual sites of sexual assaults will contribute greater understanding of the relationship between fear, crime and urban design.

Conclusion

This article was aimed at illustrating that our cities are not neutral constructs for homogeneous communities. It was women who raised the issues in the Women Plan Toronto project. Most issues reflect problems associated with nurturing and homemaking roles, low incomes, safety and other handicaps, rather than gender.

As sex stereotyping decreases, women will exercise new options in their lives, and more men will share in nurturing responsibilities. Urban planning, design and services which are sensitive to these needs will therefore help both men and women, not to mention children.

The search for more appropriate planning opens questions about many processes and policies of our profession, including land use based planning. Can't we evolve planning processes and policies which do greater justice to our changing and diverse society?

"I think in all these issues the crux is that we want a choice."

Notes

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