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# The Oshawa Express

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## Mulcair returns to Oshawa

*NDP leader comes back to town days ahead of Oct. 19 election*

By Joel Wittnebel  
The Oshawa Express

With election day less than a week away, NDP leader Thomas Mulcair was back in Oshawa to drum up support for Oshawa candidate Mary Fowler.

"We've got the energy, we've got the team, we've got the plan to repair the damage done by Stephen Harper,"

Mulcair says.

*"We've got the plan to repair the damage done by Stephen Harper."*

Standing before a crowd of supporters out front of the General Motors Centre on Tuesday, Mulcair reiterated his campaign promises, one of the biggest relating to child care, and the plan create a million \$15-a-day child care spaces.

Mulcair also pushed his party's plan for infrastructure funding and once

again took the chance to attack Harper's role in the Trans-Pacific Partnership trade deal.

"We will stand up to Stephen Harper's secret trade deal," he said, claiming the trade deal between Canada, the U.S. and other Pacific Rim countries will kill jobs and lower wages for Canadians.

"Canada can, and should, have negotiated a better deal," he said to a crowd of supporters.

See NDP Page 3



Photo by Joel Wittnebel/The Oshawa Express

Raymond Fortune, center, stands with a group of other tenants outside their home at 275 Wentworth St. W. Fortune holds a stack of notices from the landlord for shutting off the building's water, of which 28 have been issued for the building in 2015. The tenants, who are appealing to the city for help, also complain of water leaks, mice, cockroach and bed bug infestations and are receiving no help from building management.

## Tenants standing up to absent landlord

By Joel Wittnebel  
The Oshawa Express

*"You can't put a bandage over a bullet hole."*

Raymond Fortune  
Tenant of  
275 Wentworth St. W.

Walking through the front doors of 275 Wentworth St. W., an aging apartment flanked by another apartment and a Beer Store, the stale smell of cigarettes, a tenant's cooking and pungent cleaning product mix in the air.

Despite the smell, the apartment is unassuming. A wall of silver mailboxes sits to the left and the dual elevators standing guard straight ahead.

It is only when one rises above the second floor that things start to deteriorate.

The elevator rises, then drops into place with a jolt that sends

stomachs bouncing.

The odour is worse up here and the linoleum floor is chipped in places and completely missing in large portions.

Paint is faded and drywall sags beneath water that has seeped through the ceiling. Plaster is slabbed over a portion of ceiling that previously collapsed.

These signs of disrepair are only the beginning of the neglect that has led to some of the worst living conditions in Oshawa.

Raymond Fortune, a tenant in the building, is looking to change that, giving back power to renters and banishing the mice and cockroaches that infest the apartment's

See "IT'S" Page 10

## Fowler's Twitter foul

NDP candidate says she accidentally favoured a tweet comparing Harper with Hitler

Page 3



## Former PM comes to town

Short-term leader John Turner comes to Oshawa to give support to Liberal candidate

Page 3

## Keeping the city healthy

A look at the medical department and procedure that Lakeridge is raising millions for

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## A goalie of two sports

UOIT athlete Rikki Lund makes the transition from ice hockey to lacrosse

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# Archaeology in Oshawa



Jennifer Weymark  
Archivist

Did you know that Oshawa has been the site of several archaeological excavations, two of which unearthed evidence about some of our earliest settlers?

The first archaeological excavation to happen in Oshawa began in the late 1960s, when evidence of an aboriginal settlement was unearthed on the property of Howard McLeod at the corner of Thornton and Rossland roads. The excavation was led by the University of Toronto and volunteers from the Oshawa Historical Society assisted with the actual digging. The items unearthed show that this was once the home to a Lake Ontario Iroquois village dating to about 1450 CE. The village consisted of approximately five longhouses that were surrounded by a high, protective wall called a palisade.

The second archaeological site related to aboriginal inhabitation was located at the corners of Taunton and Grandview Road North. This site, known as the Grandview Site, actually dates earlier than the McLeod site, as it was inhabited around 1400 CE. Much like the McLeod site, this was once

home to a large Lake Ontario Iroquois village. This village was larger, consisting of approximately 12 longhouses. Unlike the McLeod site, there was no palisade surrounding this village.

Combined, these two excavations tell us the story of Oshawa's earliest known settlers. Items unearthed show us that the people who lived here in 1400 CE were agriculturalists who grew maize, beans, sunflowers and tobacco. They were also hunters who relied heavily on deer and fish to provide necessary protein.

Combined, the two excavations unearthed more than 29,000 artifacts. The items excavated range from a variety of sizes of projectile points, pipes and pipe bowls and pottery shards. Several of the pottery shards are what show the relationship between the Grandview and McLeod sites. Pottery found at both sites has a very unique "slip" or glaze on them. These are the only two sites with this unique type of glaze and this shows that the people who settled at the Grandview site, moved to and settled at the McLeod site.

Oct 17 is International Archaeology Day. The Oshawa Community Museum is celebrating with an event highlighting the exciting information unearthed thanks to archaeology here in Oshawa.

# "It's been neglected and let go for so long"

## Tenants calling out landlord for lack of repairs despite complaints

TENANTS From Page 1  
walls.

"It's overwhelming and it's been neglected and let go for so long," Fortune says.

Living in the building for nearly a year now and taking care of his mother, Fortune says there have been 28 water shutoffs in that time, another of which occurred last week.

Complaints to management have gone unheeded, and according to Fortune, city bylaw officers have been to the building, but with only small fixes, nothing has changed.

"You can't put a bandage over a bullet hole," he says.

Fortune is not the first one to make note of the terrible conditions in the building either. Complaints riddle the Internet on business review sites, complaining of awful conditions, bug infestations and no changes, some of which date back to 2011.

The apartment's owner is listed as Rose Garden Apartments – when contacted by The Express, no comment was provided. The female also would not identify herself when asked and only said the message, "would be passed on to head office."

The Express also attempted to contact a number provided by the tenants that connects what is presumed to be the Rose Garden Apartments head office – however, requests for comment were not returned.

Calls to the city's bylaw department and requests for information regarding 275 Wentworth St. W. were not returned as of press time. The Oshawa Express has filed a request for this information through the city's clerks department.

A renter most of his life, Fortune says he has been taken advantage of at previous apartments, and now that he has studied up on this rights through the Residential Tenancies Act, he's looking to form one of the first tenant associations in Oshawa in 57 years.

Fortune says the education process is not there for tenants to learn what they can do



Submitted photo

Raymond Fortune, a resident of the apartments at 275 Wentworth St. W., says complaints to management about things such as bugs, like the one caught here, have gone ignored.

with absent landlords. He's looking to help with that and assist tenants in need, starting with his home building.

"You take two steps, and I'll take a million," Fortune says.

Fortune and other tenants will be appearing before the city's corporate services committee on Oct. 26 in an attempt to urge the city to take action.

The chair of corporate services, Councillor Amy England, says that while she can't speak directly to specific bylaw complaints, she wants the city to be more proactive when it comes to these types of complaints and perhaps start a project to go after these absentee landlords.

"We can't centre out one individual property, but I would like to see us be more proactive in terms of our bylaw enforcement and maybe start in the south end with making an example of absentee or slum landlords," she says.

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## Ask about KI pills

Residents curious about the distribution of potassium iodide (KI) pills will have an opportunity to ask some questions later this month.

The two sessions – Oct. 21 at the Clarington Beech Centre and Oct. 22 at the Pickering Nuclear Information Centre – are



open to the public and will have experts on hand from the region's health department.

"We realize that residents may have questions about the recent distribution of KI pills in the areas around the Darlington and Pickering Nuclear Generating Stations," states Ken Gorman, the director of environmental health for the region's health department, in a news release.

"As a result, two community information sessions have been scheduled to allow residents to meet with staff from both Durham Region and Ontario Power Generation to discuss any concerns."

Both sessions are set to run from 5 to 9 p.m.

For more information about the campaign, visit [prepartobesafe.ca](http://prepartobesafe.ca).

For additional information about the KI pills distribution program in Durham, please call the Environmental Help Line at (905) 723-3818 or 1-888-777-9613.



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# The Oshawa Express

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## Bidding for the leadership

Durham MP Erin O'Toole puts his name forward to be interim head of Conservatives

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## Delay on bus pass decision

University, college students have to wait until December to find out if prices will jump in coming years



Page 5

## Residents deserve refund

Councillor John Neal says Ontario residents deserve money back from province if Hydro One is sold

Page 10



## Gens perfect over weekend

Oshawa grabs wins at home and on the road; star Michael Dal Colle leaves game after blocking shot

Page 18



Photo by Joel Wittnebel/The Oshawa Express

Raymond Fortune, right, one of the founders of the tenant association at 275 Wentworth St. W. hands out details to councillors John Shields, Dan Carter and Doug Sanders who showed up to take a tour of the apartment. Councillor Amy England also attended the tour that took the councillors through all seven floors of the building.

## Are these Oshawa's slums?

By Joel Wittnebel  
 The Oshawa Express

*For Terry Glover, it's been two years and there's no getting away from the cockroaches. He collects the dead ones in a small tupperware container.*

*For Marie McPherson, there's no escape from the mice, the bugs and the broken appliances that never seem to get fixed.*

*For Robert Ellis, there's no escaping his diagnosis of bronchial asthma, which could have been brought about by a life lived inside a cockroach-infested apartment.*

*And for Sandra Manley, she's stuck in the apartment that caught fire earlier this year and left her with second and third degree burns on her legs and feet.*

*These are only a few of the tenants that spoke out to The Oshawa Express for this story, hoping a collective voice could be loud enough to reach those who don't seem to be listening – the building's owners.*

In the south end of Oshawa, a small cluster of unassuming apartment buildings are housing the tales and images of bug-infested apartments left in disrepair by landlords who either ignore the complaints of tenants or are simply deaf to them.

This story deals with buildings at 275 and 280 Wentworth St. W.

The owner of 275 Wentworth, who The Express has learned is Toronto-based landlord Arnold Litwin-Logan, could not be reached for comment and calls to the Toronto rental office went unanswered. The Express did contact the on-site landlord, Beverly Rittwage who provided details for this story.

The owners of 280 are Davpart Property Management. The company's website also lists residential properties at 1040 Cedar St. and 835 and 885 Oxford St. as part of their portfolio.

When contacted at their Toronto office, The Express was informed no comment would be provided for this story.

See **HORRIFIC** Page 4

## City bids for national skating tourney

By Joel Wittnebel  
 The Oshawa Express

Oshawa has thrown its name in the hat to host one of the country's largest skating competitions in 2017.

If awarded The Canadian Tire National Skating Championships, Oshawa could see the country's top figure skaters arrive in the city to compete at the General Motors Centre.

The event, organized by Skate Canada in collaboration with a local organizing committee, could see 500 participants flock to the arena.

But it won't come cheap.

If awarded, the city will be doling out \$120,000 for Skate

Canada's rental fees at the GM Centre for the length of the event. That sum consists of \$40,000 in rental fees for the ice pads, and \$80,000 to pay Spectra, the company the city uses to run the GM Centre, for staff, utilities, custodial services, the work to outfit the arena to Skate Canada specifications, including the painting of ice logos and removal of glass, posts and netting, among other items.

According to a city report, the GM Centre could net \$139,000 from the event in the way of about \$61,000 in ticket sales plus \$78,000 in food and beverages, leading to a possible profit of \$19,000.

See **EVENT** Page 17

“*There's a lot of things that come to bear that make our bid very attractive.*”

Vince Vella  
 General manager of  
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# Horrific conditions at Wentworth apartments

ARE From Page 1

## Words on deaf ears

Facing each other on either side of Wentworth Street West, 275 and 280 may look different on the outside, but tenants on either side of the street have the same complaints.

Along with the bugs, the safety concerns and broken appliances, the most common complaint is the lack of response from building management.

"I put in work orders, they disappear. That's pretty much how it's been since I moved here and that's three Christmases now," says Rachel Legos, a tenant at 280 Wentworth.

Glover, a tenant at 275 Wentworth, says the same.

"We go down to the manager and give her a notice and nothing gets done," he says.

And for Shayla Dean at 280, who, last winter, was left in a wheelchair when she slipped on an unsalted sidewalk, the response is always the same.

"Basically, the supers here just told me to go f\*\*\* myself, to put it politely."

Aging buildings can create many problems for landlords, but Rittwage says the process at 275 Wentworth has always been the same since she started there as on-site manager in 1997. Tenants fill out a work order in the office on the main floor and work gets done after that.

"If it's electrical, it's right away. If it's plumbing, it's right away. The other things, we have to schedule them and give them appointments," she says.

As well, large-ticket items can take some time to complete, she says.

"If we get all these big things, like changing the floors, changing cupboards, all at the same time, well then there's a wait."

Rittwage says the building is currently undergoing many renovations, including replacing the roof.

"You only have to look at our building and know that we've been doing the roof, the balconies, fixing outside, we're doing lots of renovations."

And she says she understands that there are upset tenants in the building, but the repairs do add up, she says.

"We're not magic; we can't just make everything happen all at once."

## Stuck

"So why don't you move?"

It's a question many of these tenants have been asked before and, at times, it's a hard one to answer, but it always leads to the same conclusion: they can't.

Several tenants The Express spoke to survive off disability cheques, some on welfare, others just simply did not have the financial ability to afford rent in other parts of the city.

Manley says she still doesn't have a fire alarm in her apartment following a fire in March (the wiring in the alarm was broken at that time). She's working her way through school and finances are tight.

"Right at this moment I'm in school...so I'm sort of stuck here until that's done," she says.

McPherson, who lives with her boyfriend at 275, says it's a choice between two evils.

"To know that we can have a roof over our head, we choose to stay where we are," she says.

Online listings show a divide in rental rates compared to Oshawa's north and south ends.

Currently, a three-bedroom apartment at 275 Wentworth costs tenants \$1,025 a month, while a similar sized apartment in the north-end is, on average, \$1,495 per month.

The same goes for 280 Wentworth, at which a two-bedroom apartment is listed online at \$899 a month, while a north-end equivalent will cost \$1,160 on average.

However, along with finances, Ellis says it can come down to other factors.

"They don't want anyone who's on disability, they don't want anyone who's on welfare, they don't want anything, they want you to be working," he says of landlords looking for renters.

For Ellis, whose father is on disability and he and his siblings are in school, it doesn't leave many options.

## Fighting for basic rights

Last month, The Express reported on a group of tenants who were fighting to improve their subpar living conditions by forming South Oshawa's first tenant association.

That group, led by Raymond Fortune and Laura Green, both tenants at 275 Wentworth St. W., appeared at city hall to share their story with city council.

At the corporate services committee on Oct. 26, Fortune and Green urged council to help enforce bylaws they claim their landlords either don't know about, or choose to ignore.

"There's obviously issues surrounding tenant rights," Fortune said.

"Tenants are at risk," Green said. "Most of these issues are fairly easy to fix by having proactive enforcement."

However, Oshawa's bylaw enforcement is ruled on a complaint basis only.

But that hasn't deterred tenants; 275 Wentworth takes the title for the building in the city with the most complaints with 163 over the last five years. Eighty-two of those complaints were related to property standards, 45 related to animals, eight to adequate heat and a few other assorted complaints.

"We fully recognize that there's a problem there," Jerry Conlin, the city's director of municipal law enforcement and licensing services, tells The Express. "What is required there is a considerable project and we're trying to put the pieces together to figure out who needs to be a part of this and how we would proceed with this in terms of an investigation."

A full investigation of the building could be undertaken if a tenant requests it to the city, something that hadn't been done yet, according to Conlin.

An investigation



Photos by Joel Wittnebel/The Oshawa Express

Councillors Doug Sanders and Amy England, top, take a look at the state of the apartment buildings at 275 Wentworth St. W. on Tuesday. Raymond Fortune, bottom left, has organized a tenants' association in response to the poor state of the building, which includes bugs, broken appliances and calls for repairs, many of which he says have gone unanswered.

was undertaken at 280 Wentworth eight years ago and led to more than \$1 million in repairs being needed for the building.

In terms of enforcement, what may look like a recurring issue to those on the outside – a bug infestation for example – can be labeled as separate incidents. Specifically, two units with the same cockroach problem can not be filed as a recurring problem as they are two separate units.

"If it's an ongoing issue with different apartments and things like that, we have to take each apartment unto its own and then we have to look at the evidence when we're getting into the investigation," Conlin says.

And while bylaw officers have been at 275 and 280 in the past, tenants still claim nothing has been done to fix their problems.

"I have tenants contact me every single day...specifically for tenants that have had ongoing issues for three or four-plus years," Fortune says.

This also isn't the first time a building owned by Litwin-Logan, the owner of 275 Wentworth, has been brought to the media attention for subpar living conditions.

Earlier this year, the City of Toronto cleaned up the landfill that was forming around the building at 2777 Kipling Ave. after tenants started tossing their garbage off their balconies and out their windows in protest of the broken

garbage chutes, which hadn't been repaired in months.

The city claimed they will be adding the cost of the cleanup to the building's property tax bill for the next year.

When asked if Oshawa could take a page from Toronto's book in this case, Conlin says it's a possibility, but unlikely.

"Typically, the city doesn't go in and do the repairs to the inside of a building, we're not engineers, we're not architects and we're not builders...typically the extent of our involvement of our remedial work involves clean up and elimination of hazards," Conlin says. "We have the ability to require repairs and to bring properties into compliance with minimum standards. If the owner of the property complies with a particular case, then they've done what is required."

## Going forward

"No one should ever, ever live in these conditions," said Councillor Dan Carter.

Following the tenant association's appearance at committee, council referred the item to staff, hoping for a report to tell them what exactly could be done to deal with the situation.


The association's comments were also sent to Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing Services to consider during their on-going review with the possibility of considering proactive enforcement in the future.

"This is going to take a real team approach in order to do it," says Councillor Nancy Diamond.

It's a sentiment the tenant association is taking to heart.

Following a recent meeting of tenants in the lobby of 280 Wentworth Street West, Fortune says a new tenant association, one to represent the tenants of that very building was formed and will be working in close conjunction with the association at 275.

The association has also invited councillors to come visit their building, an invitation several councillors accepted on Tuesday.



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# The impoverished of Oshawa

Searching for solutions: breaking stigma and shunning statistics

By Joel Wittnebel  
The Oshawa Express

A chemical smell rises from the carpets of the van. The cold wind that pushes around the empty Tim Horton's cups and plastic wrappers behind 275 Wentworth Street pulls the odour from the vehicle's open doors.

Laura Green, standing beside her vehicle she's just treated for bed bugs, the pests having found their way from her apartment on the bottom of a shoe or clinging to an article of clothing, stares at a set of numbers on sheets of paper.

The numbers give a statistical overview of the income, health and early childhood indicators for Oshawa's Lakeview neighbourhood in the city's south end, where she lives with her nine-year-old autistic son, Trystan. He stands beside her, his head snug tight in a hood, his eyes glued to the iPad in his hands.

"It's scary to see these numbers," she says.

The sheets of paper ruffling in her hands don't paint a nice picture of her neighbourhood and depict how living there can affect Trystan's development, health and future prospects.

Green pulls on a cigarette and looks at a second set of numbers. A similar statistical profile, but for one of Oshawa's other areas: downtown. Her eyes widen.

"But yet they said that downtown was improving?" she queries.

According to the Region of Durham's Health Neighbourhood mapping, the residential 'hoods in downtown Oshawa are in worse shape than those in the south end of the city, and it's not the only area that's suffering these days.

The impoverished areas of Oshawa are not alone in the region and for health care providers, experts and the people who live there, breaking the cycle that keeps many of these areas from improving will mean putting stigma and statistics aside and working together to help the denizens who live there, like Trystan.

## Shunning statistics: Myth; the south end is Oshawa most's impoverished area.

While over a quarter (26.5 per cent) of people in the Lakeview area of the city are considered low income, that number jumps to 28.1 when you move into the city's core, and the number of children under age six living in low-income households increases from 38.4 per cent in Lakeview to 42.6 in the downtown.

Also, the median after-tax income is over \$10,000 less downtown than it is in Lakeview's south end, dropping from \$44,600 in the south to \$32,500 in downtown, the lowest across the city.

In fact, Lakeview's median income isn't even the second lowest in Oshawa, with Beatrice North (north of Beatrice between Oshawa Creek and Harmony Road to Taunton Road) sitting at a lowly \$43,600.

"Some of those issues that are prevalent in the neighbourhoods are not just specific to the areas of south Oshawa," says Lee Kierstead, the executive director of the Oshawa Community Health Centre (OCHC).

The OCHC, which started as the South Oshawa Community Development Project in the 1980s, has expanded its purview since then to include all of Oshawa and most recently merged with the Ajax Youth Centre to provide health, early childhood development and other resources to Pickering, Ajax and Whitby, as well.

For Kierstead, the struggling areas of a city tend to see issues snowball, with things like income disparity, health issues and development risks piling on top of each other and perpetuating one another.

In terms of schools throughout the city, a chart ranking the best in the city could have the title struck off and replaced with the title of Oshawa income levels instead. There seems to be a correlation between the two.

At the top of the list of best schools in the city are

those in the north end: Father Joseph Venini and Dr. S.J. Phillips topping Fraser Institutes rankings of elementary schools in Oshawa. Moving down the list, the general trend is of the more midtown schools and, finally, several schools in the south end of the city populate the bottom of these rankings in terms of EQAO test results. Monsignor John Pereyma, Oshawa Central and GL Roberts populate the bottom five.

"It's a perpetuating thing, when you have a lack of education, leading to low income, leading to unemployment — these are all the things that kind of cycle," Kierstead says.

And how is that cycle broken?

Numbers aside, the most important thing is getting children the resources they need at a young age.

"There's a true acknowledgement and an understanding that in order to break through cycles like that you really have to get young children an opportunity to flourish and experience and get off to the best start," he says.

However, according to Dr. Toba Bryant, an associate professor in the Faculty of Health Sciences at UOIT, this isn't always possible with low-income parents.

"They really can't afford the kind of resources that would help a child and help their development over time," she says. "So those children reach school and they're not ready to learn and it's because their households are so stressed, their parents don't have time, they're often doing shift work because those are the only kinds of jobs they can find."

And though it isn't always the fault of the parents, it's where the blame generally falls, Bryant says.

"I think often this tends to degenerate into blaming the parents, but it's the circumstances that the parents are in and they often have no control over that. So it often creates a very stressed situation," she says.

And that stressed situation can lead to something worse.

## Breaking the stigma

For Green, the stigma of living in the south end of the city is something she lives with everyday.

Not only will landlords not rent to people from her building looking to move, but living on Wentworth, she says she sees the "worst of the worst," in terms of living conditions and criminal activity.

Green says she knows the problem only exists in pockets, while the stigma of "dirty south Oshawa" extends its invisible cloud all the way down to Lake Ontario and makes no exceptions.

But she says that the people who live in the south's better areas also act as catalysts for the stigmatization by shunning the worst areas.

"They can turn a blind eye to us all they want, we're still here, and just because we're making noise and getting attention, they don't like it because 'oh, our little haven is now being put in a bad light,' and it's like, you know what? How about you open your pretty little eyes and look at the whole, not just your little area."

Perhaps the big developers should be getting that message, too.

One of the big factors that has the potential to improve the struggling areas of Oshawa is development, yet, none of it is happening in the south end.

"It sounds like they've red-circled Oshawa south as stay out of there, but that is the very community that could use help," Bryant says.

And while the north end of Oshawa benefits from wide swaths of open land, the south end must struggle with brownfields and infill, and it is this lack of development that is a really key issue, according to the city's commissioner of development services, Paul Ralph.

"We don't have any interest from developers, they haven't identified any sites," Ralph says. "There really are limited opportunities for redevelopment."

The city has successfully redeveloped such locations as the previous industrial site that is now home



Photo by Joel Wittnebel/The Oshawa Express

Laura Green and her son Trystan, 9, both live in an apartment at 275 Wentworth Street West. Green says that residents of her building and others in similar low-income areas are stigmatized by others in the area.

“

*They can turn a blind eye to us all they want, we're still here, and just because we're making noise and getting attention, they don't like it because 'oh, our little haven is now being put in a bad light.'*

”

Laura Green  
South Oshawa resident





Oshawa Express file photo

While much has been made about the economic problems faced by residents in Oshawa's south end, there are other parts of the city with even lower socio-economic standings, including city's downtown core and Beatrice North, an area north of Beatrice between Oshawa Creek and Harmony Road to Taunton Road. According to a 2014 city report, nearly all of the new housing development has taken place in the more affluent north end of Oshawa.

of Bobby Orr Public School and the previous Conant School site that is now the office of the OCHC.

In recent years however, the growth just hasn't been there.

According to the city's development activity report for 2014, nearly all of the new development for single-detached dwellings, townhouses and apartments took place in the north end. And it's not only residential, but certain essential services, like financial institutions, that are non-existent in the south.

"Those basic services that people need aren't there because the population isn't there," Ralph says.

And the population is only decreasing. Studies show a negative growth of 3.6 per cent between 2006 and 2011, the most recent statistics available.

Thus lies the catch-22. To aid in breaking the stigma of Oshawa's struggling areas, there needs to be development, but for development to occur, developers need to see a growing population, but if the developers don't build, where is this hypothetical growing population going to live?

### Searching for solutions

In recent weeks, the idea of a South Oshawa Community Development Plan has made the rounds at city hall.

In the regular meeting of council on Nov. 30, Oshawa council voted to send the project to the region to take the lead, after much debate from some councillors.

However, for those on the ground, the debate is only white noise because it doesn't matter who takes the lead.

"You need all parts of the system to be working collaboratively," Kierstead says. "It's not a matter of pushing off from one to the other."

Ralph denies the feelings of some in the community that the city is passing the buck over to the region.

"When I started looking at it all, the real heart of the issue is a social and economic issue in south Oshawa and it would be best served if the Region, who has social services, health, has regional housing, affordable housing under their purview, they have Durham Region Transit and they have Durham Region Police that can help lead with other stakeholders."

Similar to the OCHC's work with Durham's school boards to ensure children are safe, have a full stomach and receiving the love and affection they need, any type of regional or municipal plan or policy will need to take these facets into consideration, because for Bryant, the problem originates from bad public policy to begin with.

"Poverty is created by bad public policies and this contributes to the inequitable distribution of the social determinants of health," she says. Those determinants being such things as: income security, food security, job security, housing security, and early childhood development and education. "If we had policies that were supportive of those social determinants, those children would do better."

And Kierstead says there are people in the community willing to help with that.

"There's a lot of really strong leaders out there and it really is a matter of how you connect in with them and mobilize that," he says.

However, Green says the city shouldn't just look at the south end, but the city as a whole and all its struggling areas.

"We don't just deserve better living conditions, everyone does," she says.

Bryant, with the help of a colleague, is also looking into another cause with her Job Related Quality of Life in Oshawa study which will be taking place in the coming months.

"Our goal is to work with the community to try to identify some potential public policies that might address the inequities that have arisen and how we can promote the creation of good jobs," she says.

With Green, the papers with numbers spread all over them are now gone, and most of the chemical odour has drifted away on the wind.

Trystan is sitting in the open doorway of the van, still playing on his iPad.

"He gets the world and so does she," Green says, speaking of her playful son and her 17-year-old daughter, who will soon be going off to college.

While she lives on disability, she says she makes sure her son gets the things he needs and then some, taking him to karate and violin lessons.

She also says he acts as a mentor for the other children. Telling them to use their manners, and always say please and thank-you. His politeness even earns him some free treats at the Tim Horton's near his house.

"What? I'm trying to help," Trystan says.

And for Green, she knows the area isn't the best to raise her child, but for her the numbers mean nothing if she pours everything she has into raising a "young gentleman."

A young gentleman that will need to shun statistics and break the stigma to have a healthy future.

"It gives me a sense of pride to know he will stand up for everyone else," Green says.



Photo by Joel Wittebel/The Oshawa Express

Residents of areas where there is more low-income tenants, such as the Wentworth apartments, are often stigmatized when looking for a new place to live, according to Wentworth resident Laura Green. Lee Kierstead, the executive director of the Oshawa Community Health Centre, says residents in lower income areas are often stuck in a perpetuating cycle.

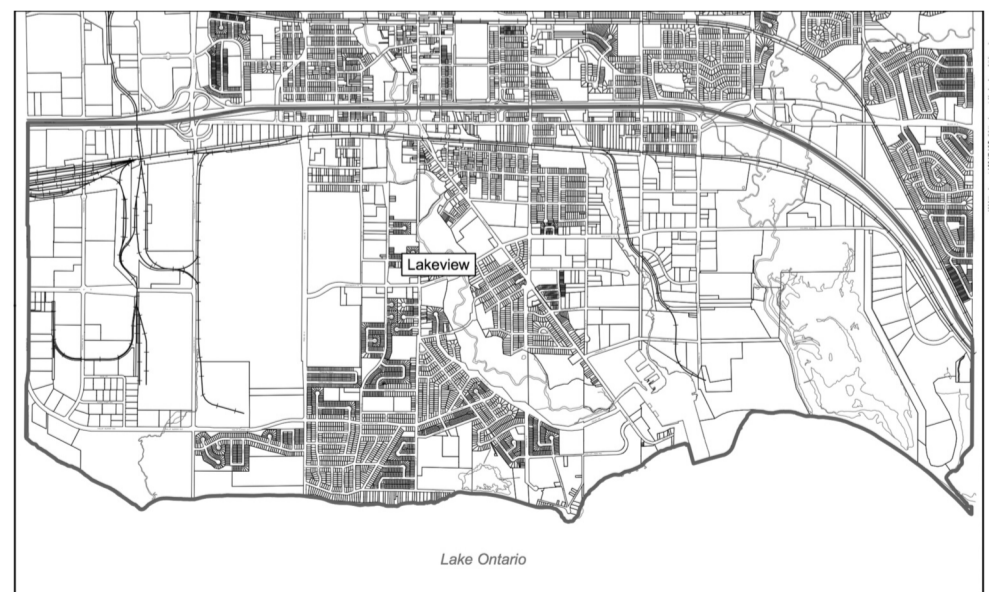


Image courtesy of the City of Oshawa

The Lakeview area - the official name for the portion of Oshawa that sits south of Highway 401 - is among the city's lowest income areas. The area is facing a falling population, falling 3.6 per cent between 2006 and 2011. Because of a falling population, the area is less ripe for new developments, unlike the city's booming north end.