REFRAMING URBAN RESILIENCE THROUGH OPPORTUNITY-ORIENTED PLANNING: LESSONS FROM THE HOUSING CRISIS IN CHINA AND CANADA

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New single-family homes under construction in the Metro Vancouver region, Canada.

1. INTRODUCTION: MISDIAGNOSING THE HOUSING CRISIS?

From the overburdened Chinese mega-cities to Canadian metropolises, the housing crisis has become a major global concern. In China's first-tier cities such as Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Shenzhen, housing prices have surged well beyond the reach of most urban dwellers. Similarly, in large urban centres in Canada such as Metro Vancouver, unaffordability is also a defining feature of urbanity. A common response from policymakers has been to focus on building more homes and limiting speculation. For example, British Columbia's Bill 44 and 47 emphasize supply-side reforms. However, growing evidence suggests that increasing supply alone does not necessarily improve affordability. This paper argues that the underlying problem lies in the growing instability of income and the closure of structural opportunity pathways. By redirecting attention to employment precarity and economic exclusion, this paper further situates urban resilience within an Opportunity-Oriented planning framework.

2. METHODOLOGICAL NOTE

Methodologically, this study adopts a comparative policy analysis framework combining literature synthesis and case vignette evaluation (Shenzhen and Vancouver). It integrates secondary data from OECD, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), and the National Bureau of Statistics of China to interpret the structural factors of housing affordability. By pairing cross-national policy review with city-scale observations, the paper derives a conceptual framework that links resilience, opportunity, and affordability.

3. RETHINKING THE STRUCTURAL LOGIC OF URBAN RESILIENCE

3.1 THE EVOLVING NOTION OF RESILIENCE

Urban resilience has expanded beyond its initial definition of disaster preparation to a comprehensive description of a city's capacity to recover in all aspects including social, economic, and environmental dimensions. It initially focused only on how a city could be prepared for natural disasters such as floods or earthquakes (Burton,2009; Holling, 1973). However, the notion has since extended to acknowledge recovery not just from acute crises but also from disruptions rooted in existing social and economic inequalities, highlighting that cities must be inclusive and provide resources for all groups, especially marginalized ones, to recover (Meerow, Newell, & Stults, 2016).

Social vulnerabilities - for example, income discrepancies, or racial inequality - can make urban shocks more damaging. Resilience strategies have gradually broadened to aim at reducing these gaps, recognizing that the capacity of urban systems to support residents during crises depends on socio-economic opportunities (Chelleri et al., 2015). Wilkinson and Pickett (2009) argue that more unequal societies experience lower levels of social resilience. When societies become more unequal, their capacity to build trust and undertake collective action are undermined - what is most needed when a crisis emerges.

Thus, resilience must broaden its narrow focus on physical infrastructure, and bring equitable access to resources to all groups. This shift calls attention to systemic inequalities and making everyone in the cities has the opportunity to thrive.

3.2 A NEW DEFINITION: RESILIENCE AS STRUCTURAL CAPACITY

Urban resilience must be redefined from a reactive capacity focused solely on survival to a proactive, structural capacity that fosters long-term,

sustainable livelihoods. Resilience should be viewed as a city's ability to provide structural conditions—access to education, employment, healthcare, and housing—that enable residents to thrive, even amid change (Adger, 2000; Pelling, 2011).

This new definition draws from Sen's (1999) capability approach, which emphasizes enlarging people's ability to live lives they value. A resilient city should not merely survive but also foster an environment where individuals can grow, innovate, and fully engage in the economy and society. It should be a place where everyone gets the chance to achieve a stable and prosperous life through access to fundamental necessities and opportunities.

This also accords with Berkes and Ross (2013), who state that resilience is an ongoing process of adaptive transformations. Resilient cities adapt to changing social, economic, and environmental conditions, incorporate equitable policies and programs that expand opportunity, enabling residents to thrive despite uncertainties.

While this paper advances resilience as structural capacity—the ability of urban systems to provide the enabling conditions for stable, dignified livelihoods—this view builds on and extends established strands in the literature. The capabilities lens (Sen, 1999) foregrounds substantive freedoms and economic opportunity; socio ecological perspectives emphasise adaptive capacity and transformability (Folke, 2010; Berkes & Ross, 2013); and urban resilience synthesis work stresses distributional equity and social vulnerability (Cutter et al., 2003; Meerow et al., 2016). Our structural capacity framing integrates these strands and makes them operational through Opportunity Radius targets and two metrics (Sections 4–6), thus translating abstract resilience into measurable planning practice.

In operational terms, structural capacity can be conceptualized as the composite of stable income, opportunity access, and adaptive ability—each representing the socio-economic infrastructure that enables resilience.

4. THE ROOTS OF UNAFFORDABILITY: NOT A HOUSING SHORTAGE, BUT AN OPPORTUNITY GAP

4.1 CANADA: DEFINING CRISIS THROUGH SUPPLY AND DEMAND

In Canada, the housing crisis is commonly viewed as supply shortage. According to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), 5.7 million new homes should be built by 2030 to achieve affordability (CMHC, 2023). However, this supply-side approach ignores the unstable labor market, where many Canadians face unstable employment, affecting their ability to maintain stable housing.

As of 2022, over one-third of Canadian workers rely on unstable income sources, such as gig work, temporary contracts, or part-time jobs that lack job security and benefits (Statistics Canada, 2022). This high reliance on unstable work can lead to frequent relocations, difficulty qualifying for leases, and an inability to save for homes, which erodes housing affordability.

For young immigrants, this issue is more acute. While they may technically eligible for affordable housing, the exclusive nature of the job market and lack of information about welfare resources often put them in financial difficulties and unable to pay rent or obtain a mortgage. This highlights that affordability is not only about housing supply or housing prices, but also about economic opportunities that support long-term residence.

4.2 CHINA: "UNSETTLED LIVING" AMID OVERSUPPLY

In China, rapid urbanization has led to housing oversupply in most metropolises, yet affordability is still a main challenge. Although vacancy rates in cities like Shenzhen and Guangzhou have exceeded 25% in 2021 (National Bureau of Statistics of China, 2022), housing prices continue to soar, making them out of reach for most people.
More unbalanced data—Beijing's price-to-income ratio is estimated to be 25:1, and Shanghai's is over 30:1 (OECD, 2021) —show that the real estate market is driven by speculative investment and continues to ignore the needs of middle- and low-income residents.

As unaffordable high-priced properties continue to emerge in urban centres, more highly educated young people are choosing to exit urban life—faced with high housing prices and low quality of life, they choose to return to their rural hometowns or move to areas with lower living costs (Liu et al., 2021). This trend reflects people's widespread disappointment with urban opportunities, which do not provide social mobility or sustainable livelihoods.
This reverse migration phenomenon highlights a fundamental problem: even an oversupply of housing can still lead to the same crisis consequences as a shortage of housing if the urban system fails to provide the necessary economic and social opportunities.

4.3 COMPARATIVE REFLECTION

Despite differing contexts, both Canada and China face similar policy misconceptions: treating housing as an end product rather than as part of a larger system. Housing is often seen as something "built" to meet a demand, rather than as part of a system that encompasses economic opportunity, social mobility, and security.

As the international frameworks proposed by UN-Habitat (2020) and the OECD (2022) emphasize, income stability and livelihood access are key variables for housing affordability. These frameworks challenge the view that housing supply alone can address affordability, arguing that housing

affordability is closely linked to a city's broader socioeconomic system, especially employment stability.

When income is dispersed or unstable, even nominally affordable housing can become an unaffordable burden. People may be forced to relocate, downsize, or delay key life decisions like starting a family or buying a home.

Beyond the high-income and upper-middle-income contexts of Canada and China, experiences from the Global South further illustrate this interdependence between housing and livelihoods. For instance, Enns (2022) shows that residents of informal settlements in Nairobi, Kenya should be included in urban planning processes. This alternative perspective highlights the value of supporting self-built housing and lowering its institutional barriers. Housing, in this view, functions not merely as a commodity but as a platform for livelihoods, identity, and community resilience (Izar, 2022; Omollo, 2022).

While the model of large-scale self-built housing cannot be directly applied to countries like Canada or China, it reminds us that effective housing systems are those that integrate social, cultural, and economic dimensions.

This insight prompts us to rethink how to measure affordability—not just in terms of quantity and price, but also in terms of the extent to which housing can bring stability, opportunity, and resilience. As Glaeser (2011) put, urban resilience cannot be built by infrastructure alone; it requires the establishment of systems that can provide stable incomes, opportunities for advancement, and pathways to social mobility. Thus, in the following article this paper proposes new affordability assessing metrics and opportunity-oriented planning frameworks that align with such ideas.

4.4 CASE VIGNETTES: SHENZHEN AND VANCOUVER

Shenzhen (Nanshan/Longhua): Talent Housing + Maker Employment — Shenzhen's talent housing programmes and mixed employment housing industrial parks illustrate how proximity to jobs mediates affordability beyond unit price. Small format ateliers, co working and light production spaces are bundled with rental talent housing.

Within the proposed framework—later elaborated through the Employment Creation Index (ECI) and the Income Mobility Index (IMI) introduced in Sections 4 and 5—a development-level ECI credits on-site enterprise spaces that commit to hiring local residents and graduates across entry-to-professional tiers. At the Opportunity Radius (OR) scale, the IMI reflects transit job accessibility to technology or manufacturing hubs, the density of training seats (e.g., vocational institutes), and entrepreneurship dynamism (e.g., new business licences). Compared with traditional supply led or dormitory style housing, the OR lens requires quantified job targets and mobility enablers, making affordable by income outcomes more durable.

Vancouver: Inclusionary Set Asides vs. OR Conditioned Approvals — Inclusionary tools and rental pilots near rapid transit improve production and tenure mix but often leave the job creation channel implicit. Under our approach, rezonings would carry ECI obligations (e.g., minimum employment floorspace or local hire commitments) and OR scale IMI benchmarks (transit job reach, childcare seats, training capacity). The comparison clarifies value add: the OR framework binds housing approvals to measurable income pathways, not only unit typologies.

4.5 POLICY COMPARISON AND INTERNATIONAL DEBATE:

Inclusionary zoning and rent geared programmes primarily secure units and income tested access, but seldom guarantee earning stability or progression. The OR + ECI/IMI package adds a second channel of affordability—by conditioning development on job creation and mobility enablers—thereby reducing the risk that affordability decays when wages stagnate. Beyond supply vs. demand: this paper acknowledges unit scarcity and regulatory frictions matter, yet three limits persist—time lag, mismatch, and income risk. The OR framework is agnostic to tenure ideology but adds the income channel (jobs, accessibility, training, entrepreneurship) so that new supply translates into lived affordability.

5. REDEFINING AFFORDABILITY METRICS

5.1 LIMITS OF TRADITIONAL METRICS

Traditional metrics of housing affordability, such as the cost-to-income ratio, have long been used to assess housing market conditions. However, as global housing crises unfold, these metrics no longer capture the complexity of affordability. They assume a stable economic condition, which is increasingly rare in modern cities, where income volatility is widespread.

For example, the cost-to-income ratio does not account for temporary or underemployment, which have become more common in urban centres. As the gig economy and freelance labor grow, many workers face irregular or unpredictable earnings, making it difficult to assess affordability using conventional metrics (Chau et al., 2018). These gaps ignore the structural issues of modern labor markets, where jobs are often short-term, low-wage, or dependent on market forces, which particularly impacts urban populations struggling to maintain stable housing.

Moreover, traditional models, while focusing on the financial burden of housing costs, fail to address deeper issues like lack of access to stable income, education, and training (Cheshire & Sheppard, 1995). A broader understanding of affordability needs to incorporate access to opportunities and economic resilience to fully reflect the complexity of urban housing markets today.

5.2 AFFORDABILITY ASSESSMENT: THREE DIMENSIONS PERSPECTIVE

To address the limitations of traditional metrics, this paper proposes a new, multidimensional framework for assessing affordability, which includes:

• **Earning Stability:** This dimension considers not only income levels but also the stability of that income. In urban economies with growing precarious employment, households with unstable incomes face challenges in maintaining housing (Sen, 1999).

• **Access to Opportunities:** Housing affordability should also be viewed in the context of economic mobility. Urban areas that offer access to education, job training, and career development help residents increase their earnings over time, improving long-term affordability. Employment hubs and skill development programs support upward mobility and reduce housing inequality.

• **Adaptive Capacity:** This refers to the ability to withstand economic and personal shocks, such as job loss or economic downturns. Households with high adaptive capacity—those with financial resources, social support, and economic flexibility—can navigate instability and maintain housing despite challenges (Berkes & Ross, 2013).

These three dimensions offer a comprehensive view of affordability, emphasizing that it's not just about low-cost housing but about creating an inclusive, resilient economy that supports residents through diverse opportunities.

5.3 A COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING METRIC: LINKING EMPLOYMENT CREATION WITH HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Traditional urban planning tends to consider housing and job creation separately. Real estate development only considers residential space, and then jobs are created through separate industrial zone planning. However, this separation can be changed by taking a new, more integrated approach that links housing development with job creation and encourages developers to consider the broader economic needs of the community.

For example, a new planning metric could require all residential developments to contribute to local job creation. Developers may need to prove how many jobs their projects will create through flexible industry models that cater to the needs of small and local businesses. These developments may include mixed-use spaces for craft workshops, community centres, or small businesses that provide employment and entrepreneurship opportunities.

Developers who cannot meet this metric may also adopt "grouped land development", that is, residential developers cooperate with other developers to bind clusters of residential and commercial/industrial plots to build complementary commercial and industrial spaces. This ensures that jobs are directly linked to residential development and helps create integrated mixed-use communities where residents live and work, promoting economic mobility.

The following section will provide a more detailed discussion on the construction of new indicators for affordability assessment.

6. DESIGNING FOR OPPORTUNITY: A NEW PARADIGM IN URBAN AFFORDABILITY

6.1 RATIONALE FOR NEW METRICS

To truly support opportunity-oriented urban development, new and more comprehensive planning metrics are essential—metrics that capture not only financial costs but also the economic vitality and social integration of neighbourhoods. Traditional housing affordability ratios such as the price-to-income or shelter-cost-to-income metrics fail to account for income volatility, job precarity, or career progression potential in contemporary urban labor markets (OECD, 2022). These static measures overlook the dynamic relationship between housing, employment, and opportunity.

In this context, this paper introduces two new planning metrics to guide urban development and affordability assessments: the Employment Creation Index (ECI) and the Income Mobility Index (IMI).

The ECI and IMI respond to recognised limits of price to income or shelter cost ratios in volatile labour markets. They complement Housing+Transport (H+T) affordability metrics by adding opportunity formation; they align with accessibility research (cumulative opportunities within time thresholds) and with equity sensitive resilience frameworks that prioritise enabling conditions for upward mobility (Sen, 1999; Berkes & Ross, 2013; Meerow et al., 2016; OECD, 2022).

Improvement over existing measures:

(1) shift from static household burden to dynamic earning capacity;
(2) link project level obligations (ECI) with area level mobility pathways (IMI);
(3) embed monitorable targets in zoning/approvals.

These proposed indices extend existing frameworks such as the OECD's Opportunity Lens (2022) and UN-Habitat's Livelihoods Approach (2020), translating qualitative opportunity assessments into quantitative zoning tools. They also align conceptually with composite frameworks like the Housing + Transport (H+T) Index developed by the Centre for Neighbourhood Technology and the Opportunity Atlas (Chetty et al., 2014), ensuring that the proposed metrics build upon tested global methodologies rather than stand as isolated models.

6.2 EMPLOYMENT CREATION INDEX (ECI): DEFINITION, FORMULA, AND DATA SOURCES

This index would measure the number of jobs created through a given development project. For example, a multi-family development would be required to demonstrate how many local jobs it can generate through on-site businesses, retail spaces, shared workspaces, or small enterprises. This metric goes beyond the simple provision of housing and includes a measure of how the development contributes to the local economy. It tracks how well a development supports job creation within the community, directly linking housing projects to economic sustainability (Cheshire & Sheppard, 1995).

Definition: Weighted FTE jobs attributable to a development over the first N years of operation, including on site operations and bound off site partnerships, adjusted by job stability, local hiring and job diversity.

Formula: $ECI = \Sigma_i (FTE_i \times StabilityWeight_i \times LocalHireWeight_i) \times (1 + Diversity\ Bonus)$.

Suggested weights:
full time=1.0;
part time=0.6;
seasonal=0.4;
Local Hire Weight ∈ [0.7, 1.1];
Diversity Bonus = +0.05–0.10.

TABLE 1 CONCEPTUAL INDICATORS OF THE EMPLOYMENT CREATION INDEX (ECI)

SUB-INDICATOR	WHAT IT MEASURES
Total Jobs Created	Number of jobs generated through construction, services, or on-site operations
Stability of Jobs	Proportion of long-term or full-time positions vs. seasonal or short-term work
Local Hiring Rate	Share of jobs accessible to local residents or workers already living nearby
Diversity of Job Types	Whether jobs cover various skill levels—from entry-level to professional roles
Business & Enterprise Space	Whether the project includes retail units, co-working space, or small business hubs

Data: *DP conditions, business licences, employment reports, third party audit.*

6.3 INCOME MOBILITY INDEX (IMI): DEFINITION, COMPONENTS, AND MEASUREMENT

This Index tracks the ability of households to improve their income over time, reflecting access to job training, employment opportunities, and entrepreneurial pathways within their neighbourhoods. This metric would assess how well a city's infrastructure supports upward mobility and enables residents to move from low-wage, precarious work to more stable and higher-paying jobs. It would measure how neighbourhoods facilitate economic growth and provide individuals with the tools needed to improve their financial security over time (Wilson, 2012).

Definition: Composite score of upward mobility enablers at the Opportunity Radius scale.

Components (0–100, standardised):
(1) Upward earnings proxy (5 year rank mobility or proxy);
(2) Education & Training Seats per 1,000 residents;
(3) Transit Job Accessibility (share of metro jobs within 45 minutes at peak);
(4) Childcare availability per 1,000 children 0–5;
(5) Entrepreneurship dynamism (net new business licences per 1,000).

Formula: IMI = 0.30•(1) + 0.20•(2) + 0.25•(3) + 0.15•(4) + 0.10•(5).

TABLE 2 CONCEPTUAL INDICATORS OF THE INCOME MOBILITY INDEX (IMI)

SUB-INDICATOR	WHAT IT MEASURES
Access to Education & Training	Availability of local schools, job training centres, adult learning programs
Diversity of Employment Paths	Range of industries and job types available within or near the neighbourhood
Entrepreneurship Support	Availability of resources for small businesses, self-employment, and start-ups
Transit Access to Job Centres	How easily residents can reach major employment areas using public transport

Data: *administrative statistics, GTFS, education and childcare supply, business registries.*

6.4 APPLICATION CONTEXTS AND POLICY RELEVANCE

Both ECI and IMI can be applied within multiple policy contexts. In transit-oriented upzoning corridors, ECI can ensure that development approvals deliver real, measurable employment outcomes. In innovation or industrial districts, IMI can monitor whether local residents gain access to new skill and job pipelines, mitigating displacement pressures in emerging "maker economies." Similarly, in university-adjacent precincts, IMI can track graduate retention and inclusion in local industries.

By embedding these indices within local development review processes—such as rezoning conditions, density bonusing, or community benefit agreements—cities can ensure that housing growth directly strengthens

economic opportunity. These metrics offer an actionable bridge between urban form and social resilience, aligning with UN-Habitat's emphasis on livelihood-based urban sustainability (UN-Habitat, 2020; OECD, 2022).

7. IMAGINING THE OPPORTUNITY-ORIENTED CITY: REOPENING THE LADDER OF MOBILITY

Having established the Employment Creation Index (ECI) and the Income Mobility Index (IMI) as project- and area-level assessment tools, this section integrates them into a spatial governance module—the Opportunity Radius (OR)—that operationalizes the concept of opportunity-oriented resilience in planning practice. The OR provides a measurable way to translate socio-economic opportunity into spatial policy, linking affordability metrics to urban form and governance mechanisms.

7.1 A NEW VISION FOR URBAN PLANNING: INTEGRATED ZONING FOR OPPORTUNITY

Post pandemic labour precarity, rising spatial inequality, and climate constraints make 'housing alone' strategies insufficient. The Opportunity Radius reframes neighbourhood completeness to explicitly include income generation and mobility pathways, closing the gap between where people live and how they sustainably earn.

7.1.1 DEFINING THE OPPORTUNITY RADIUS: A QUANTITATIVE, IMPLEMENTABLE MODULE

Spatial unit: a 400–800 m walkable module mapped as an OCP overlay. Core idea: each OR must co provide housing and measurable livelihood pathways (jobs, training, entrepreneurship support) so that affordability is sustained by incomes, not only unit price.

Illustrative targets to be locally calibrated:
- Local Job Density (LJD) ≥ X jobs/ha;
- Employment to Resident Ratio (0.8–1.2);
- Transit Job Accessibility (≥ Y% of metro jobs within 45 min transit at peak);
- Opportunity Floorspace (≥ Z% GFA for employment/training/small business uses);
- Entrepreneurship/Training Seats (≥ S per 1,000 residents).

Governance: quantitative 'Opportunity Contributions' attached to rezonings/DPs with annual public reporting (business licences, tax rolls, GTFS, training provider data).

Opportunity Radius Score (ORS) formula:
ORS (0–100) = 0.25•LJD′ + 0.20•(E/R)′ + 0.25•TJA′ + 0.15•OF′ + 0.15•(Training/Entrepreneurship)′, where primes denote normalised 0–100 scores. Weights can be tuned to local priorities.

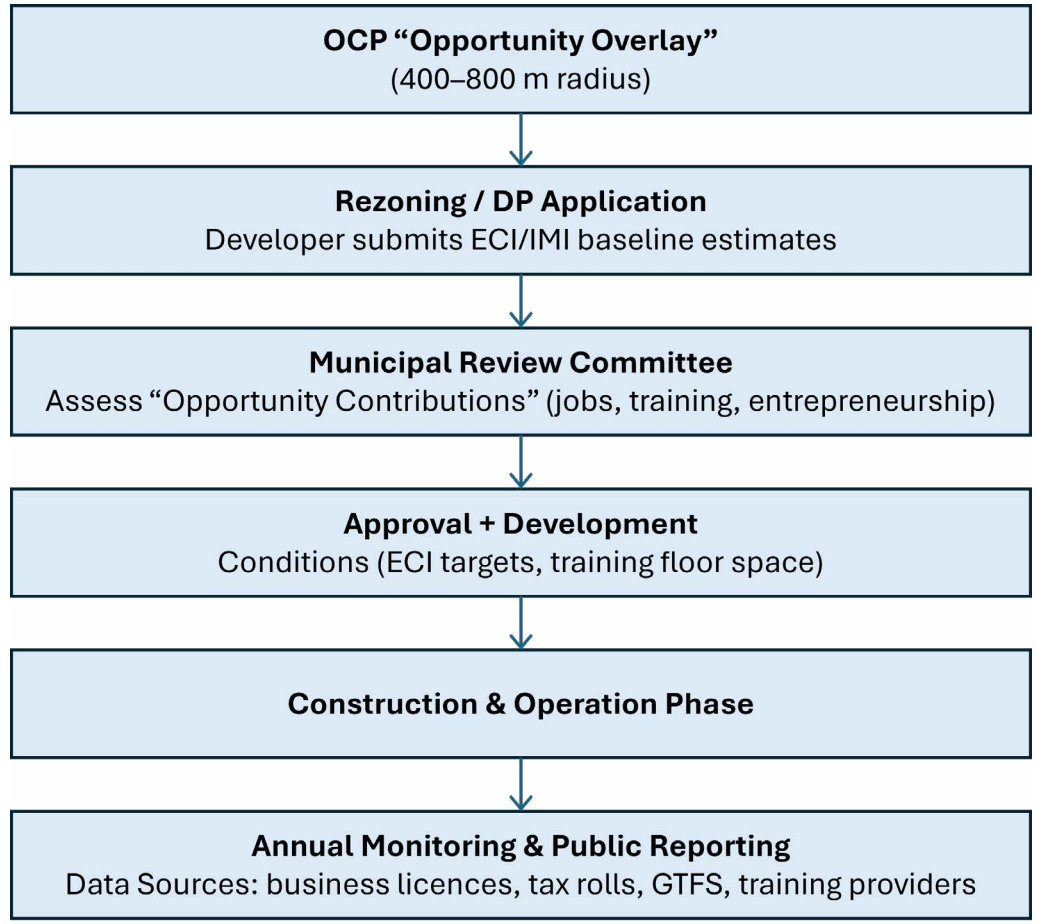

Figure 01 *Opportunity Radius Governance and Implementation Flow*

A key consideration of Opportunity-Oriented Planning in reshaping resilience is to rethink urban zoning. Historically, cities were established in distinct zones designated as residential areas, commercial areas, or industrial areas. These divisions help planning managers manage urban development efficiently, but they also create barriers between living and working spaces, objecting negative impact on economic mobility by limiting access to job opportunities within the same neighbourhood (Glaeser, 2011). Furthermore, separating different land uses reinforces isolation, exacerbating economic disparities because geographic barriers tend to restrict the movement of individuals to different types of economic activities across a city (Fainstein, 2010).

To address these challenges, this paper proposes a new approach to urban zoning based on medium-sized modules— these areas provide integrated living, working, and leisure spaces. It is aligned with the 15-minutes city design (Moreno et al., 2021) idea that aims to create communities where work, school, grocery shopping, and entertainment opportunities can be reached within a 15-minute walk or ride from home. This 15-minutes

TABLE 3 OPPORTUNITY RADIUS INDICATOR DICTIONARY (WITH ECI/IMI LINKAGES)

INDICATOR	PURPOSE	COMPUTATION / MEASUREMENT	PRIMARY DATA SOURCES
LOCAL JOB DENSITY (LJD)	Measures job concentration within each OR module.	Jobs per hectare within 400–800 m catchment.	Business licence database, census microdata.
EMPLOYMENT-TO-RESIDENT RATIO (E/R)	Balances jobs and housing in each zone.	Local employment ÷ resident population.	Census, tax records.
TRANSIT JOB ACCESSIBILITY (TJA)	Percentage of regional jobs reachable within 45 minutes by transit at peak.	Cumulative-opportunity model (GTFS network analysis).	Regional GTFS feeds, transit models.
OPPORTUNITY FLOORSPACE (OF)	Proportion of GFA dedicated to employment / training uses.	Employment or training area ÷ total GFA.	Development permits, building plans.
TRAINING / ENTREPRENEURSHIP SEATS	Captures local capacity for skill and business development.	Number of training and incubator seats per 1,000 residents.	Adult-learning and apprenticeship records, municipal economic data.
EMPLOYMENT CREATION INDEX (ECI)	Quantifies jobs produced by each development and their stability.	Σ ($FTE_i \times StabilityWeight_i \times LocalHireWeight_i$) $\times$ (1 + DiversityBonus).	DP conditions, business licences, employment audits.
INCOME MOBILITY INDEX (IMI)	Tracks residents' upward income mobility within the OR.	Weighted composite of five factors (Earnings Mobility, Training, Transit Access, Childcare, Entrepreneurship).	Census microdata, GTFS, education and childcare registries, business licences.

city model has attracted much attention in urban planning, especially in the context of post-pandemic recovery, for its ability to enhance local resilience by decreasing longer commutes and supporting sustainable lifestyles (Friedmann, 2000).

This paper tentatively names the new zoning module **Opportunity Radius**, which will be a zoning concept with quantitative indicators that can be implemented in the OCP map. Each "opportunity radius" integrates housing with employment opportunities. Each module will contain a designated employment centre (or job creation targets dispersed across different plots), which is not just a small business incubator or retail space, but a true job creation hub that provides measurable job vacancies within the block. These centres can support diverse types of work, from commercial businesses to handicraft workshops, cultural enterprises, and skill development centres (Cheshire & Sheppard, 1995).

The **Opportunity Radius** requires that a certain proportion of space in each urban development project should be set aside for job creation. This can include space for craft workshops, community service centres, or creative industries to ensure that each development provides both housing and job opportunities. This ensure that cities are built around opportunities to create stable lives rather than just around housing units (Glaeser, 2011).

7.2 PATHWAYS TO IMPLEMENTING OPPORTUNITY-ORIENTED PLANNING

1. Policy-Level Pathways:

At the policy level, cities must introduce development incentives aimed at making projects which integrate jobs with housing feasible. Zoning regulations should be adjusted to allow for mixed-use developments that require developers to create measurable employment opportunities (OECD, 2022). This can include:

- **Flexible Zoning Regulations:** Allowing developers to mix residential, commercial, and industrial uses within the same module, ensuring that job creation is a key aspect of all new urban developments.

- **Employment-Linked Incentives:** Providing tax incentives, subsidies, or grants to developers whose projects meet job creation targets. This can incentivize the creation of community-driven businesses, skills development programs, or local production facilities within residential areas (Wilson, 2012).

- **Partnerships for Local Job Creation:** Encouraging developers, local businesses and government agencies to work together to create job centres that directly serve the community.

2. Development-Level Pathways:

At the development level, based on the new metrics proposed in the previous chapter, urban projects should undergo a comprehensive review process that assesses the quantitative and qualitative impacts of the development on the local economy. This can include:

- **Employment Impact Assessments:** Developers should be required to outline how their projects contribute to job creation. For instance, a residential development could be assessed on how many local jobs it will create—whether through commercial operations, small business incubation, or cultural enterprises.

- **Job Growth Projections:** Developers could be asked to provide long-

term forecasts of how their developments will contribute to continued job growth in the area. This would measure the potential of a development to continue generating jobs in the coming years, ensuring that urban development is not just a temporary fix but part of a long-term opportunity ecosystem (Cheshire & Sheppard, 1995).

3. Zoning-Level Pathways:

At the zoning level, cities could implement a new Opportunity Radius model that combines housing with job creation. Each urban module would need to provide an employment centre, ensuring that all developments contribute to the economic stability of the area.

These **Opportunity Radius** areas could be designed to be categorized based on industry characteristics, with different modules accommodating different industry mixes, from small-scale manufacturing to services, and potentially including space for entrepreneurial activities and community-driven projects.

8. LIMITATIONS & FUTURE WORK

The proposed metrics rely on administrative and transit data whose spatial/temporal granularity varies by jurisdiction; attribution of jobs to a given project requires transparent baselines and third party audit. Future work should test alternative weightings, validate IMI against longitudinal mobility outcomes, and examine displacement risks and maker economy retention within ORs.

9. CONCLUSION

The Opportunity-Oriented Planning model proposed in this paper represents a paradigm shift in how urban development should be approached. It challenges the traditional view of housing as a static commodity and instead presents housing as an integral component of a broader system that includes economic opportunity, social mobility, and resilience. By emphasizing the intersection of housing and economic opportunity, this model offers a holistic framework for cities to not only provide affordable housing but also to foster vibrant, thriving communities where residents can grow and prosper (Glaeser, 2011).

Through the development of new planning metrics and the introduction of the Opportunity Radius zoning framework, this paper intends to explore a flexible, integrated approach that directly links housing developments to local job creation and economic sustainability. these tools encourages mixed-use developments aiming to focus on the stability and adaptability of income, access to economic opportunities, and the integration of diverse communities—ultimately contributing to long-term urban resilience.

As cities face the complex challenges of the 21st century, the Opportunity-Oriented Planning model provides a roadmap for creating urban spaces that are not only affordable but also inclusive, resilient, and able to adapt to future changes. This approach ensures that urban growth is more than just the construction of buildings—it is about building communities where all groups can live, work, and thrive.

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