

Jim Dunn0:04

Hello.

Can you hear me OK?

PJ

Pepper, Jessica0:09

So yes, we can hear you.

JD

Jim Dunn0:11

Ohh, fantastic. I'm relieved.

PJ

Pepper, Jessica0:13

Let's just let's just turn that turn our speaker down a little bit. Is that OK?

Thank you.

Hi and welcome back everyone. I'm delighted to introduce Professor Jim Dunn, who is joining us at some time in the morning and over in Canada in McMaster. Is it about 9:00 o'clock your time?

JD

Jim Dunn0:38

Left 11.

PJ

Pepper, Jessica0:40

11.

And Jim is the department chair and urban geographer at McMaster in Canada, and he's interested in living communities as they undergo transformations and explore how built environments affects the mental and physical health in neighborhoods and communities. And Jim's presentation is going to be focusing on housing, aging and health care priorities and policies for the near future.

So thinking more broadly about urban infrastructure, as I alluded to, you know, as I say, we have a, a, a situation where we have a highly car dependent low density urban form. And while I know that there's a lot less of that in the UK, there's at least there's certainly still a fair bit of it recently. Several years ago, I guess now the Ontario government where I live, they changed the tests that people over the age of 80 have to go through to maintain their driver's license.

And those tests for driver fitness have become harder, they added. It used to be just a rules of the road test.

And a vision test. And now they've added a cognitive test as well and.

And so the really the number of people over the age of 80 without a driver's license, who are stuck in the suburbs, is potentially poised to grow quite quickly. And so even without other kinds of care needs, but just the burden of care of just driving people around and giving them rides could easily be quite significant as a result of that, especially as this population grows.

And we're already seeing where some municipalities are experimenting with public transportation, providing dial-a-ride, which is, you know, a sort of on request, public transportation service. And these municipalities are already quite concerned about the cost of this. And we haven't really even hit the the period where we're gonna have very large number of

folks who might be dependent on this. And so the, The upshot of this is that we need to think about the urban infrastructure from a universal design perspective where.

The level of disability that people experience is partly about their functioning, but also about the environment, and this really speaks back to that point that I made a moment ago whereby being in an inappropriate kind of environment actually may curtail the length of time that you can maintain your independence. And if we can provide options for people to get into environments where they can prolong their independent living, that is actually really beneficial, both individually and and, you know, from a public interest and the.

The the challenge, of course, is making sure that those are adequately supplied and that there's trusted pathways for people to get from where they are now to those kinds of environments. And then, you know, one of the things that we have that leads I I think with this driver's license problem and and the urban infrastructure for us is gonna be the the risk of social isolation, which we know from pretty good evidence base is, is quite deadly.

Now this is a very Canadian thing. As much as all of us would love to believe that this is how we're we get around in winter. The reality of it for us is actually it's quite a bit more like this. And actually, winter, winter transportation is is actually an incredibly dangerous for people with mobility limitations and and so that's something that we need to think about as well here so. I'm gonna leave us, uh with a couple of slides. Just kind of thinking about some questions for the future and I hope this might be a springboard for a little bit of a conversation, if it permits it, not knowing what configuration you're in or how many of them, how many of you there are. But I think it does kind of force us to think about how we plan our cities so that they promote greater levels of independence for older people for longer durations. And how do we actually implement this at scale? And it's a pretty large scale, as I said with about.

An extra in our case an extra 700,000 people potentially affected over the next 20 years, which is, you know, not much of a runway to be ready. So you know is the idea of age optimizing cities, age, optimizing housing, something that we ought to be thinking about.

What would age optimizing housing and neighborhoods look like? In my view, they be focused on housing, transportation, social opportunities and services. One of the problems we have here in North America is that urban planning, to its credit, and it's early days separated residential land uses from industrial land uses so that people didn't experience the health effects of pollution and and so forth. But it has gone a step further through the 20th century, where we actually separate out the single detached dwellings.

Are in 1 area and the more row house kinds of housing is another area and the apartments are in and and flats are in another area and the problem that creates is that those people who might want to seek something alternate to the single detached dwelling multi story that's going to prolong their independence might have to move out of their area completely. And so we don't have complete lifecycle communities available. So this really signals the need to be able to do infill.

Uh. Development of of purpose built housing for older folks so that people could potentially stay in their same neighborhoods and not have this disruption to their social lives and their social routines and their networks.

So how can this be marketable, affordable, desirable, and culturally appropriate? On the one hand, and also balance the dignity of risk. There's a number of kind of social and cultural norms to overcome here. I think one of them being that if you can't live in your own home anymore, that's somehow a failure. If you can't live in the home that you lived in for decades, that

somehow were failure and you know, very common for me to encounter people say, like when I present this kind of A-frame to them say.

Yeah. The only way I've been taken out is in a box. You know, those sorts of things. So that's that's definitely something that's that's kind of an issue. And then of course, the dignity of risk thing is also that so much of what we do for older adults.

Is really focused on risk minimization at the expense of and often at the expense of of people's independence and independent decision making and so forth. And so I think people in the audience are probably likely familiar with this this term.

And then ohh long long term, if we were to build new sorts of options like this, what would make such a build form ready for future use? Post baby boomers.

And then I think you know, this is the the exciting thing about this.

Uh, kayak. These sets of questions is that they have synergies with a whole host of other agendas. And I think that this can make it actually the translation decision makers quite a bit more easy. So in our case, there's a lot of interest in urban intensification. So this really fits well with that efficient use of infrastructure. It certainly fits well with that in terms of transit infrastructure, even the underground infrastructure like sewers and water and so forth that we use them quite efficiently and low density communities.

One of the things we chat we encountered frequently here around schools I I live in a A in a suburban municipality adjacent to the city of Hamilton where where Mcmasters located and we have a whole bunch of new areas in the north part of the city and they recently built a new secondary school there about 10 years ago. Within three years that secondary school had 12 portable classrooms, so it was.

Incredibly, over full and around the time that those classrooms were open, those additional classrooms were open. They also started the school board started in a process to close two secondary schools in the older southern part of the city. And the reason they were closing those schools is because there wasn't the the student population based to support them. And that really was due to the fact that the houses that are well suited to families were not being vacated. And families moving into them in order to keep the schools viable. And so we have this real inefficiency around schools just because we don't see the turnover, if you like, of of family oriented housing.

Fossil fuel consumption and pollution from automobiles are another thing that's related to this. There's also an opportunity to for more active transportation and routine physical activity through this sort of thing. Through this kind of a perspective, with densification, transit oriented development and so forth, potentially for smaller communities, there's an opportunity for revitalization of downtown cores because they already have that kind of density and can support more.

Uh may also address issues around affordable housing shortages. There's a kind of broad supply. There's all kinds of problems in the housing system that I won't go into, but but broadly, more supply would be as not not a magic bullet, but it would certainly provide some relief. And then all kinds of issues around how system challenges. And I think one of them chiefly being the alternate levels of care and really having nowhere to discharge people to. So I'm gonna stop there and.

You know, please feel free to reach out and and I hope there's an opportunity that we can maybe have a bit of a conversation now if that's.

Possible through this medium.

Thanks.

PJ

Pepper, Jessica24:37

Charge up.

JD

Jim Dunn24:40

Oh, there you are.

PJ

Pepper, Jessica24:46

Can you hear me now? OK.

JD

Jim Dunn24:48

Yes, yes.

PJ

Pepper, Jessica24:50

Thank you so much for a wonderful presentation. It really tied in beautifully with with the presentation that's gone before and what we're going to do now is we're going to open up questions because, Jim, we've had presentations this afternoon and then we've saved up all the questions to the end. So we're just going to open it out now.

JD

Jim Dunn25:08

Oh great.