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THIS ISSUE:

Balancing farmland protection with on-farm diversification for agricultural viability 06



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INSPIRE



SPOTLIGHT ON LONDON, HOST CITY FOR 2GETHER, THE OPPI-OALA 2022 CONFERENCE

Set in the heart of Southwestern Ontario, London is the region's economic, entertainment, and cultural hub. With a population of more than 400,000, London is Canada's 11th largest city and an ideal environment to work, play, and live. Big enough for the "big city" experience, but still far more affordable in comparison with many other Canadian cities, London boasts an extensive educational and health-care community, while providing the safe and clean atmosphere of a small community.

The city of London is in the county of Middlesex in OPPI's Southwest District, where more than 600 members are led by a District Leadership Team. Chaired by Brandon Fox, RPP, the Southwest District Leadership Team implements a program of Continuous Professional Learning, shares planning knowledge, and provides education on area-specific issues. Through these activities, the team encourages planners to incorporate OPPI Calls to Action into workplace practice, as well as municipal and provincial policies. These actions build support for the self-regulation of the planning profession and promote the value of good planning through a coordinated communications program.

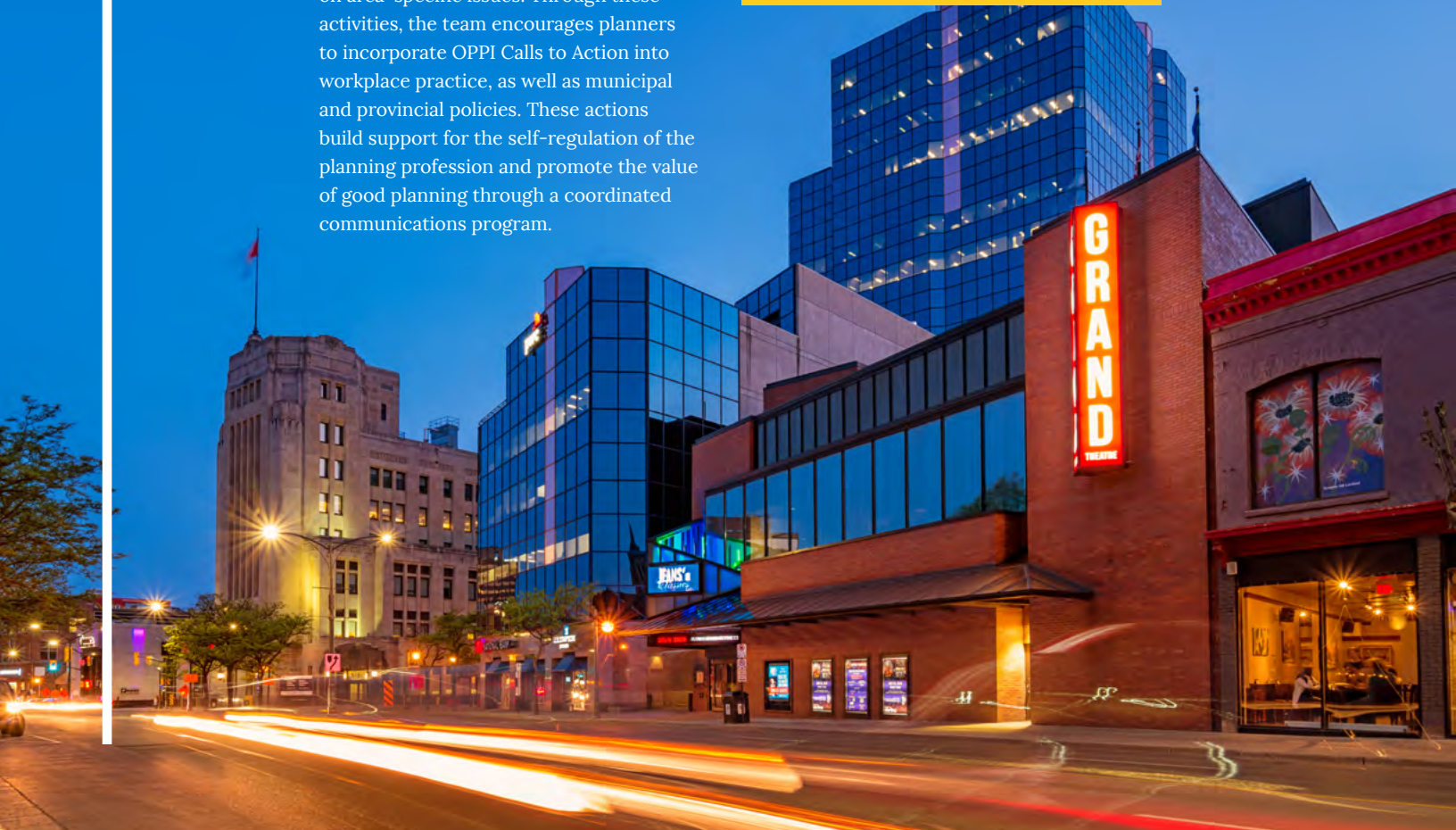
→ FUN FACTS

Opened in 1877, London's Labatt Park is the world's oldest operating baseball grounds.

Artists Jack Chambers and Greg Curnoe, actors Kate Nelligan and Ryan Gosling, screenwriter and director Paul Haggis, dancer Evelyn Hart, and musician Guy Lombardo were all born in London.

London is affectionately known as the Forest City and boasts more than 200 treed areas and public parks, including the 140-hectare Springbank Park.

Learn more about what to see and do in London at londontourism.ca.



“The vast majority of the land base is rural, and we depend on that land base for food production.”

As Wayne Caldwell points out in his RPP Profile interview on page 35, probably less than two per cent of the planning profession comes from a farm background. I am in that two per cent: I am a resident of Toronto, but I grew up on a farm in Chatham-Kent west of London, and I am familiar with many of the unique challenges facing rural communities.

It's critical for our profession to understand that the vast majority of the land base is rural, and we depend on that land base for food production. It's a dependency that becomes even more significant when viewed from a global perspective and considering challenges such as climate change and biodiversity loss.

There are planners among us who are tackling the issues facing rural Ontario. In Wayne's interview, as well as the articles on on-farm diversification, agri-food systems, intergenerational transfers of wealth, among others, you'll read about how members of our profession are approaching rural challenges. You will also see that some of those approaches can help address the big challenges of our generation.

In addition to its rural focus, this issue of *Y Magazine* carries a secondary theme as it coincides with 2GETHER, the joint conference of the Ontario Professional Planners Institute and the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects being held in London on September 21 and 22.

I am excited that we were able to bring together two allied professions to explore some common issues at our conference. In fact, many landscape architects are also RPPs. Both professions address, in different ways, how to plan the public realm, and it is in the public realm where planners and landscape architects can have the most direct impact on everyone's day-to-day lives. As the article from Eha Naylor and Shannon Baker on page 8 discusses, the collaboration of our two disciplines results in the creation of great public spaces.

This year's conference is your opportunity to connect, learn, and tackle the increasingly complex challenges faced by our communities; challenges that no single discipline can solve alone. Please join us in London to learn more about how we can build inspired communities 2GETHER.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Paul Lowes'.

Paul Lowes, MES, MCIP, RPP
President
Ontario Professional Planners Institute

It's not enough to just preserve farmland anymore: Balancing farmland protection with on-farm diversification for agricultural viability

BY PAM DUESLING, RPP, EMILY C. SOUSA, AND WAYNE CALDWELL, RPP

“The economic development committee brought planners and other departments to our farm to show them what could happen with on-farm diversification. At the same time, I would walk down the hall to the planning department, which seemed to be doing everything to stop us. They kept saying... ‘if we allow you, we have to allow everyone.’ If you allow me, you’ve got a pathway for the next farmers to come.

We’ve been pushing hard for many years because it’s too important. We’ve seen the industry thrive. We’ve seen people make a living on their farm and not just make a living but thrive. This is, in my opinion, one of the only ways to truly preserve the family farm”

– Southeastern Ontario farmer on their experience with on-farm diversified uses.

Comprising less than five per cent of Ontario’s land base, Ontario’s prime agricultural lands are a finite, non-renewable resource vital for local food production, agri-food exports, and rural economic prosperity.¹ Despite this value, the Canadian Census of Agriculture (2021) reports that Ontario has lost 319 acres of farmland a day over the last five years.² This daily loss is equivalent to 242 football fields, 797 hockey rinks, 4,785 tennis courts, or 49,764 cars. And yet, family farms remain the cornerstone of agriculture production in Ontario, with 98 per cent of farms in Canada being family-owned.³ However, the number of small and medium-sized farms is

dwindling while the number of larger farms is increasing.⁴ These numbers illustrate the difficulty smaller to mid-sized family farm operations are facing in prospering in the modern agricultural economy.

“Ontario has lost 319 acres of farmland a day over the last five years...”

Many farmers diversify their land uses and revenue streams to make their agricultural operations viable. The 2020 Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and

Rural Affairs (2016) *Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas* (“OMAFRA Guidelines”) introduce on-farm diversified uses (OFDUs) as a permitted use in prime agricultural areas, allowing farmers to balance farmland preservation with development opportunities to generate additional revenue on the farm.⁵ These pivotal policies in rural land use planning provide an avenue for the land use planning profession to recognize that it is simply not enough to preserve farmland but that society must also preserve the family farmer.⁶

A key challenge for municipalities is reconciling how best to assist the next generation of family farmers while

preserving Canada's farmland. The OMAFRA Guidelines suggest parameters and opportunities to protect farmlands while supporting on-farm diversified income-generating activities, subject to criteria, including limiting the secondary use in size and scale. Municipalities are tasked with translating the provincial guidance into a local policy appropriate for their community context.

"...society must also preserve the family farmer."

This article is based on the research conducted over the last year by the University of Guelph with support from OMAFRA, various farm organizations, rural municipal planning departments, and over 150 farmers diversifying their operations across Ontario. Our research aims to uncover best practices for OFDUs that the planning profession can implement in policy and process to assist the next generation of family farmers in their entrepreneurial endeavours. This article provides a snapshot of seven best practices, next steps, and recommendations for the state of OFDUs in Ontario. Readers are encouraged to reflect on the ideas presented and think about ways these may be utilized or applied to their community or professional contexts:

1. Municipalities, the provincial government, and the agricultural community should recognize the value of the OMAFRA Guidelines as a helpful tool; it provides a baseline to interpret policy and open the doors to balance farmland preservation with opportunities to promote agricultural viability for farmers.
2. Province should work with municipalities to utilize, interpret, and implement the guidelines into local-level policy, including training on how to carefully define "farm" in the zoning by-law, size and scale criterion, as-of-right uses, the use of site plan control appropriate for the agricultural area, and policies and tactics to encourage reuse of existing buildings.
3. Agricultural areas would benefit from design specifications, both put out by the province and municipalities, to ensure compatibility with and character of a farm is maintained.

4. Municipalities are encouraged to have pre-consultation meetings with farmers as proponents, with all departments present, to have everyone learn more about what applications, timelines, and fees the proponent may require before applying for an OFDU. If this offer is not put forward, farmers are encouraged to ask municipal staff for a pre-consultation meeting. It should be used as an opportunity for open discussion.
5. Where possible, responsible, and feasible, municipalities should scale back fees and requirements for farmers applying for OFDU development permissions. Examples could include exemptions on development charges, scaled back site plan requirements, or reduced application fees. For the agricultural community, planting and harvest seasons are busy, and the process for planning approvals must be timely and financially justifiable for their operation, particularly if they are doing so to remain viable in the first place.
6. OFDUs could benefit from enhanced working relationships and collaborations between municipalities, such as planning and economic development departments, OMAFRA, and various farm organizations, to provide resources to support OFDUs in the agricultural community. Examples of collaborative relationships and initiatives could include promoting local on-farm businesses as destinations, designing toolkits for farmers to understand the land use policy framework and the development process, as well as access to other training or resources for skill development related to OFDUs, such as business planning, succession planning, and more.

"OFDUs could benefit from enhanced working relationships and collaborations between municipalities..."

7. Farmers are encouraged to maintain positive neighbourly relations with other farmers and non-farmers alike to ensure the most successful outcomes for farm operations and on-farm diversified

businesses before, during, and after establishing (and while operating) their newly diversified business.

As the next generation of entrepreneurs establishes OFDUs on the family farm, they introduce uses never before seen in the prime agricultural area and create additional revenue streams that will inevitably enhance agricultural production in Ontario. The key to OFDUs is the critical balance of preserving all agricultural lands in Ontario – whether they are prime or not. Strong public planning policies and processes ensure agricultural resilience will continue to preserve farmland, agricultural viability, and the family farmer.

This article is based on a report prepared for OMAFRA with support from the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance, available at www.waynecaldwell.ca. 

¹ Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH). (2020). *Provincial Policy Statement, 2020*. Queen's Printer for Ontario. <https://www.ontario.ca/page/provincial-policy-statement-2020>

² Statistics Canada (2021). *Census of Agriculture*. <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/en/census-agriculture>

³ Statistics Canada (2021).


⁴ Statistics Canada (2021).

⁵ Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA). (2016). *Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas*. Queen's Printer for Ontario. <http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/landuse/permitteduses.htm>

⁶ Walton, M. (2003). *Agriculture in the central Ontario zone*. Issue Paper No.1. Toronto, ON. Neptis Foundation.



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Meaningful interdisciplinary work is key to solving complex issues

BY SHANNON BAKER, RPP, AND EHA NAYLOR, RPP

As the country struggles to build more affordable neighbourhoods, contain urban sprawl, protect natural and agricultural lands, facilitate social inclusion and equity, the inherent rights and title of Indigenous Peoples, and respond to the climate crisis, innovative planning and design continue to offer solutions to address these and a host of other issues. With a population of almost 39 million, Canada is expected to welcome 400,000 new residents each year, and they need places to live in communities that offer economic, social, and ecological benefits.

To effectively address these issues, professional collaboration is key, according to industry experts. Professional planners, landscape architects, and other allied professions must effectively collaborate to create communities that are successful and resilient.

“Professional planners, landscape architects, and other allied professions must effectively collaborate to create communities that are successful and resilient.”



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Shaping physical space for a safe and healthy public realm, and ensuring it really works is, in fact, a key skill that a landscape architect brings to the table. Trained in how people and vehicles move, how water flows and natural systems function, with an eye for sightlines, desire lines, and an understanding of ecological systems, landscape architects address issues of human scale,

experience, aesthetics, environment, history, and culture in their practice. They also have a role to inform local political discussions as well as global discussions about place, people, climate, and ecological resilience issues.

“...planners and landscape architects often work on a continuum...”

Professional planners are known for engaging communities to set the framework, policy, and processes for well-developed and maintained communities. In a collaborative process, planners deftly determine the location, type, and relationship among land uses, but beyond supporting the organization of the built environment, they promote the protection of green space and map out multi-modal transportation networks and can support design excellence through guidelines, among their many contributions. They do this by developing economic and social programs to improve local communities.

In the team of collaborators, planners and landscape architects often work on a continuum, from early planning and visioning to detailed design and construction. Connecting people to places as well as creating more equitable and accessible built environments have always been shared goals.

Differences may be found in how the professionals are taught to approach problems, be it analytically or intuitively; however, it is within these differences that the opportunities for cross-pollination of ideas and professional growth lie. While the two professions are different, they also share many similarities that make them strong allies when working together.

industrial site and better protect neighbouring communities from extreme weather conditions. PLFP will protect 240 hectares of land within the south-eastern downtown area currently at risk of flooding. The project, led by landscape architects as prime consultant, will transform ~30 hectares of industrial brownfields into a naturalized, multi-outlet river valley system with a new mouth of the Don River, while unlocking the area for revitalization and will facilitate billions of dollars in investment.

Work began many decades ago, with grassroots community activism that inspired Bring Back the Don, and the project is underlain with an environmental assessment, which involved the



Many successful projects have proven that each profession's unique skill sets are interrelated and work in a complementary way to meet the public's needs. Meaningful interdisciplinary collaboration creates great projects, including those that address some of the most pressing issues of our time.

COLLABORATION WORKS

Each year, over 12 million vehicles and almost \$120 billion worth of goods cross the Detroit-Windsor border, making this the most economically significant international crossing in North America. The Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Parkway was built to both address the need to direct heavy traffic flow away from residential areas, while also ensuring a reduced environmental impact with consideration of existing habitats for species at risk.

For their part, the team at Dillon Consulting Ltd., a collaborative interdisciplinary team, was responsible for the urban design and landscape plan. While working collaboratively within project engineering and environmental teams, Dillon enabled this expansive transportation project to maintain a connected greenspace. It also created a visually appealing design, which promoted the region's natural beauty and local public expression.

The Port Lands Flood Protection Project (PLFP) is a \$1.25 billion dollar landscape infrastructure project currently being delivered by Waterfront Toronto. It aims to bring nature back to an underused

work of many planners and landscape architects as well as allied professions to complete the study. An exceedingly complex project such as PLFP demands intensive collaboration in order to address complex and inter-related issues and solve problems in innovative and imaginative ways. It also requires the engagement of the public, a strong vision and planning framework in order to design and build a transformative landscape.

These projects demonstrate the need for close and meaningful interdisciplinary collaboration in order to address complex issues and create significant change. In every circumstance, the collaboration between the disciplines creates a result that is greater than the sum of its parts and has been crucial to creating great public spaces for the health and well-being of our communities. ♻️



Eha Naylor, RPP, is a Member of OPPI and senior partner with Dillon Consulting and has over 40 years of experience in community building across Canada. She is both a Landscape Architect and a Professional Planner.

Shannon Baker, RPP, is a Member of OPPI and the Project Director, Parks and Public Realm for the Port Lands Flood Protection project at Waterfront Toronto. She is both a Landscape Architect and Professional Planner.

It's time to ReThink Zoning in Canada

BY LISA D. ORCHARD

It's not every day you have a chance to create a new municipal zoning by-law, never mind one that's more accessible and easier to interpret than what we're all used to. Fortunately for our project team, the City of London is seeking a fresh approach to developing and presenting the regulations that will implement its official plan, *The London Plan*.

Approved by the Ministry in December 2016 (and appeals decided by the Ontario Land Tribunal in May 2022), *The London Plan* is based on a concept of "place types." Its policies go beyond land use to also consider the form and intensity of uses as the means of creating "a mosaic of outstanding places" in a city that is "prosperous, connected, and culturally rich."

The City's ReThink Zoning process seeks to make this vision a reality – incrementally, intentionally, and sustainably. Our team, led by Sajecki Planning, R.E. Millward + Associates, and Freedman Urban Solutions (FUSL), is working closely with City staff, stakeholders,

"It's the openness to a new approach that makes ReThink Zoning an exciting process."

and residents to draft a new, comprehensive zoning by-law that will replace Z.-1, which has been in place to implement the 1989 official plan. Our hope is that this process – and the new zoning by-law – will provide a model for other municipalities that also want to take the mystery and frustration out of creating and administering their own development regulations.

A NEW APPROACH

Take a look at any local zoning by-law in Canada, and you'll see that most are organized strictly on land use zones that often serve to divide the community into a series of single-use districts, without a focus or sense of place. Alternative approaches in other jurisdictions focus more on the design of the community and the relationship between buildings and streetscapes and how they relate to the shared public realm. In the United States, for example, "form-based codes" (FBCs) use physical form as the organizing principle. FBC regulations encourage a mix of land uses and are concerned with context, site layout, building placement, and the scale and massing of buildings and the way they relate to and address the street and the public realm. As a bonus, they often support the use of clear and concise language, are more accessible, and have easily navigable rules that appeal to a wide range of users.

It's the openness to a new approach that makes ReThink Zoning an exciting process. To implement *The London Plan*, the new zoning by-law will balance land use with intensity and form in its approach to developing new zones. The team is also considering how to incorporate



Figure 1. Transect Application to London's Place Types (Draft)

climate resiliency and housing affordability in a way that is in line with the official plan and that can be used appropriately in a zoning by-law under the *Planning Act*. As David Sajecki, partner and co-founder of Sajecki Planning, notes, “These are central questions in *The London Plan*. ReThink Zoning will look at the opportunities to build on its policies to develop regulations that help to mitigate these issues through new approaches to development.”

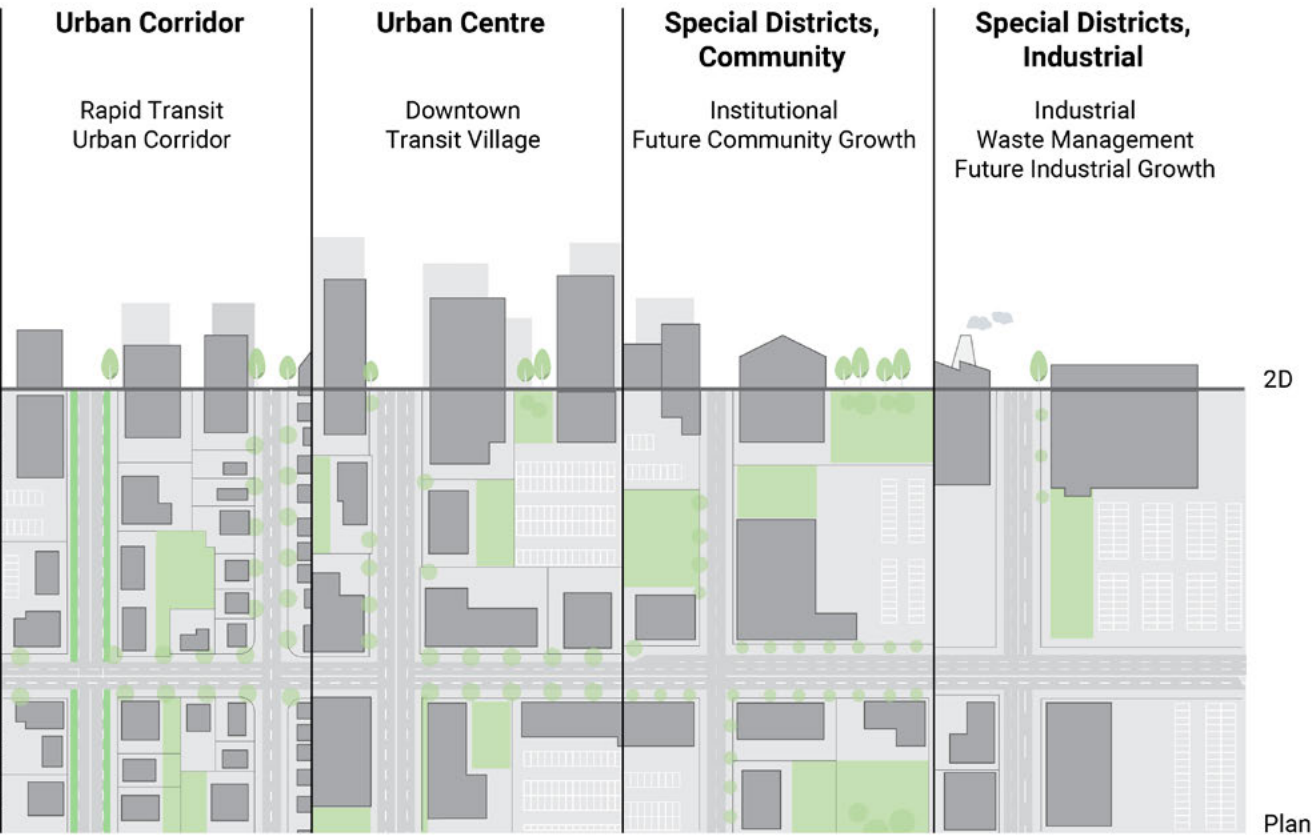
Led by London senior planner Melissa Campbell, City staff want an innovative zoning by-law that functions as a tool to improve the administration, presentation, ease of interpretation, and accessibility of land use regulations in the city. To date, our team has been exploring how an FBC, or a hybrid approach with a nod to tradition, can help achieve the future vision articulated in *The London Plan*. Ian Graham, director at R.E. Millward + Associates, explains, “We are looking at how to restructure the by-law from land use zones to place type zones. This involves both a change to the geographic boundaries of zones and determining what the essential regulations are that make up a place type zone to achieve a positive and predictable outcome.”

The London Plan calls for compact and contiguous growth and development, with a focus on building inward and upward. It introduces a new way of designating land, based on the physical form of a place, or more specifically, based on place type (e.g., downtown,

shopping area, neighbourhood, farmland). By replacing traditional land use designations with a place types approach, the new zoning by-law would present a more complete view of how the city is changing – one that recognizes the influence of a building’s intensity and form, as well as its use, to manage growth and development to 2035. As FUSL director Robert Freedman describes, “At its core, a zoning by-law should help people build communities they can be proud of.”

“At its core, a zoning by-law should help people build communities they can be proud of.”

An FBC or a hybrid approach to zoning has the potential to support London’s vision by providing a range of zoning tools that focus on achieving the buildings and overall built form that is appropriate for each of *The London Plan*’s place types. For example, many FBCs are organized using the concept of a rural-to-urban “transect” – an ordering system that places all of the elements of the built environment in an easy-to-understand hierarchy that progresses from the most rural to the most urban areas and provides the regulations that ensure the form and intensity of buildings match



the appropriate transect zone (see Figure 1). “SmartCode,” one type of FBC, encourages a gradual transition between different areas of a community in a way that responds to local conditions. We’re looking at how these options may apply in London to enable the City to achieve its vision.

USER-FRIENDLY ZONING


As the technical writer on the team, I’m delighted to be working toward a simplified, streamlined, user-friendly zoning by-law that reinforces and demonstrates London’s values and goals for the future. Why continue creating regulations that are incomprehensible to anyone but the most detail-oriented planners and lawyers, and zoning by-laws that cost municipalities significant staff and financial resources to manage? Instead, why not help residents and other users find what they need, understand it, and take steps with less confusion and greater confidence, while supporting a city’s shared goals for growth and development?

We are excited to have the opportunity to develop a new approach that will help London stand out as a leader for excellence in the process of developing a new zoning by-law and in the innovative way it is communicated. We’ve already prepared a series of seven discussion papers to get the conversation rolling, which the City is posting on its project website. The papers build on preliminary work

launched by the City in 2019, which included several backgrounders on the scope of its zoning by-law review, relevant legislation, policy requirements, and best practices.

Into the fall, we’re hoping to hear more from the practitioners and community members that use the zoning by-law. Our consultations and surveys will help us determine the best way forward. At the same time, we’re starting to develop sample zones to generate feedback and test our approach, and develop an outline for the draft zoning by-law, due in 2023.

If you’ve ever wondered how we can make zoning by-laws more accessible and user-focused, join us at OPPI-OALA’s 2GETHER conference in September 2022. You can also sign up for updates through London’s project: getinvolved.london.ca/rethink-zoning.

And we’ll report back here on our progress over the next year! 



Lisa D. Orchard is a Pre-Candidate Member of OPPI and principal consultant at Scribe Technical. The ReThink Zoning team is led by Sajecki Planning, R.E. Millward + Associates, and Freedman Urban Solutions, with LURA Consulting, PosadMaxwan, and Scribe Technical.

Linking rural planning and agri-food systems

BY WAYNE CALDWELL, RPP, NATASHA GAUDIO HARRISON, SHANLEY WESTON, AND REGAN ZINK



© Guido Klinge

“[Planners] transform direction from upper levels of government, academia, and researchers into tangible impacts at the local level.”

In 1917, Thomas Adams¹ wrote about the importance of agriculture in rural communities. While approximately one-third of the Canadian population was employed in agriculture at that time, farmers represent less than two per cent of the national labour force today. Yet agriculture and the agri-food system impacts us all; it pervades the Canadian economy, modifies our environment, and has critical health and social linkages. It also has fundamental connections to the planning system.

“Farmers Feed Cities” is a popular phrase used by farmers and farm organizations to promote agriculture. It also captures the important

linkages between rural and urban. Production, distribution, farmland availability, agricultural viability, urban expansion, human and environmental health (including climate change), affordability, and stewardship are just a few of the issues impacted by local and provincial planning policy. While planners recognize the importance of these issues, we sometimes struggle with how the planning system can best contribute to addressing them. This article highlights the role of the planner in relation to stewardship, education, and leadership within the agri-food system.

STEWARDS OF THE LAND

Stewardship is “the job of supervising or taking care of something.” Planners have an important role to play as stewards of the agricultural land base. Provincial policies and directives such as the PPS, MDS, and agricultural systems approach lay the framework for agricultural land use planning; however, it is the role of the planner to translate these documents into local contexts.

At a base level, planning tools such as official plans and zoning by-laws prioritize the long-term protection and viability of agricultural lands (see Waterloo Region’s Countryside Line). However, stewardship activities extend beyond planning policy and process and include activities such as the Haldimand County’s Rural Water Quality Program, Wellington County’s Green Legacy Programme, or Halton Region’s Rural and Agricultural Strategy. All three examples highlight the holistic role planning can play in stewarding the agricultural land base.

EDUCATOR

Planners often take on the role of educator. We transform direction from upper levels of government, academia, and researchers into tangible impacts at the local level. A planner’s knowledge base is ever expanding. Consider a planner’s presentation on a complex development application to a new council: the planner’s job is to explain their recommendation so that council can make an informed decision.

Planners must fully comprehend both the policy framework and complexity of challenges that face communities, so they can communicate how and why planning decisions best serve the public interest, both now and in the future. As part of this, planners may wish to maintain active relationships with higher education, to discuss new ideas, identify best practices, and develop novel approaches to contemporary planning issues. Projects such as Halton Region’s Review of On-Farm Diversified Use Policies and the Township of Centre Wellington’s Cannabis Policies and Perspectives for Cannabis Growth Operations were the result of student projects sponsored by municipal planners looking to embrace their role as educators.

LEADER


Planners can and often do play a leadership role as community builders. We are “in a position where power has been given to us – power to direct, influence and build.”² Through the implementation of programs, policies, and plans, planners’ decisions directly affect community development. In the case of agriculture, planning leadership often goes beyond statutory requirements and looks for ways to promote and enhance agricultural

sustainability. For example, a partnership between the Northeast Community Network (NeCN) in Southern Cochrane District and a research team from the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development at the University of Guelph resulted in the development of 23 measures to promote and develop agriculture in the region.

Through research and knowledge generation, we can improve our ability to bring diverse interests together, apply best practices, and help build sustainable, rural communities.

CONCLUSION

The agri-food system is dynamic and constantly evolving. Planners contribute in a number of ways, reflecting the stewardship, education, and leadership roles outlined within this article. Planning success can be measured in several ways, but new ways of thinking have allowed us to move beyond regulation to also embrace voluntary programs and initiatives. Across the province, we have stewardship programs designed to improve agriculture’s relationship with the environment (see the Huron Clean Water Project), policies aimed at assisting small and medium-sized farms to diversify and create new economic opportunities as a path to protect the family farm (see Brant County, for example), and initiatives aimed at supporting transitions in the agricultural sector (see Grey County’s Ag 4.0 Conference).

These approaches to planning and the agri-food system depend on three key variables connected to capacity: i) a willingness to embrace new strategies and approaches; ii) a political commitment to embrace innovation and planning; and iii) sufficient capacity to not only deliver on planning’s traditional roles, but to also embrace what Dykeman wrote about in 1992, as a challenge for planners to be innovative, creative, and visionary strategic thinkers.^{3,4} 

¹ Caldwell, W. (2011). *Rediscovering Thomas Adams: Rural Planning and Development in Canada*. UBC Press.

² Caldwell, W. (2009). Who’s on first? The power to make decisions as planners. *Ontario Planning Journal*, 24(1).

³ Dykeman, F. (1992). Leadership and Community Renewal: Exploring the Planner’s Role. *Plan Canada*, 32(5).

⁴ These comments connected to capacity to plan for the agri-food system will be explored in depth in a new research project that will document and analyze municipal capacity across the province. For details please visit: www.waynecaldwell.ca.



Wayne Caldwell, RPP, FCIP, is a member of OPPI and a Professor in Rural Planning and Development at the University of Guelph. **Natasha Gaudio Harrison, EcD**, is an MPlan student in the University of Guelph’s Rural Planning and Development program. **Shanley Weston** is an incoming MSc student in University of Guelph’s Rural Planning and Development program. **Regan Zink** is a candidate member of OPPI, Arrell Food Institute Scholar, and PhD student in the University of Guelph’s Rural Studies program.

Implementing on-farm diversified uses and agriculture-related uses in comprehensive zoning by-laws

BY BOBBY GAUTHIER, RPP, ROB RAPPOLT, RPP, AND MATT RODRIGUES, RPP

Through the 2020 update of the Provincial Policy Statement, the Province of Ontario introduced new policies to guide municipal regulation of “agriculture-related uses” and “on-farm diversified uses.” These provincial policies, along with supplementary Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario’s Prime Agricultural Areas issued by the Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs, are intended to enable municipalities to offer economic flexibility for farm owners and maintain the agricultural function and character of prime agricultural areas.

As many municipalities in Ontario are currently undergoing comprehensive zoning by-law review processes, consideration must be given with respect to the approach these policies may be implemented through this exercise. This article draws on our ongoing and recent zoning by-law review experience in the Township of King and City of Kawartha Lakes to share overarching options and approaches for implementing these Provincial policies through zoning.

ZONING OPTIONS FOR AGRICULTURE-RELATED USES

Agriculture-related uses, as defined by the 2020 PPS, refer to farm-related commercial and industrial uses that support nearby farm operations. They include uses such as feed mills, farm equipment dealers/repair operations, abattoirs, and other similar uses. The uses, by definition, are intended to support farming activities and agricultural operations as a primary activity. These uses are also not normally accessory to a farm but are usually self-contained businesses. Development of these uses would typically involve the creation of a new lot.

It is very difficult to establish as-of-right permissions for new agriculture-related uses in a comprehensive zoning by-law. The criteria included in provincial policies, and local criteria, will typically necessitate a case-by-case review of any proposed agriculture-related uses, particularly where the use involves lot creation. Indeed, many municipal official plans explicitly require a zoning by-law amendment for a proposed new agriculture-related use.

While it may not be possible (or desirable) to pre-zone permissions for new agriculture-related uses, there is value in conducting efforts to set up the comprehensive zoning by-law in a manner that facilitates the review of applications, such as:

- **Reviewing and determining whether to carry forward existing uses.** Drawing on building permit history and the historic zoning, existing agriculture-related uses may be identified and recognized in a site-specific exception zone or put into an agriculture-related use zone category. Alternatively, legally existing agriculture-related uses may be recognized as a permitted use in the general agricultural zone.
- **New “template” zone categories may be established and then applied through future zoning by-law amendments when agriculture-related uses are proposed.** A new rural industrial/commercial zone will allow the municipality to set minimum requirements which help maintain rural character, such as appropriate setbacks, maximum lot coverage, and requirements to prevent significant fragmentation of agricultural lands. When a new agriculture-related use is proposed, it should be evaluated against these baseline standards. In some cases, site-specific zones may still be required to address unique or unforeseen conditions.
- **Defining agriculture-related uses more specifically for added clarity.** The provincial definition of agriculture-related use does not directly lend itself well to zoning enforcement, as it is very broad. Municipalities should consider defining the uses specifically, and this can be benefitted by conducting consultation with the farming community and by reviewing existing uses.

ZONING OPTIONS FOR ON-FARM DIVERSIFIED USES

Unlike agriculture-related uses that are often more difficult to permit as-of-right, on-farm diversified uses are intended to be secondary to a principal agricultural use on the same property, limited in scale, and are often more broadly defined than agriculture-related uses. These uses commonly include educational programming, hospitality and service industry-related uses, micro-brewery and winery retail, agri-tourism, and value-added agricultural products, for example.

Implementation of on-farm diversified uses differs slightly than agriculture-related uses in that there is a greater opportunity to consider implementing as-of-right zoning permission through a comprehensive zoning by-law review (i.e., pre-zoning). This is largely because the uses, by definition, are secondary in nature and should be of a scale and intensity that is appropriate for rural and agricultural areas. Further, on-farm diversified uses should not involve lot creation as agriculture-related uses do as they are more directly linked to the principal agricultural use of the property.

Where it is appropriate to pre-zone on-farm diversified uses, there is value in carefully considering certain zoning matters, such as:

- **Defining the specific types of on-farm diversified uses that are explicitly permitted as-of-right**, such as a farm produce outlet, on-farm shop or café, or bed and breakfast.
- **Considering a definition for the term “on-farm diversified use”** to allow an applicant to seek a minor variance to expand the specific type of “on-farm diversified use” where the proposal is not explicitly defined in the by-law, provided it meets all other criteria for the use.
- **Defining specific types of on-farm diversified uses that are not permitted as-of-right** and not included in the list of permitted uses. For example, provincial guidelines are clear that large-scale, permanent, or recurring event venues are not on-farm diversified uses and are intended to be directed to settlement areas or rural lands. The term “farm event venue,” for example, could be defined but not permitted to clearly distinguish this use from other, appropriate farm-related events which meet the criteria for on-farm diversified uses such as ploughing matches/races and other temporary events.
- **Regulating the scale and intensity of on-farm diversified uses** to ensure the use is secondary to the principal agricultural use. This can be achieved through regulations that restrict the area of operation dedicated to certain on-farm diversified uses, such as retail, or establishing limitations to the floor area of buildings and structures devoted to on-farm diversified uses.

While on-farm diversified uses are a key tool to support long-term viability and vitality of agriculture, it is important to balance this economic opportunity with the unique characteristics that define the local rural character. By developing a thoughtful zoning approach, municipalities can permit and control a suitable range of on-farm diversified uses as-of-right through the comprehensive zoning by-law.


COMPLEMENTARY TOOLS

Many municipalities are making intentional efforts to further support rural areas and the agriculture sector by implementing complementary tools to manage agriculture-related uses and on-farm diversified uses. Site plan control may be applied to review specific operational matters and to complement the zoning by-law's requirements. Additionally, the uses can be encouraged by offering financial incentives under a community improvement plan (CIP). Financial incentive programs established through a CIP framework can be tailored to encourage private investment in a range of agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses.

For example, the recently updated King Township CIP introduced an “Agricultural Resilience and Innovation Grant” which promotes investment in specified on-farm diversified and agriculture-related uses. This grant covers eligible costs to support agri-tourism, farm produce stands, value-add and value-retention facilities, and small-scale community café uses. Undertaking a thoughtful engagement program with the rural and agricultural community informs how a CIP can be responsive to the local context. Further, these types of uses are contemplated as-of-right in the Township's new Rural Zoning By-law, which sets the stage to promote on-farm diversification and enhanced economic resilience in King.

Lastly, it is worth noting that the concept of regulating agriculture-related and on-farm diversified uses in detail through zoning and other tools is relatively new for many municipalities. Whether it is through an official plan, zoning by-law, or community improvement plan, municipalities are encouraged to monitor the performance of these implementation tools to inform subsequent improvements and refinements. This can be achieved through indicators such as the number of amendments and minor variances that are required over time, enforcement issues, uptake of financial incentive programs through a CIP, and municipal tax assessment, for example.

CONCLUSION

There are significant opportunities to build as-of-right permissions for on-farm diversified uses, while future agriculture-related uses should be guided by new zones and definitions. The specific nature of the regulations should be considerate of local context and character. Our recent work on the new zoning by-laws for the City of Kawartha Lakes' rural areas and the Township of King's rural areas use these approaches. Complementary tools, such as community improvement plans and site plan control, can also help promote and further manage these uses. 



Bobby Gauthier, RPP, MCIP, PMP, is a Member of OPPI and a Practice Lead at WSP. **Rob Rappolt, RPP, MCIP**, is a Member of OPPI and a Senior Planner at WSP. **Matt Rodrigues, RPP, MCIP**, is a Member of OPPI and a Project Planner at WSP. Bobby, Rob, and Matt have recently worked with municipal clients to implement on-farm diversified use and agriculture-related use frameworks as part of comprehensive zoning by-law reviews.

Preparing for growth: Fostering partnerships between school boards and municipalities

BY CASSANDRA HARMS, CHRISTOPHER HARRIS, AND ERIC MILES, RPP

To prepare for the rapid residential growth being experienced in many communities across Ontario, opening lines of communication between municipal planning departments and school boards is crucial. As growing populations continue to put pressure on infrastructure and amenities, more conversations about how and when this growth will be accommodated will be needed. Municipalities and the communities they serve need to know that education spaces will be provided, and school boards need to know how quickly that space needs to be built in order to fulfill that need. Sharing data with each other helps to fill informational gaps and strengthens a relationship that is mutually beneficial.

The Thames Valley District School Board has been exploring stronger relationships with municipal partners to manage student enrolment growth across the district. Thames Valley covers a vast geographic area, including the counties of Middlesex, Oxford, and Elgin, and the cities of London, St. Thomas, and Woodstock, serving approximately 82,000 students.

NEW PLANNING CHALLENGES IN SOUTHERN ONTARIO

The migration out of the Greater Toronto Area over the last few years has made a significant impact on smaller municipalities. The demand for housing and amenities has increased, driving the average home price higher than it has ever been in many

parts of the province. As a result, families look to smaller, more affordable communities in which to settle, putting pressure on services, utilities, and community infrastructure that until now has satisfied the needs of a smaller population. An example of this is the enrolment growth that many schools now experience; while growth is occurring across the district, many schools are pushing the limits of their site capacities.

THE ADVANTAGES OF OPEN COMMUNICATION

Municipalities and school boards are facing many of the same challenges related to rapid growth. Questions of where new residential development will be located are of interest to both parties, and the inevitable questions of where children will attend school often follow. Municipalities want to create complete communities with access to services that make that community attractive to new residents, while school boards want school communities to be walkable to reduce reliance on bus transportation. The challenge is being able to predict where schools will be needed in advance of the need; this is where partnerships really come into play.

“...while growth is occurring across the district, many schools are pushing the limits of their site capacities.”

Building and maintaining relationships between municipal planning staff and school board planning staff allows for more information sharing about development applications and how school boards use this information to build student enrolment projections and future accommodation strategies for each school.

Municipalities can also include school boards in pre-consultation meetings for new developments, provide residential building permit data to help inform the tracking of large development projects, and set up regular meetings with school board staff to discuss current demographic trends and availability of school sites. In turn, school boards can provide comments and insight on circulated applications, provide notice where new student accommodation measures are being taken, and circulate long-term planning documents to municipal partners.

FOSTERING PARTNERSHIPS IN THE THAMES VALLEY DISTRICT

The Thames Valley District School Board is in the process of building stronger relationships with our municipal partners. This has involved a greater level of data sharing and regular meetings to discuss development trends and projected enrolment growth. This has served both parties well as several settlement areas within the limits of the school board have experienced notable population growth over the past few years.

Several municipalities across the board are seeing a residential development boom that is increasing student enrolment at many local schools. Schools in these communities were built to accommodate the rate of growth seen prior to the COVID-19 pandemic and rapid GTA migration, resulting in the use of multiple portable classrooms at various sites.

As an example of this type of relationship, the board has held various meetings with our municipal partners to discuss residential development activity and the board's plans for future

accommodation strategies at our schools. This open dialogue, and sharing of information, has allowed Thames Valley more time to formulate accommodation options before potential problems become critical. It has also allowed our municipal partners to see what conditions we monitor when planning for the school district and how they can best share information with us. The relationships we have built with our municipal partners have been positive, and we will continue to strengthen these relationships over time through continued data sharing efforts and regular meetings.

TAKING THE NEXT STEP

As with all planning puzzles, there is no one-size-fits-all solution; strategies you may choose to pursue with your local partners may look different from one community to the next. The important point is that a communication line is opened so we can all tackle these new population, housing, and student accommodation issues together rather than from our own silos. ☺



Cassandra Harms is a Junior Planner with the Thames Valley District School Board. **Christopher Harris** is a Planner with the Thames Valley District School Board. **Eric Miles, MCIP, RPP,** is a Member of OPPI and a Planner with the Thames Valley District School Board.



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OPPI NEWEST RPPS

Each year, OPPI is pleased to welcome new Registered Professional Planners (RPPs) as Full members. Our newest RPPs have completed the certification process administered by the Professional Standards Board for the Planning Profession in Canada (PSB) which allows them to practise in the province of Ontario and use the RPP designation.

Welcome and congratulations! We applaud your achievement, dedication, and commitment. RPPs are the professionals specifically educated, trained, and ethically committed to guiding decision makers, the public, and stakeholders in all sectors to help inform choices and inspire communities.

Learn more at www.ontarioplanners.ca/Newest-RPPs.

OPPI STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

OPPI understands that today's planning students are the Registered Professional Planners (RPPs) of tomorrow and provides student members with scholarship opportunities that award excellence and community contributions.

Congratulations to this year's student scholarship recipients:

Jennifer Khuu, Ronald M. Keeble Undergraduate Scholarship

This scholarship is named for outstanding member, Ron Keeble, and recognizes an undergraduate student who is making a significant contribution to their community.

Skyler Niehaus, Gerald Carrothers Graduate Scholarship

This scholarship is named for longstanding member, Gerald Carrothers, and recognizes a graduate student who is making a significant contribution to their community.

Alexandra Lambropoulos, OPPI Opportunity Scholarship

This scholarship is offered in acknowledgement of the barriers to education that disproportionately affect Black, Indigenous, and other racialized people and is awarded to either an undergraduate or graduate planning student.

Brian Eng, Justine Giancola President's Scholarship

This scholarship is named after OPPI Past-President, Justine Giancola, and recognizes leadership in the area of racial equity as it relates to planning for communities.

Learn more at www.ontarioplanners.ca/Scholarships.

OPPI NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING AND AGENDA

The 2022 Annual General Meeting of the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) will take place on September 22, 2022, from 7:30 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. in person at RBC Place London in London, ON, and virtually on the IMPACT AV Platform for the purpose of:

- Reports of the Treasurer and President
- Items for Membership consideration:
 - Appointment of auditor
 - Approval of actions of Council
 - Motions submitted by members
 - Election results and introduction of the 2023 Council

Notification of the call for nominations of Directors was sent to all members and posted on the OPPI website. In accordance with section 4.4.2 of the By-Law, an election was held to determine the vacant Director positions available on the 2023-2024 OPPI Council. Nominations for the election of Directors at the AGM are received in accordance with Section 4 of the OPPI General By-Law.

A request for submission of substantive motions for the AGM was sent to all members and posted on the OPPI website. No motions were received by the deadline. Motions concerning substantive issues that were not provided in writing will not be considered at the AGM.

Voting members (Full and Candidate Practicing and Retired) who cannot attend the meeting are asked to complete the proxy form by September 15, 2022 at 4:00 p.m. EDT.

Learn more at www.ontarioplanners.ca.

OPPI MEMBER SERVICE AWARDS

OPPI Member Service Awards acknowledge the extraordinary service and significant contribution of OPPI volunteers. The awards recognize volunteers who have raised awareness for the planning profession, mentored students or nurtured relationships, been involved with a special project or program, and more.

Congratulations to this year's Member Service Award recipients and thank you for your dedication to OPPI:

Derek Coleman, RPP
 Lauren Vraets, RPP
 Erin O'Connor, RPP
 Jennifer Roth, RPP
 Michelle Banfield, RPP

Learn more at www.ontarioplanners.ca/Member-Service-Awards.



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OPPI STUDENT DELEGATE

Student planners are the future of the planning profession and OPPI encourages students to get involved early in their careers. Each year, one student member becomes the Student Delegate and Chair of the OPPI Student Liaison Committee (SLC).

OPPI is pleased to welcome our Student Delegate for a one-year term:



Paul Simoneau, Student Delegate, SLC

Paul graduated from the University of Toronto in 2015, majoring in political science and minoring in history and human geography with a particular interest in municipal politics, Canadian history, and urban studies. Paul is currently working towards his MEd at York University's Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change under the supervision of Dr. Ute Lehrer. His current research includes examining the role of public and shared spaces over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Student Delegate is the chair of the SLC, which is made up of OPPI student members from each of Ontario's accredited planning programs. This leadership network links planning students to OPPI, represents the interests of planning students across Ontario, and meets throughout the school year to promote student awareness and membership in OPPI, as well as events and programs targeted specifically to students.

We look forward to working with the Student Delegate and the SLC this year!

Learn more at www.ontarioplanners.ca/Student-Liaison-Committee.

CORRECTION: SPRING/SUMMER ISSUE OF Y MAGAZINE

In Dale Taylor's article, "Radial Development strategy: The answer to future realities of South-Central Ontario Growth" (page 23, spring/summer 2022 of *Y Magazine*), a data error was discovered for historical growth-rate comparisons between Toronto and American mega regions. The article, which continues on OPPI's Planning Exchange blog, has been corrected in the online version. The author regrets the error. To see the revised article in its entirety, go to: <https://ontarioplanners.ca/blog/planning-exchange>.

OPPI MEMBERS RESIGNED OR REMOVED FROM THE REGISTER

The following Full members have resigned in good standing from OPPI for the 2022 membership year:

- Lindsay King
- Daniel Aquilina
- Charles Mulay
- Walter Jamieson
- Carolyn Kellington
- Emily Rosen
- Carlo Pellarin
- Barbara O'Connor
- Anthony Dionigi
- Mugendi Zoka
- Michael Poos
- Reid Fulton
- Brett Howell
- Montana Caletti
- Fred Sandoval
- Caitlin Willcocks
- Kirstin Jensen

The following Full members have been removed from the register for non-payment of membership fees:

- Ronald Blake
- Dana Collings
- Grant Whittington
- Eugene Fera
- Maria Musat
- Jacqueline Svedas
- Michael Dwyer
- Hugo Lalonde
- Mark Bodrug
- Scott Duff
- Michael Bricks

To raise questions or concerns, contact membership@ontarioplanners.ca.

Note: These names are accurate at time of printing.

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ACADEMIC

Hidden treasures: Planning for intergenerational transfers of wealth in rural Ontario

BY ALEX PETRIC AND RYAN GIBSON

Planners in rural areas regularly contend with several socio-economic and demographic changes in their communities. They balance economic, environmental, and social concerns to build a sense of community and identity, manage housing supply and other services, and support local business development. While no two rural communities are identical, many places in rural Ontario face challenges related to uneven population growth, youth retention, and economic restructuring.¹

How do we plan in the face of a shifting and unpredictable future? Identifying community assets and planning around them have grown as topics of interest, and evidence from other jurisdictions suggests

Farm in Huron County; photo by Ryan Gibson

“...communities may have financial assets hidden in plain sight...”



that communities may have financial assets hidden in plain sight in the form of an ongoing intergenerational transfer of wealth.

THE SIZE AND MOBILITY OF COMMUNITY WEALTH

As generations age, wealth slowly but surely changes hands through bequests, business transitions, and other avenues. However, the exact size of this financial flow has garnered attention in recent years, as it appears larger than anyone had anticipated. U.S. researchers estimated as much as \$41 trillion USD that will pass between generations in their country over 50 years.² RBC pegged the Canadian figure at \$4 trillion USD over a generation while finding that few families actively plan around the subject.³ Imagine if families decided to set aside five per cent of their wealth⁴ to invest in their community: it could generate as much as \$200 billion to support development in communities across Canada. This funding could enhance immediate philanthropic efforts, or it might build up longer-term investments through place-based organizations like community foundations that keep wealth in a region perpetually.

“... municipalities ought to consider how to draw more effective investment in their communities, for both economic and social development.”


With work becoming increasingly mobile, people are less likely to remain in a single community for their entire lives. Their financial wealth is more likely to travel with them, whether they are relocating for a new job or to be closer to medical services. In rural Ontario, what happens to wealth as youth move away for education or employment? When earlier generations pass away, their wealth may move to their children living in urban areas. Rural areas are more likely to depend on industries tied to the land – like agriculture, resource extraction, or forestry – and the wealth earned on that land may leave the community forever as residents migrate, making rural places more susceptible to losing these resources when compared to urban areas. Currently, there is not an exact measure of this wealth for communities in rural Ontario, but our team is working on creating estimates for counties across the province.

WHAT ROLE DO RURAL PLANNERS HAVE?

Rural planners wear many hats and juggle multiple responsibilities, but they have a key role in widening conversations about the future.

Within their communities, planners can assess regional/local trends and highlight opportunities to secure future assets. By establishing and maintaining contact with local non-profits, charities, and other community organizations, planners can encourage longer-term thinking about community sustainability as populations change.

Exploring options to support the partial retention of community wealth can also help to develop amenities that attract new residents to call their regions home. To do so, planners need an understanding of the wider institutional ecosystem in which they stand, which may include youth organizations, social services, faith groups, and foundations.

Rural Ontario shows a range of economic and demographic diversity, and the COVID-19 pandemic has brought new residents to some of the province's rural areas. However, these trends may not last forever, and municipalities ought to consider how to draw more effective investment in their communities for both economic and social development. By spurring conversations about long-term community planning, planners and other staff can prepare for whatever settlement patterns the future holds. Across the province, professional planners are ideal persons to be asking, how much are we investing in our community's collective bank account? 

¹ Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation. (2016). State of rural Canada 2015. Ottawa, Ontario: CRRF. <http://sorc.crrf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/SORC2015.pdf>

² Havens, J. J., & Schervish, P. G. (2003). Why the \$41 trillion wealth transfer estimate is still valid: A review of challenges and questions. *The Journal of Gift Planning*, 7(1), 11–15.

³ Royal Bank of Canada & Scorpio Partnership. (2017). Wealth transfer report 2017. Toronto: RBC Wealth Management.

⁴ Joslyn, H. (2016). The 5% solution: Charities in shrinking communities are working to get in on the wealth transfer to younger generations. *Chronicle of Philanthropy*, 29(2), 30.



Alex Petric, is a Student Member of OPPI and a PhD student in Planning at the University of Waterloo. **Ryan Gibson** is the Libro Professor of Regional Economic Development in the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development at the University of Guelph.



ACADEMIC

Biodiversity finance for cities: The time is ripe for new financial tools for urban parks

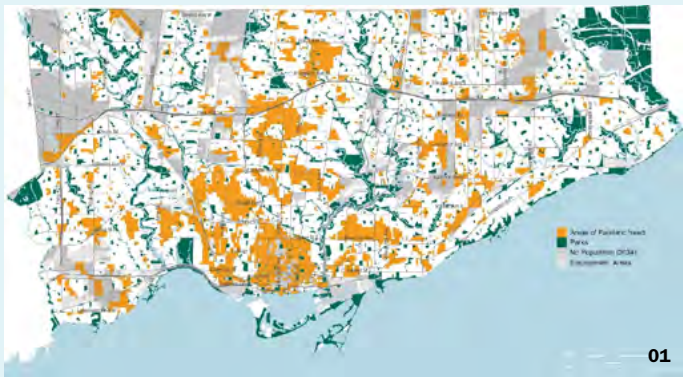
BY JEAN-FRANÇOIS OBREGÓN MURILLO

Why can't Toronto be known for its parks the way that Amsterdam is known for its canals? Parks became popular during the COVID-19 pandemic. A 2021 Park People report found an 82 per cent increase in park use. However, the city has grappled with financial shortfalls for operating its parks system. Meanwhile, the financial system has been innovating on tools to fund conservation.

THE MRP

My Major Research Paper, *The Time is Ripe: New financial tools for the City of Toronto's Parkland Dedication Rate*, documents over 25 financial tools that municipalities could use for parkland acquisition. It focuses on Section 42 of Ontario's *Planning Act*, where development proposals must either convey parkland or cash-in-lieu

- 01 Parkland Study and Acquisition Priority Map in Toronto. Credit: City of Toronto
- 02 IPCAs in Canada. Credit: Government of Canada



(CIL) contributions. The MRP also highlights how the City of Toronto can improve the parkland acquisition process.

THE SITUATION

Municipalities across Ontario have reserve funds with CIL contributions. The City of Toronto had \$237 million (2019) in uncommitted funds that could be used for parkland acquisition. Meanwhile, Toronto has seen significant residential construction activity from onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. According to Toronto's Parkland Strategy Refresh 2022, the average parkland provision per person is projected to decline 10 per cent from 28 m² in 2019 to 25 m² in 2034.¹ High-density neighbourhoods are likely below the average and may be in areas considered parkland deficient (Figure 1). With these trends, the opportunity exists for new tools to address its parkland acquisition funding gap.

THE CHALLENGES

Using existing CIL reserve funds is not an easy task. The City of Toronto must save up funds to purchase parkland. It cannot finance the acquisition. In other words, it cannot go to a bank and say: "We are \$20 million short. Can you give us a loan to buy this parkland, please?" Plus, the City does not move as fast as private actors. The silver lining is that it provides a starting point in the conversation for all parties to address the problem of moving faster to acquire more parkland.

HOMEGROWN INNOVATIONS AND THE OPPORTUNITIES

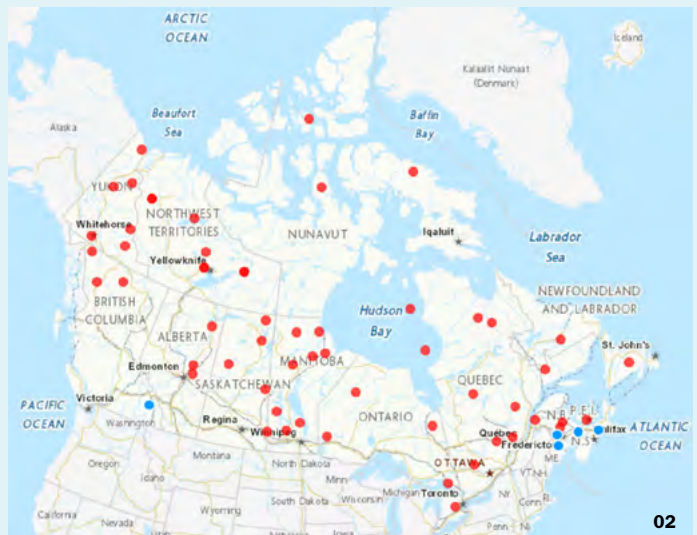
The City of Toronto has issued four green bonds cumulatively valued at \$780 million since 2018. Proceeds have been used to fund actions like tree planting at a streetcar yard and flood protection in the Port Lands. Payments to investors are funded through municipal general revenues.

What if we put a twist on it and issued an Urban Green Space Bond (UGSB)? According to conservationist Jeremy Guth, a UGSB would be CIL-backed. If we took the Parkland Acquisition Reserve Funds as of 2019 to back it, which was \$31.2 million, the City could borrow \$623.7 million and afford to pay a five per cent annual coupon. The bond could be used for the City to acquire parkland in a way that connects green space corridors and improves biodiversity. It is worth noting that current provincial legislation does not allow for such a bond to be issued. However, now is a time for bold ideas.

An UGSB should have social benefits. Areas of Toronto close to equity-deserving groups and with parkland need can be prioritized. An Indigenous Protected and Conserved Area (IPCA) could be established with the City of Toronto and an Indigenous Nation. An

IPCA allows Indigenous Peoples to use their knowledge to conserve land in partnership with governments. So far, five IPCAs have been established in British Columbia, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. The blue dots represent IPCAs in Figure 2.

We can take inspiration for a UGSB from Carolinian Canada Coalition's Deshkan Ziibi Conservation Impact Bond (DZCIB). The DZCIB was created to reverse habitat loss and accelerate growth of healthy landscapes in southwestern Ontario. It was launched in 2020 by the Deshkan Ziibiing (Chippewas of the Thames First Nation), VERGE Capital, Thames Talbot Land Trust, Ivey Business School, with the support of 3M. As of July 2021, the DZCIB pilot has supported 69 hectares (171 acres) of habitat that has been improved, 39,000+ native plants have been planted, and 450 people have been engaged.²



THE WAY FORWARD

New tools are being developed in finance to address longstanding environmental issues. Why can't municipalities do the same? After all, cities are often on the frontlines of climate change. We are fortunate to see animals like deer, owls, and great blue herons in Toronto's parks. Without vision in parkland acquisition, those sightings may become rarer. I want to keep seeing animals in parks. The time is ripe to do things differently. 🌱

¹ City of Toronto Parkland Strategy Refresh 2022: <https://www.toronto.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/969f-Parkland-Strategy-Draft-April-2022-Refresh.pdf>

² Carolinian Canada Coalition: <https://caroliniancanada.ca/dzcib/report>



Jean-François Obregón Murillo is a 2022 graduate of Toronto Metropolitan University's Master of Planning program and a Research Assistant at the Ivey Business School at Western University. He also runs The Urban Hulk, a consultancy and blog focused on socially responsible investing and urban planning.

As a thank you to front-line workers during the pandemic, One Bench One Tree created a mini design where a single native tree is planted physically distanced at two metres from the front of a bench. Photo by Thanu Tharma



ACADEMIC

Hospitality for all: The One Bench One Tree project

BY EVERETT DEJONG

There are tokens of appreciation being placed and planted on hospital grounds around the province of Ontario. A volunteer group that originated as a cohort of Master of Landscape Architecture students at the University of Guelph has formed an organization thanking frontline workers for their work during the COVID-19 global pandemic.

Hospitals serve like hospices, emblematic of hospitality to those in a vulnerable state in their lives. During its first year of activity,

“...extend an invitation to rest in a hospitable fashion, understanding the site where human trauma was taking place.”

the One Bench One Tree group quickly recognized the mental pressure to care while needing care yourself. As volunteers in the landscape architecture community, they decided that the least they could do was say thank you and extend an invitation to rest in a hospitable fashion, understanding the site where human trauma was taking place. The question asked by this volunteer group was, who is taking care of those taking care of us during this pandemic?

“...when dealing with humans struggling with real human issues, the reality of your work impacting others may be immeasurable, however small a project.”

One Bench One Tree (1Bench1Tree.ca) created a mini design where a single native tree is planted physically distanced at two metres from the front of a bench. The native tree, donated by Maple Leaves Forever (mapleleavesforever.ca), is to be considered a forever gift, understanding that, because of the trauma that has taken place these past few years, this gift is to last the lifetime of those directly impacted while taking care of the general populous during this current pandemic.

The bench, donated by Maglin Site Furniture (maglin.com), is meant to invite the frontline worker to rest their bodies and minds from the stresses of the job and the life around it. And this bench is to be placed on a hard surface of precast Umbriano slabs donated by Unilock (unilock.com).


It's a tight design intended to fill most spaces, understanding the grounds may be full of physical structures due to the expansion of the facilities over time. Void green space, however small, can still be hard to come by, notably at small historical hospitals in rural Ontario.

The invitation to rest has become a critical token of appreciation noted by the frontline community. It didn't take long in this capacity that the One Bench One Tree group soon found itself out of its

element and, in the collaborative fashion of landscape architects, decided to bring in the Canadian Mental Health Association (cmha.ca) as a partner.


Having completed several projects at various sites across Ontario, the group has learned that planting a forever gift as a token of gratitude was the easy part. The extending of an invitation to rest by way of design came with a set of consequences unbeknownst to the original design team. Planning for a bench under a tree may appear serene, but the turmoil of one using the bench may challenge the original design's spirit of intent. The initial plan was to say thank you, but the fundamental objective now is to assist those dealing with mental health issues.

“The initial plan was to say thank you, but the fundamental objective now is to assist those dealing with mental health issues.”

Designing and planning to assist humans in living a better life is noble. But, when dealing with humans struggling with real human issues, the reality of your work impacting others may be immeasurable, however small a project. Can this One Bench One Tree project serve as an example of what should be present at every care facility in Ontario? Hospitality for all, including caring for those who care. 



Everett Dejong is an entrepreneur, Master of Landscape Architecture student at the University of Guelph, and the founder of the One Bench One Tree project.

A large indoor cannabis cultivation facility, often referred to as a grow room. The room is filled with rows of cannabis plants growing in a structured, industrial environment. The plants are supported by a metal frame and are illuminated by numerous yellow grow lights hanging from the ceiling. The lighting creates a warm, golden glow throughout the space. The plants are densely packed, and the overall atmosphere is one of a highly controlled and specialized agricultural production environment.

ACADEMIC

Planning for cannabis production: Growing consensus in a field of conflict

BY MEGAN CRANFIELD AND SARA EPP

A typical indoor non-greenhouse cannabis production facility. Retrieved from an open-source database.

When recreational cannabis was federally legalized, many growers sought rural farmland and existing greenhouses for production; however, concerns from neighbouring property owners about the potential for odour and lighting nuisances impacted opportunities for cannabis production. In response to these concerns, many communities enacted interim control by-laws to prohibit the construction of new production facilities in their jurisdiction. These control by-laws also gave municipal staff time to amend their zoning by-laws to include stipulations around cannabis production and determine an appropriate approach to these facilities. Many municipalities felt unprepared to address cannabis nuisance issues given limited provincial guidance, but planning departments were forced to amend zoning by-laws as an initial step to mitigate conflict and limit impacts on adjacent properties.

“...zoning by-law regulations on cannabis production facilities vary across the province.”

As a result of this municipally led approach, zoning by-law regulations on cannabis production facilities vary across the province. Some policies are incredibly prohibitive, while others are more welcoming of the industry. These inconsistencies have created confusion within the industry, frustrated rural residents, and, in many cases, increased conflict. With funding from the Ontario Agri-food Innovation Alliance, our research examines planning approaches for cannabis production that mitigate land-use conflicts and are also supportive of the industry.

“...provincial guidance...would assist many municipalities in their creation of cannabis production policies.”

The first phase of this study included the creation of a publicly available database that tracks cannabis policies by municipality in Ontario. Through this database, several interesting trends have been observed. First, the most common setbacks for cannabis production facilities are 150 to 300 metres from sensitive land uses (schools, public parks, places of worship, etc.). Second, most zoning by-laws focus exclusively on indoor production and do not permit or do not acknowledge outdoor facilities. Third, these policies only apply to new facilities and not legacy greenhouses that operated through medicinal licenses before recreational legalization.

Through phase two, interviews with rural planners and legal growers have provided insight into the challenges and opportunities

for cannabis production. Nuisance complaints predominantly relate to odour, with some participants noting lighting concerns as well. To address these issues, additional by-laws related to odour emissions and dark skies have been created in some municipalities; however, concerns regarding the impact of these regulations on production were noted by growers. Many of these by-laws have been appealed by growers to the Ontario Land Tribunal (OLT), with decisions pending. Some appeals have also sought clarification regarding the role of the Normal Farm Practices Protection Board in determining the appropriateness of these by-laws as part of their appeal. Interviews have highlighted the unique complexity of the cannabis sector, given the various roles of all levels of government and significant pressure facing rural communities to create policies that not only limit conflict but also support the expansion of the industry.

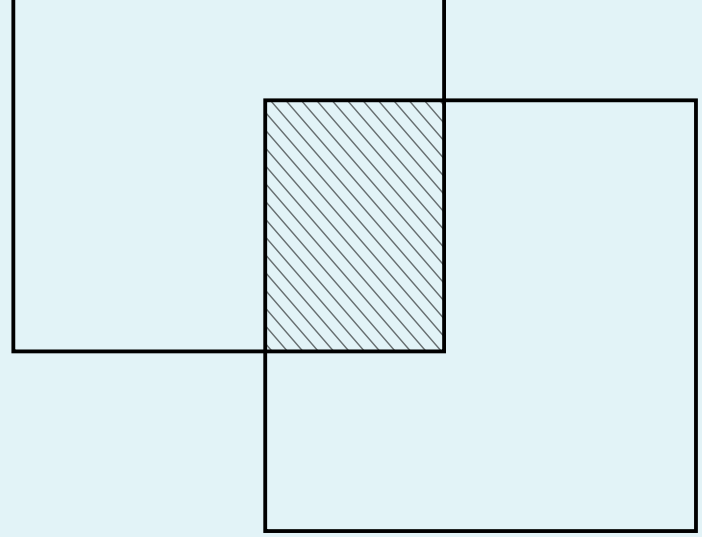
“While rural planners have no impact on the approval of production licenses, they are facing significant public pressure to create policies...”

Through our research it has been noted that provincial guidance, such as a standard minimum separation distance, would assist many municipalities in their creation of cannabis production policies. While rural planners have no impact on the approval of production licenses, they are facing significant public pressure to create policies that not only limit conflict but also do not impede the expansion of the industry. To move forward with the industry and effectively mitigate odour and lighting concerns, policy guidance from the province or decisions on cases currently under review at the OLT is necessary. ☺

Learn more about the research and review the planning for cannabis database at saraepp.com/cannabis.



Megan Cranfield is a Student Member of OPPI and an MSc (Planning) student at the University of Guelph and **Sara Epp, PhD**, is an Assistant Professor at the University of Guelph.



ACADEMIC

Applying intersectionality to rural planning

BY PATRYCIA MENKO

In the late 1980's, African American feminist scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw introduced the idea of intersectionality to explain how race and gender overlap to intensify systems of oppression. Since its advent, intersectionality has evolved to consider how other configurations of identity – such as age, class, disability/ability, immigrant and migration status, religion, sexual orientation, etc. – intersect to affect one's experiences in society. Although experiences can be shared by social groups, they are all distinct in some way. Experiences can also be amplified by social power hierarchies rooted in history, geographic location, and macro-level contexts, like urban planning policies.

In May this year, I wrote a blog post for Urban Minds reflecting on intersectionality and equitable urban spaces.¹ In summary, urban planning has historically done too little to incorporate intersectionality into practice. In doing so, we have failed and disappointed many low-income, racialized, and minority individuals and communities. Indeed, one of the most pronounced humbling realizations of the COVID-19 pandemic era has been the consequences of systemic discrimination in our profession, including redlining, limiting transportation infrastructure and routes, and inequitable access to and quality of neighbourhood green spaces. As Jay Pitter once expertly said, urban design is not neutral.²

The good news is that many planners are already on track towards resolution and applying an equity lens to planning work. Many of us

are leading community-based and localized approaches knowing that residents are both closer to the problem and the solution.³ The challenge remains in rural settings, where intersectional planning has not been afforded the same attention as it has in more urbanized areas.

“We all deserve to have our voices heard, cultures celebrated, and unique needs reflected through planning policies.”

Rural planning has traditionally focused on balancing a rural economy around agricultural and rich natural resources and creating small towns that enable sociability without compromising the natural environment.⁴ Recently, Cohen found that rural settings compound intersectional systems of inequity.⁵ For instance, seniors not only face issues of ageing, but those living in small or remote towns also have less access to public transportation, health care centres, healthy food retailers, and sufficient housing. Small towns also show greater incidents of discrimination towards immigrants, Indigenous, and racialized people compared to medium-sized cities which impede on feelings of belongingness and community engagement – a notion far from pride that Canada is built on diversity.

In 2021, a study from Western University looked at discrimination across nine regions and their outlying rural areas in Southern Ontario, including London–Middlesex. The researchers found that more than 80 per cent of Indigenous people, and in more than half the regions studied, 60 per cent of immigrants and racialized people feel unwelcome and unaccepted in rural communities.⁶ Many respondents experienced discrimination in libraries, parks, community centres and arenas, and on public transit. A 2020 Remax study also found that acts of racism towards BIPOC people in small towns were heightened following the surge of people leaving large cities like Toronto for rural communities with cheaper housing during the COVID-19 pandemic.⁷

Rural communities are struggling with population growth, and future economic development is dependent on the inflow of migrants. Knowing this, how do planners (and our allies) keep people they’ve attracted to rural communities? How do they sustain BIPOC, LGBTQ2S+, and other minorities’ trust in planners and public institutions? We all deserve to have our voices heard, cultures celebrated, and unique needs reflected through planning policies. So, how does intersectionality gain prominence in rural planning circles and transcend unwelcoming neighbours?

- **First**, diversity training is needed to increase tolerance and acceptance by long-time residents and public and private sector employees. Planning is deeply rooted in empathy and needed to better understand how to create more inclusive urban spaces.
- **Second**, rural planners can incorporate an intersectional lens towards decision-making. For instance, a planner might consider intersections of identity (e.g., race, immigrant status, etc.) against processes (e.g., discrimination) against an analysis of policies and practices (e.g., who is attending public consultations? Who feels unwelcome? Do current planning processes make it difficult for marginalized groups to participate? What are the barriers to

engagement?). The same line of thinking can be applied beyond race to other groups who have historically been negatively impacted by planning decisions or left out of the conversation (e.g., seniors, those with disabilities, people of different faiths, etc.).

- **Third**, planners can apply gender-based analysis+ (GBA+) towards research and policy development. GBA+ is a tool to help assess systemic inequalities across government initiatives. It is offered by the Government of Canada for free.
- **Fourth**, planners can turn to youth to help shape inclusive neighbourhoods knowing that youth are hyper-aware of social issues and needed to sustain rural communities. At Urban Minds, we offer workshops with municipalities and civic organizations interested in better connecting with youth and building youth-friendly, equitable spaces, programs, and services.
- **Fifth**, planners can employ creative thinking and consider new ways to celebrate diversity and increase public safety for vulnerable groups. Meaningful community engagement events, like roundtable discussions, focus groups, or digital engagement, in formal and informal settings can be held to give many community members a place to share their thoughts and experiences.

These ideas are merely first steps. There is much to be learned between each other and between urban-rural relations. Moreover, applying intersectionality means monitoring and reevaluating approaches as populations shift and grow over time to continuously design better and equitable cities for everyone.

¹Menko, P. (2022). Meet Me at the Corner of You St and Also You St: Intersectionality and Urban Spaces. <https://medium.com/urban-minds/meet-me-at-the-corner-of-you-st-and-also-you-st-intersectionality-and-urban-spaces-e15e757d2ccf>

²Pitter, J. (2020). A Call to Courage: An Open Letter to Canadian Urbanists. <https://canurb.org/wp-content/uploads/OpenLetter-ACallToCourage-Final-June2020.pdf>

³Dandekar, H.C. & Hibbard, M. (2016). Rural issues in urban planning: current trends and reflections. *International Planning Studies*, 21(3), 225–229.

⁴Dandekar & Hibbard (2016).

⁵Cohen, A. (2021). The Challenges of Intersectionality in the Lives of Older Adults Living in Rural Areas with Limited Financial Resources. *Gerontology and Geriatric Medicine*, 7, 1–9.

⁶Vaswani, Mamta & Esses, Victoria M. (2021). Discrimination Experienced by Immigrants, Visible Minorities, and Indigenous Peoples in London and Middlesex. <https://london.ca/sites/default/files/2021-09/Report%20on%20Experiences%20of%20Discrimination%20in%20London-Middlesex.pdf>

⁷Yazdani, T. & LePage, M. (2020). Alleged racism highlights diversity divide in rural Ontario. Toronto City News. <https://toronto.citynews.ca/2020/11/02/alleged-racism-highlights-diversity-divide-in-rural-ontario/>



Patricia (Patti) Menko is a graduate of the MES in Planning program at the University of Waterloo. In 2021, she received the Canadian Institute of Planners President’s Scholarship for her thesis research on food gentrification in Toronto. She currently works as a Planning and Public Health Research Assistant at UW and volunteers as Project Coordinator with Urban Minds.



Wayne Caldwell, RPP, is a Professor of Rural Planning and Development at the University of Guelph and also has a career-long connection with the County of Huron Department of Planning and Development. He has lectured across Canada on the future of rural communities and has published extensively in the areas of planning, community development, agricultural land preservation, siting livestock facilities, healthy rural communities, rural land use, and the environment.

Registered Professional Planner

PROFILE

NAME:

Wayne Caldwell, PhD., FCIP, RPP

LOCATION:

Guelph, Ontario

POSITION:

Professor in Rural Planning at the University of Guelph

Wayne is also an active member of the planning profession: Past President of the Ontario Professional Planners Institute, Council for the Canadian Institute of Planners, Past President of the Association of Canadian University Planning Programs, founding member and Past Chair of the Ontario Rural Council, founding member of the Huron Stewardship Council and the Lake Huron Centre for Coastal Conservation. He sat on the Greenbelt Council and was appointed by the Ontario government as Chair of the Provincial Nutrient Management Advisory Committee.

What inspired you to follow a career in planning and, in particular, to teach rural planning at University of Guelph?

I had some fantastic mentors early in my academic career and in my professional career as well. It's worth acknowledging that I worked with Mike Troughton, who sadly passed away too early, and Ralph Krueger, who also sadly passed away too early. I did my undergraduate and masters at Western with Mike and my PhD at Waterloo with Ralph. They were just such wonderful, dedicated professionals. I could not have had a more positive, supportive experience than I had working with these two individuals. I also had the great fortune to work with Gary Davidson in Huron County, who was the director there for 25 years and Past President of OPPI and Past President of CIP, and he's such a fantastic person to work for and such an exemplary leader in the planning field. I have to acknowledge those people because they helped set my career path, and I am indebted to those individuals.

“Having the privileged position as an educator to make those contributions is incredibly rewarding.”

I was raised on a farm and have always had this connection to the land, always this connection to rural, always this connection to community in that context. I think we often look for those influences in life that help set us in a direction. If I had been born a generation earlier, I'm sure I would've been a farmer. That just would've been the path that would've been there for me. Growing up at the time I did, there was opportunity for education and those were my interests and I pursued them.

“When it comes to farmland preservation, I don't think we often enough bring that global perspective to it in terms of change into the future.”

What is and has been most rewarding for you?

I think of that from two scales. They're the little things as a practising planner, which was the first 20 years of my career. People coming up to me at a public meeting or people sending a note or an email or a card at Christmas saying thanks for something I may have done that they felt was of benefit to them. Those little recognitions that come to all of us as planners are rewarding in their own way, where people acknowledge that you've made a contribution, that you've done something well.

Then there are the opportunities to work with students, literally the last 20, 25 years of my career, where I run into someone, or I see the fantastic things that someone is doing. That's incredibly gratifying as a recognition that I contributed to someone's life. Having the privileged position as an educator to make those contributions is incredibly rewarding.

“Between 2016 and 2021, Ontario lost 319 acres of farmland a day.”

Also, the opportunity to do research and see it influence policy in some way, whether it be provincial policy or at a local level – that's also very rewarding.

What are some of the threats to farms in rural Ontario, and how do they connect to what's happening globally?

One can't not mention climate change and there's the connection that doesn't get near as much attention, which is the loss of biodiversity. At a global level, we see that happening in so many ways. These kinds of threats exist in a global context, and they impact what happens in local communities. Our challenge and opportunity as planners is to bring these global issues down to the local level. How do we get people more motivated around acting in regard to climate change? How do we get them more motivated as it relates to the loss of biodiversity? I think those are key environmental issues that are impacting us.

I would also bring a flag to changing demographics as they exist in rural communities. We have this current situation with COVID-19,

where many rural communities are feeling a reinvestment of interest and desire on the part of people to live here.

But we still have rural communities across the province and across the country that are losing population. If you look at the demographics, there's concern that they will continue to lose population. For those communities, their livelihoods remain at risk, and it's something for us to recognize and it's not always easy to do.

When we see the booming economy and the booming population of the GTA, as an example, what does it mean in Northern Ontario? What does it mean in those parts of the province that are further removed from those engines of population growth in terms of their future and the services that will be required for people in those communities in the decades ahead, especially with the baby boom population aging.

“...huge portions of the planet are forecast to lose significant amounts of productivity...”

What about the effects of development and the protection of agricultural lands?

The land base, which we depend upon, it is critical for food production. There are innovative things happening with greenhouses and hydroponics and things of that nature, but we still rely fundamentally on land to produce, and we've been losing land. Between 2016 and 2021, Ontario lost 319 acres of farmland a day. And what does that mean? I like to bring a global lens to things. So, one of the global lenses is climate change. We live in a part of the world where forecasts would suggest we're likely to see an increase in productivity as a result of climate change, more heat, more moisture, notwithstanding unpredictability that can be connected to climate change. Meanwhile huge portions of the planet are forecast to lose significant amounts of productivity, virtually all of South America, virtually all of the American Southwest, virtually all of the African continent, virtually all of Southeast Asia, Australia. Huge losses in productivity.

What does it mean for us when we bring that global lens? Yes, you could argue, well, you lose a few acres, Ontario, what's the big deal as it might relate to the province. But it is a big deal. If you think about these things from a global perspective, in terms of the loss of farmland in an area that has the forecasted outcome from climate change of increased productivity. What does it mean from an ethical and moral perspective for us in this part of the world to see increases while much of the rest of the world will have dire consequences? When it comes to farmland preservation, I don't think we often enough bring that global perspective to it in terms of change into the future.

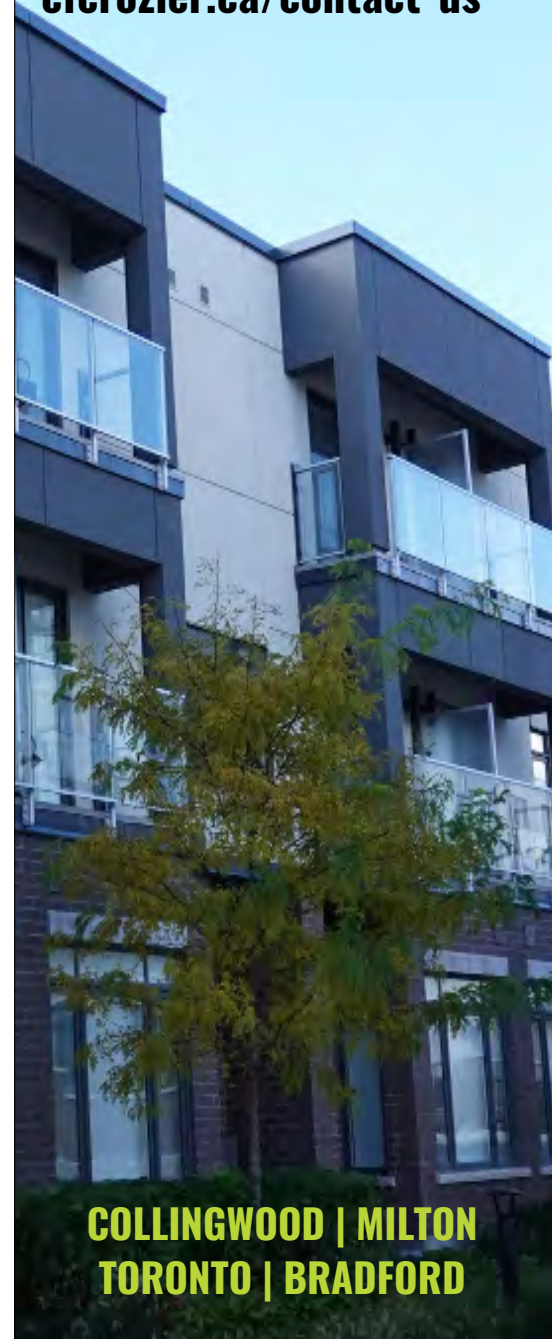
“...many of the solutions to those questions reside within rural communities.”

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What makes you feel hopeful for future of rural Ontario?

I like to think I have a “glass is half full” perspective as opposed to a “glass half empty” perspective. We can look at rural communities and, yes, there are those which will struggle and find challenges, but there’s also all kinds of opportunity. Part of this will be driven – going back to environmental issues, climate change, loss of biodiversity, and even demographics to a degree – by realizing as a provincial society that rural has so much to offer. And it’s not only so much to offer, but it’s also so critical in addressing the equation – the equation being, how do we deal with climate change? How do we deal with loss of biodiversity? Realizing that many of the solutions to those questions reside within rural communities. All the way from the green space, the open space, that’s there to noticing the air quality warnings today. Rural is a potential response to some of those issues from the point of view of how it contributes positively to the environment. There’s increasingly a recognition that rural can contribute in a hopeful, positive way to some of these challenges that, as a society, we will face in the generations ahead of us.

“Our challenge as a profession and opportunity as a profession is to embrace those broad issues and recognize that we can work locally, but we can do our very best to bring a global lens to it.”

Do you have a message for RPPs and up-and-coming RPPs

[I was recently asked] why don’t more of our planners know more about agriculture and rural communities. My response was, well, the planning population isn’t so different from the population of the province. If we look at the province as a whole, less than two per cent of the provincial population are farmers. If we look at planners and the province, probably less than two per cent of the planning population comes from a farm background. Our challenge is to make sure we embrace the fact that a much, much larger percentage of the land base is rural than is urban. We have many more urban trained planners, but the vast, vast, vast majority of the land base of the province is rural.

Many of our graduate planners will end up working in rural communities, whether they realize it or aspire to it or not. If you’re working for the Region of Halton, or the Region of Peel, or the City of Ottawa, the vast majority of land in those regions, notwithstanding a huge urban population, is, in fact, rural. The city of Ottawa is the old county of Carleton plus the urban centre of Ottawa. It’s a huge rural area. The case is the same for most of our regions as well – large urban centres, but also large rural land bases.

The opportunity for up-and-coming planners is to embrace opportunities to learn more about rural communities, rural planning, because many will be practising in those environments. It’s really important to recognize the importance of rural and grab the experience when it presents itself.

For the established profession, it’s to try to maintain that. It’s so easy as a planner to get pulled into the weeds and lose sight of some of those broad community goals and broad issues we recognize and aspire to – whether it be climate change, or biodiversity, or demographics – and get pulled into the latest development. Our challenge as a profession and opportunity as a profession is to embrace those broad issues and recognize that we can work locally, but we can do our very best to bring a global lens to it. And we can do our very best to infuse our local communities with the issues that need to be addressed and are the challenge of our generation. ☺

Keep reading... Find the full interview with Wayne Caldwell on the Planning Exchange blog at ontarioplanners.ca/blog/planning-exchange

Contributors

What are RPPs focused on today? What do they see as priorities in rural Ontario?
Here is what three contributors to this issue of *Y Magazine* have to say.



Page 06

Pam Duesling, MAES, MCIP, RPP, Ec.D., CMM3
GENERAL MANAGER OF DEVELOPMENT
SERVICES COUNTY OF BRANT

My interests as an RPP are focused on the future of the profession and, specifically, helping to mentor new rural planners. I look forward to working with my colleagues in the County of Brant and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing on completing a new official plan, as strong local policies are a priority for responsible community development. As the County of Brant continues to grow and prosper, it is now more important than ever to manage growth socially, environmentally, and economically. Under new legislation timelines for complete development, we are focused on customer service, managing expectations, and quality community development, as well as working with neighbouring First Nations on environmental protection and cultural preservation.

As a rural planner for nearly 25 years, I have seen much change in Ontario's agricultural communities. My priorities have always been and will continue to be focused on the preservation of agricultural lands, responsible growth management, and opportunities for family farmers through on-farm diversification.



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Eric Miles, MPL, MCIP, RPP
PLANNER
THAMES VALLEY DISTRICT SCHOOL BOARD

As an RPP, I am focused on building relationships with other planners across the discipline to help improve the work I do. Planning is a collaborative profession. By expanding my knowledge base, better outcomes for projects such as new school developments can be achieved. I am also focused on advocating for the importance of school board planning. Schools are a vital part of communities and require careful planning to ensure that positive outcomes can be achieved for students.

I see a continued focus on collaboration and research and data analysis as a priority for rural Ontario. As trends and demographics continue to change in rural areas, planners will need to be able to adapt to meet changing school and community needs. To allow this to happen, collaboration between planners across school boards and municipalities will continue to be important.



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Regan Zink, Candidate Member of OPPI
PHD STUDENT
UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH'S RURAL STUDIES

As a PhD student in Rural Studies, Candidate RPP, and Arrell Food Institute Scholar, my interests lie somewhere in the nexus of agri-food systems, urban-rural interdependence, local governance and knowledge, and environmental adaptation and resilience. Agricultural lands and the availability of food, particularly culturally appropriate food, are the foundation of human health, community vitality, and in many rural areas, livelihoods. I feel strongly that planners have a role to play in supporting and responding to agri-food systems.

I think one of the biggest priorities for planners in rural areas is creating space for both bottom-up (community-driven) and top-down (policy-driven) forms of governance. This requires us to view the role of planning broadly – inclusive of the role planners play in education, leadership, and stewardship, among others. We must also continue to work towards reconciliation and food sovereignty in a meaningful and authentic way.

What's your vision for a better Ontario?

Neighbourhoods where everyone belongs. Rural development that protects natural habitats and increases food security. Healthy communities with equitable access to health care, housing, and education. Transportation systems that get people where they are going cleanly, safely, and actively. Cities where the goals of economic development are balanced with the needs of the people who live and work there.

Students aspiring to achieve their visions for the future get their start at Ontario's accredited planning schools. Six universities across Ontario offer accredited programs, where students gain the knowledge and skills they need to become leaders in the planning field.

- Queen's University's School of Urban and Regional Planning
- York University's Faculty of Environmental & Urban Change
- University of Waterloo's School of Planning
- University of Toronto's Department of Geography and Planning
- Toronto Metropolitan University's School of Urban and Regional Planning
- University of Guelph's Rural Planning Program in the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development

These programs provide students with opportunities to engage in well-focused education across a broad spectrum of planning issues, including urban design, rural studies, community sustainability, transportation, housing, heritage, health care, and more. Students engage in teamwork, active learning, innovative research, and real-world projects led by exceptional professors with years of planning experience.

Ontario's accredited planning programs are also the first step to achieving the Registered Professional Planner (RPP) designation. RPPs are innovative thinkers who use their skills and knowledge to bring diverse opinions to the table to find equitable solutions. They are game changers who work in a variety of fields within the public, private, academic, and not-for-profit sectors to inform choices and inspire communities. RPPs know change is constant and challenges are opportunities to do better.

Be part of the change you want to see in Ontario.



Learn more: ontarioplanners.ca/become-an-rpp





2GETHER

OPPI • OALA CONFERENCE

2 days, 2 disciplines, 2 ways to participate – defining our professional roles and uniting to build more equitable, accessible and inspired communities.

The Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) and the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects (OALA) partnered to host a joint conference in London, Ontario.

SEPTEMBER 21 & 22, 2022

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