

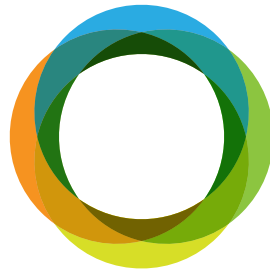


IDEAS AT THE CROSSROADS OF INSPIRED COMMUNITIES



THIS ISSUE:

Housing for all: Kitchener's approach to tackling the housing crisis 06



PlanON AWARDS

Honouring Excellence in Planning

The Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) honours the outstanding contributions of members across Ontario. The PlanON Awards is an awards program to honour the exceptional achievements of OPPI members who demonstrate professional excellence and a commitment to advancing the planning profession in Ontario.

The PlanON Awards recognize the important role the planning profession plays in shaping the quality, livability, and sustainability of communities for future generations. Several categories have been created. This year, our awards program expands with a focus on projects. We're introducing a new framework, allowing unlimited awards, including an inaugural Project of the Year Award that may be awarded for exceptional projects. Recognitions will be based on awards of excellence (90-100) or merit (80-89). We eagerly anticipate celebrating outstanding achievements and contributions to planning, ushering in a new era of visionary planning.

The PlanON Public Education Award
The PlanON Innovative Research Award
The PlanON Vision Award
The PlanON Emerging Leadership Award
The PlanON RPP Leadership Award
The PlanON Volunteer Service Award

The ceremony for the recipients of the 2024 PlanON Awards is a highlight of the OPPI Adaptation Transformation Conference in Hamilton, September 25 to 27, 2024.

Find detailed information on categories and eligibility, as well as submission requirements and deadlines for the PlanON Awards, at www.ontarioplanners.ca/PlanON.

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FEATURES

- [06 Housing for all: Kitchener's approach to tackling the housing crisis](#)
- [09 An intersectional approach to the affordable housing crisis: A logic model framework](#)
- [13 Finding the missing middle from the inside out](#)
- [15 Planning for Ontario's housing needs: How do we effectively address current structural issues and plan for growth?](#)
- [17 A blueprint for equity: Confronting systemic racism in Ontario's housing landscape](#)
- [20 Planning with Purpose](#)
- [23 Urbanizing suburbia: Examples from Ontario](#)
- [27 Recreation master planning and equity, diversity, and inclusion in NHL Hockey](#)
- [31 City of Markham and MIPOC partnership: Reducing participation barriers for racialized planners](#)
- [34 The Popular Audit of the Historic Centre of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil](#)
- [35 Condoland: Lessons from the failure of CityPlace](#)

REGULARS

- [04 Inspire: OPPI and the housing crisis](#)
- [05 Chair's Message](#)
- [36 Policy Column](#)
- [48 RPP Profile: Uzo Rossouw](#)
- [51 OPPI News](#)
- [55 In Memory](#)
- [56 Staff Spotlight: The Membership Team](#)
- [57 Volunteer Spotlight: Krishon Walker](#)
- [58 Contributors](#)

ACADEMIC

- [37 Affordable housing is more than a big city problem: Rural Greenbelt housing and implications for planners](#)
- [40 Rendering visible tenant displacement throughout Ontario](#)
- [43 A wiser approach to planning education and practice](#)
- [45 Welcoming campus, inclusive communities: Building housing infrastructure for international students](#)
- [46 Planning Student Projects](#)

INSPIRE



OPPI AND THE HOUSING CRISIS

OPPI continues to embrace and enhance our role as the voice of the planning profession by proactively and reactively participating in meaningful engagement and conversations around the housing crisis.

On January 11, 2024, OPPI met with representatives from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to provide an overview of potential planning solutions for discussion and consideration. The presentation, entitled “**Creating a Transparent and Streamlined Planning System**,” highlighted a number of policy and process recommendations which were informed by numerous conversations with RPPs throughout Ontario. A few of the topics included Minister’s Zoning Orders, the creation of a Chief Planner of Ontario, increased delegation to planning staff, zoning reform, agency review timelines, and a stable land use planning environment.

Then, on February 20, OPPI hosted a **Reception at Queen’s Park** to introduce provincial political officials and their staff to OPPI and the valuable solutions our membership brings forward. Receptions at Queen’s Park are informal drop-in lunches that foster connections between organizations and provincial decision makers. OPPI’s goal for the reception was to discuss important role planners play in the development process, the need for more planners in Ontario, and OPPI’s recommendations

on how to increase efficiency in the planning process. These kinds of conversations help OPPI strengthen its relationships within the province while working towards our government relations advocacy goals.

These are just two recent examples of the work OPPI is doing to advocate for building healthy, resilient communities where everyone is welcome in response to and in consideration of the public interest.

OPPI also posts all submissions to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing at *The Policy Corner*. Since February 2022, almost all documents relate to the housing crisis, including OPPI’s responses and recommendations.

 **LEARN MORE**

To learn more about OPPI’s influence and role in the development of planning policy in Ontario, you are encouraged to check out *The Policy Corner* at <https://ontarioplanners.ca/inspiring-knowledge/policy-submissions-legislative-corner/policy-corner>.

The housing crisis has continually enhanced the spotlight on Ontario planners with more people being made aware of the role that planners play. That said, a planner's role is not singular – limited to the review and approvals process. It is broad and critical in responding to and addressing the many different components of the housing crisis.

In addition to the review and approvals process, planners in Ontario provide support and insights to municipalities as consultants; work with and as part of agencies to support the planning process and policy development; strategize around the interrelationship between land use and servicing / infrastructure; and coordinate engagement and outreach with community members, stakeholders, and decision makers. We are solution-focused facilitators who are the technical experts in “all things planning,” from high-level strategy around growth and development down to site-specific design and approvals.

With our duty to the public interest, we understand the importance of being part of the ongoing conversation around housing with the goal of being considered trusted advisors to those in positions of power. At the same time, we strive to use our role to educate people on the value of community and the value of creating healthy, resilient communities.

Over the past two years, OPPI has struck a number of working groups and invited members to provide their thoughts on the important role of planners in addressing the housing crisis. We have rallied and responded to new legislation and policies. We have submitted comments on all bills that were appropriate and affected us as planners. We have accepted invitations to meet with and provide solutions to Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing staff and build relationships where possible. This work is ongoing as we encourage our members to bring new ideas forward and participate in conversations around the future of the planning profession in the context of the housing crisis.

In our proactive and invited meetings with the Ministry and other allied agencies, we feel our

perspective is valued and respected and considered part of the evolving policy landscape. We provide input on potential solutions within our own framework, expertise, and understanding. OPPI's recommendations for addressing housing supply started as a list of 10 in February 2022, then grew to 13 and have further evolved as discussions deepen and ideas are developed.

OPPI is committed to being involved in any and hopefully all provincial conversations that address housing supply. We continue to encourage members like yourself to do the same within your own area of practice and influence. We are determined to help shape legislation and policy. We want to do so, because this represents a pivotal time in our profession which will significantly impact how we move forward. We are committed to working within our robust planning framework to bring different perspectives from agencies, communities, and the public with the ultimate goal of generating healthy, resilient communities. The future is unknown (as of now) but we are confident that we are at the table, representing your perspectives and opinions and putting best practice, innovation, and collaboration first and foremost.



A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'C. Basinski'.

Claire Basinski, MCIP, RPP, CP3
Chair,
Ontario Professional Planners Institute

“We are determined to help shape
legislation and policy.”



Housing for all: Kitchener's approach to tackling the housing crisis

BY ROSA BUSTAMANTE, RPP

The confluence of multiple housing-related factors has brought housing to the forefront of our work as planners: increasingly expensive market housing; limited supportive and affordable housing; displacements caused by renovictions and redevelopments; new tent cities and encampments in public spaces; and a growing unhoused and underhoused population.

Many planners have been trying to address housing affordability with limited regulatory tools, but housing challenges require collective effort from all orders of government, the private sector, and the non-profit sector to make a meaningful difference in addressing housing needs.



As a city operating within a two-tier local government, Kitchener is not a direct provider of affordable housing nor mandated to provide housing units for those in need of housing. Nevertheless, Kitchener actively seeks opportunities to support housing that fall within our span of control, including adopting our first housing strategy and quickly acting upon it by reframing our approach to engagement; streamlining approvals; and implementing innovative housing policies as part of a continuum of housing-focused initiatives.

THE STRATEGY

In 2020, Kitchener completed our first housing strategy, Housing for All. This award-winning document set out a series of actions and initiatives as we began shifting into the housing space:

- A human rights-based approach to housing;
- A commitment to lived experience collaboration;
- Help to end homelessness;
- Help to secure community, affordable rental, and affordable ownership housing;
- Advocacy;
- Aligning policies, processes, and the use of City of Kitchener land to facilitate more affordable housing; and
- Filling data gaps and establishing effective monitoring and accountability mechanisms.

Integral to achieving these priorities was the new approach to examining affordability across the housing continuum – from

homelessness to community housing to affordable housing and market rental and ownership.

To support the early implementation of Housing for All, Kitchener collaborated with The Shift and Leilani Farha, the former UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing. Leilani prepared an opinion piece for our local newspaper and participated in Kitchener's Speaker Series to initiate conversations with our community about the United Nation's declaration that housing is a human right and the commodification of housing. Leilani's work provided the community with an important starting point as we reframe the way we view housing – as a human right, not an investment strategy.

ACTIVATING HOUSING FOR ALL

Kitchener immediately pivoted to activating the strategy through the following examples.

In 2021, Kitchener established a Lived Experience Working Group for staff to work with and learn from community members who have lived experience being underhoused or unhoused. This rights-based participation supported by local government has transformed residents into engaged community members who are passionate about addressing housing issues and provide valuable advice on strategy implementation and progress monitoring as we continue our housing-related work.

To help end homelessness, the strategy identifies several actions towards facilitating the creation of 450 units of new supportive housing by providing city-owned sites for supportive housing projects; advocating for appropriate supports from Ontario Health teams; collaborating with the Region of Waterloo and operators to facilitate supportive housing projects; and identifying new locations and housing options for people living in encampments and shelters.

STREAMLINING APPROVALS

Kitchener moved quickly to support two time-sensitive opportunities to help local organizations secure funding for supportive housing for women and youth. One of these projects, the YWKW, was awarded

federal funding through the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) to construct a 41-unit supportive housing facility for women who have experienced homelessness. The City of Kitchener facilitated the project by entering a nominal-fee, long-term lease on a city-owned site and by piloting a new project manager position on the planning team.

The project manager's role was to work closely with the housing provider and their team to jointly establish timeline accountability, accelerate the development approvals process, and ensure supportive housing projects met required milestones to secure funding from other orders of government. This project went from the submission of a pre-consultation request to final site plan approval in a record 72 days, meeting its RHI timeline to reach occupancy within one year. The piloted project manager role demonstrated its value, and the city has since established two positions that continue to support affordable housing applications.

“...average development approvals process time being reduced by approximately 60 per cent.”

To align policies and processes to facilitate more affordable housing, Kitchener utilizes the new project manager positions to fast-track non-profit and affordable housing projects through city processes, offers a planning and building application fee-waiver incentive for non-profit organizations building rental units, and has established an affordable housing reserve fund to support affordable housing initiatives.

In 2020, Kitchener completed a transformative and comprehensive process-improvement project: the Development Services Review (DSR). This internal project was comprised of 18 “kaizens” (i.e., lean projects) to streamline processes, invest in new technology, return securities to applicants sooner, enhance public engagement, and make significant

reductions to development approval timelines. The DSR created a framework, knowledge base, and momentum for an ongoing body of continuous improvement work which has resulted in the average development approvals process time being reduced by approximately 60 per cent. This continuous-improvement mindset has led to a suite of process improvements in the past two years to address changes to provincial legislation through Bills 13, 109, and 23, facilitating the approval of over 11,400 units within legislated timelines in 2023, representing one third of Kitchener's Municipal Housing Pledge.

Although housing challenges related to labour shortages, borrowing costs, or construction material costs are outside of local government control, Kitchener is committed to ensuring the development approvals process will not be a primary barrier to achieving housing.

POLICY INNOVATION

In 2023, Kitchener launched Growing Together – a project that is creating a new policy and zoning framework for seven of Kitchener's 10 Major Transit Station Areas (MTSAs), which are located along the spine of the ION Light Rail Transit (LRT) route.

Growing Together plans to unlock more housing in the city's core by creating more pathways to development through as-of-right zoning and policy permissions that will reduce the need for official plan amendment applications for height or density. Using an award-winning equity-based engagement approach, this work will implement new land uses and zones that have been custom designed to perform in an MTSA including a thorough understanding of current market conditions.

The proposed zoning permits a full range of missing middle, mid-rise, and high-rise housing forms with a complementary mix of uses that will help lead to more complete communities. Each proposed zone includes carefully calibrated built-form regulations to ensure compatible building design at appropriate densities and without parking minimums.

The Growing Together initiative is closely aligned with establishing an inclusionary zoning framework. Kitchener is working with its counterpart cities of Waterloo and Cambridge along with the Region of Waterloo to establish a consistent approach to delivering affordable units within private development. The policy was developed with a land economics lens and seeks to minimize market disruptions that could negatively impact the supply of new market housing while delivering as much new affordable housing as possible. The staged approach reflects the relative market strength around each of the ION LRT stops and gradually increases the percentage of affordable units over a five-year horizon.

City council and staff are continually striving to do everything within our scope to support our existing and future residents. Recognizing that there are limited legislative tools available for municipalities to address displacement occurring in our community, staff are developing a rental replacement bylaw for city council consideration in early 2024 to address the future loss of rental units in our community. With the recent announcement of Kitchener's Housing Accelerator Fund (HAF) application, Kitchener looks forward to bringing more housing online through our next set of housing-related initiatives.

“...by seeking innovative opportunities and identifying gaps in internal processes, municipalities can find ways to support the delivery of housing...”

CONCLUSIONS

There is no single initiative that will solve the housing crisis, but by seeking innovative opportunities and identifying gaps in internal processes, municipalities can find ways to support the delivery of housing in partnership with other orders

of government and industry partners to collectively contribute towards providing housing for all.

Through intentional actions – such as completing a municipal housing strategy; building community capacity to have important conversations around housing as a human right; leveraging public assets for time-sensitive funding opportunities; reviewing internal processes to reduce barriers to development approvals; completing important policy work to unlock more housing opportunities; and collaborating with local agencies and community partners to support underhoused community members – municipalities can realize their ability to make a meaningful impact on the housing challenges facing our communities. (Y)



Rosa Bustamante, MCIP, RPP is a Member of OPPI and the Director of Planning, City of Kitchener.

17.1%

"17.1 per cent of Indigenous People live in overcrowded housing, almost double the number of non-Indigenous people living in crowded housing." – Indigenous Corporate Training Inc., February 28, 2023.

An intersectional approach to the affordable housing crisis: A logic model framework

BY OLUSOLA OLUFEMI, RPP, AND ZAHRA JAFFER

The definition of the word “housing” as a noun compared to a verb, as presented by John F. C. Turner in his article, “Housing as a Verb,” explains the difference between two alternate approaches of meeting housing demands when housing is seen either as a product or a process.

“...when housing is approached as a process, it is an activity...”

When housing is seen as a product, then it is also treated like a commodity where all the emphasis is on its physical attributes. On the other hand, when housing is approached as a process, it is an activity, which corresponds to both psychological and physical

needs of its inhabitants.¹ In the delivery of housing for consumption purposes, housing has been seen more as a noun: commodified, monetized, and hence, unaffordable to most of the population.

The prohibitive cost of housing has pushed minorities and lower income Ontarians further away from accessing decent, suitable, and affordable housing and homelessness continues to escalate. The Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force affirms: “Not long ago, hard-working Ontarians – teachers, construction workers, small business owners – could afford the home they wanted. In small towns, it was reasonable to expect that you could afford a home in the neighbourhood you grew up in. Today, home ownership or finding a quality rental is now out of reach for too many Ontarians. The system is not working as it should be. Housing has become too expensive for rental units, and it has become too expensive in rural communities and small towns.



Figure 1: Housing Intersectionality

“Supporting climate mitigation cannot be an excuse to continue business as usual.”

Having a place to call home connects people to their community, creates a gathering place for friends and family, and becomes a source of pride.”²

Housing affordability is a challenge for many living in Canada’s large urban areas, especially the vulnerable groups. The shortfall in housing impacts some populations and demographic groups more than others, such as those seeking accessible housing or affordable, family sized units in urban areas. Overall, CMHC estimated that Ontario needs 1.85 million additional homes to achieve affordability by 2030, while Ontario is currently committed to getting 1.5 million homes built by 2031.³

“...recognize housing-first approaches as a necessary context to addressing climate justice, transportation justice, and issues of land access and Indigenous rights.”

HOUSING INTERSECTIONALITY: TOWARDS A LOGIC MODEL AND BETTER COLLABORATION

One of the greatest challenges in addressing the housing crisis is how decoupled issues of housing are from related aspects of community development, health and well-being, and the environment. If we want to not just house people in a more secure, stable, and affordable way but also address broader social, health, and environmental aspects, we need better frameworks to design and evaluate policy and more willingness across all levels of government, the private sector, and social institutions to support partnerships and fund programs that recognize housing-first approaches as a necessary context to addressing climate justice, transportation justice, and issues of land access and Indigenous rights.

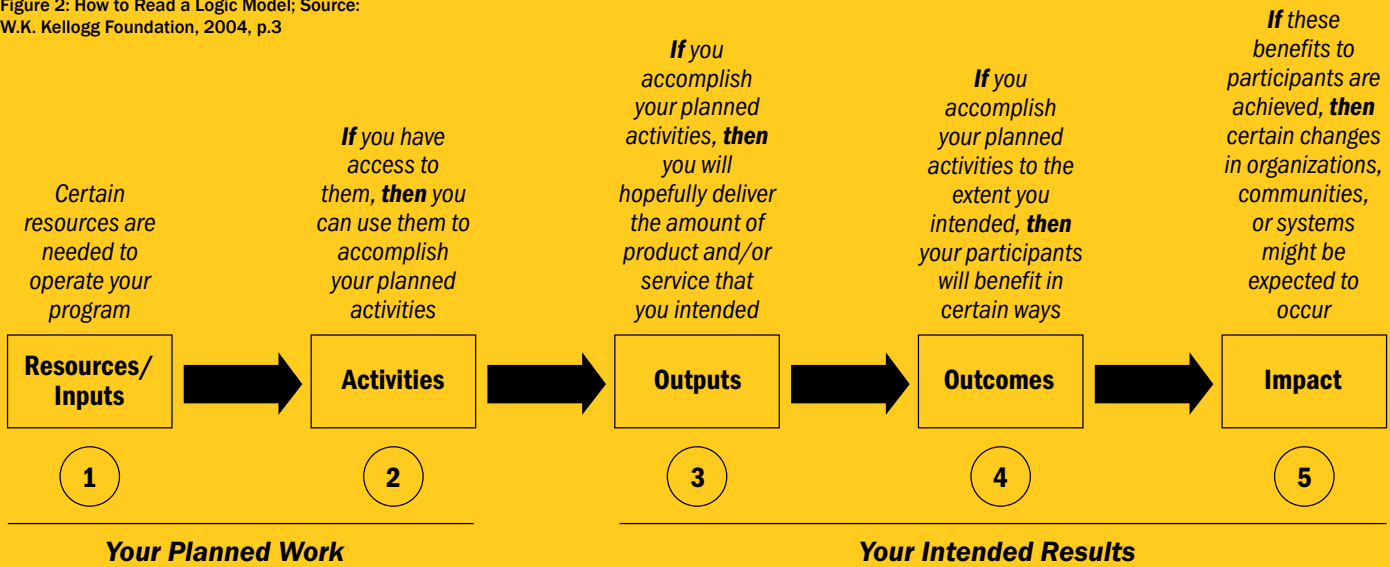
The evidence we use to guide housing decisions comes from a variety of sources, not least of which is the prevailing sentiment of the provincial government and their conception of what best serves their political interests. Fundamentally, the root of the housing crisis is inextricably linked to capitalistic motivations, housing commodification, lack of regulation to prevent loss of affordability and displacement, and land financialization.

If we want our housing policies to be more effective and have fewer undesired or unintended consequences, then we need to commit more strongly to building in a clear understanding of how success will be defined and measured in order to support better data gathering, monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement. Central to this would also be actively engaging those with lived experience, who are most impacted by policies and who understand implementation barriers and both the long- and short-term results of policy directions. Broadening the lens through which we understand the issue of housing is therefore crucial, particularly in the context of Indigenous rights and land back. As we enter the ninth year since the Truth and Reconciliation Commission’s Calls to Action were issued, it is vital that planners take up the mantle of better integrating an Indigenous justice lens into all our work and in housing in particular, given the connections to so many other critical issues of our time.

“...it is vital that planners take up the mantle of better integrating an Indigenous justice lens into all our work and in housing in particular...”

For example, much has been written about the deficiencies in the Ontario Building Code and its conception of “visitable” rather than “accessible” housing. Indeed, in the absence of a meaningful definition of accessibility in policy, it is not surprising that so little

Figure 2: How to Read a Logic Model; Source: W.K. Kellogg Foundation, 2004, p.3



housing is at a standard that would support the needs of disabled residents. Often, the debate around housing unit size suggests there is something morally wrong with people who question why anyone would want to live in a “shoebox in the sky” or who would prefer more space. In fact, for many disabled people, space is not just a nice benefit but a core requirement for safe, accessible, and comfortable living. Indeed, some of the most successful co-op housing models and developments for older adults feature a mix of public and private outdoor space to encourage social contact and support proximity to nature. And while high-rises can be designed to be more suited to a wide variety of living arrangements and resident needs, very little of it is currently.

“...sustainability in housing as fundamental to human survival...”

If we consider how climate change is impacting residents of older housing stock, the need for upgraded HVAC systems to support air conditioning given extreme heat as well as ventilation and filtration to manage spread of air-borne illnesses, we begin to see the issue of sustainability in housing as fundamental to human survival rather than a matter of cost savings on energy or appealing design.

CMHC notes: “Affordability is affected by changes in the distribution of income... Other sizeable challenges for housing in Canada include climate change that will cause rising sea levels or continuous fire hazard and risk of flooding that may render some housing uninhabitable.”⁴

Integrating a more intersectional analysis into housing policy and planning also supports stronger interlinkages to infrastructure components needed to supply complete communities, from sanitation and water to roads, sidewalks, active transportation, parks, and natural spaces (Figure 1).

Considering these issues through a logic model framework (Figure 2) provides an opportunity to think through what success looks like more holistically and reduce the potential for unintended consequences such as further displacement, loss of affordability, gentrification, and increased commodification of housing.

“A logic model is a systematic and visual way to present and share your understanding of the relationships among the resources you have to operate your program, the activities you plan, and the changes or results you hope to achieve.”⁵ Logic models provide a clear roadmap to prepare policies and plans to be monitored and evaluated throughout their implementation lifecycle by identifying what success looks like and what types of data, both qualitative and quantitative, need to be collected to measure progress. Logic models assist in evaluation and include process and outcome components. The most important factor is that all the components of an affordable housing program are linked.

“Logic models provide a clear roadmap to prepare policies and plans...”

In the context of housing, examples of logic models that consider both outputs as well as outcomes include the Metrics for Healthier Communities Affordable Housing Logic Model. It identifies outputs such as the numbers of affordable housing units, individuals housed, playground equipment users, and walking path users, as well as initial, intermediate, and ultimate outcomes such as mental health and well-being self-reports, housing quality, academic proficiency scores, and life expectancy.⁶

Another example was developed by Snohomish County (Washington State) in their *Feasibility Study of Inter-jurisdictional Housing Programs* report (SCT, 2009), which is linked to their Countywide Planning Policies and identifies outcomes for both

housing ownership and rental supply, reducing the household housing cost burden and creating fair and equitable access to housing.⁷

While the specificity of outcomes can vary, identifying clear and measurable targets would improve the ability to monitor and evaluate the success of the resulting housing programs and policies.

“...affordable housing buildings can also serve as catalysts for other economic development...”

THE UPSHOT


Canada’s housing markets are in turmoil, with soaring prices and rents leaving many Canadians struggling to secure affordable housing. These challenges have led to a fundamental shift in what people seek in their homes and where they want to live.⁸

Wilder Research asserts the affordable housing logic model’s influence on the social determinants of health help improve the housing quality, safety, and stability of low-income individuals and families who are unable to afford market-rate housing and improves the health of residents through building design elements, programs, and policies.⁹

New/rehabbed affordable housing buildings can also serve as catalysts for other economic development. Locating housing in an environment where people live, learn, pray, work, and recreate, with ready access to public transit and culturally appropriate needs for food, without fear of erasure in gentrifying situations, will enhance a just transition that protects people and neighbourhoods from climate disruptions and creates communities that are sustainable, resilient, and affordable for future generations. To do this, as professionals in the built environment, we need better collaboration and a strong intersectional approach to housing that is linked to

→ LEARN MORE

“Housing affordability has diminished across cities and regions that are characterized by high levels of migration from within and outside of Canada. Many places in Canada that need housing the most – large urban regions – are also the least affordable places to secure adequate housing. Housing supply and affordability is a generational crisis, exacerbated by a mismatch between supply and demand, rising borrowing and land costs, supply chain constraints, and policy gaps. Identification of the challenges must highlight the cascading effect of the unaffordability of housing, leading to displacement of households, loss of essential workers and an increase in the number of individuals facing dire financial conditions.” – CUI (2023). *At the Crossroads: Maximizing Possibilities. State of Canada’s Cities Report*. Canadian Urban Institute, November 2023. <https://canurb.org/publications/the-state-of-canadas-cities-report/>

a better understanding of current and future demographics and supports stronger mechanisms for creating meaningful outcomes for our housing programs and policies. 

1 Turner, J.F.C. and Fichter, R. (eds.) (1972). *Freedom to Build, dweller control of the housing process*. Collier Macmillan, New York. pp. 151, 152.

2 OHATF (2022). *Report of the Ontario Housing Affordability Task Force*, February 8, 2022. p.6 <https://files.ontario.ca/mmah-housing-affordability-task-force-report-en-2022-02-07-v2.pdf>

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7 SCT (2009). *Feasibility Study of Inter-jurisdictional Housing Programs for Snohomish County*, A report of Snohomish County Tomorrow (SCT). Final deliverable by the City of Lake Stevens to the Washington State Department of Community, Trade, and Economic Development in fulfillment of Contract C08-63200-423, June 17, 2009. <https://snohomishcountywa.gov/DocumentCenter/View/8172/Feasibility-Study-of-Interjurisdictional-Housing-Programs?bidId=>

8 CUI (2023). *At the Crossroads: Maximizing Possibilities, State of Canada’s Cities*. Canadian Urban Institute, November 2023. <https://canurb.org/publications/the-state-of-canadas-cities-report/>

9 Wilder Research (2018).



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Finding the missing middle from the inside out

BY GREGG LINTERN, RPP

The facts of Toronto's housing crisis quickly demonstrate the depth and diversity of action required to deliver generational change. Approximately 48 per cent of Toronto households are renters. Forty per cent of those renters are living in unaffordable housing. New affordable housing is not coming close to replacing private affordable housing lost through gentrification and the current vacancy rate of around 1.7 per cent is well below a well-functioning standard of three per cent or higher.

There is no one-size-fits-all solution. Even though a substantial amount of new housing is approved every year, only a small percentage of that is rental housing. On top of that, only six of every 10 units entitled

through zoning actually get built given the realities of the private market.

We also know that in a fully built-out city, only intensification and infill will create housing opportunity, and most of that housing will be in the form of mid-rise and taller buildings. We know that many people want or need ground-related housing – in Toronto, estimates are that at least 44,000 net new ground-related homes are needed out to 2051, in addition to thousands more that will come in other building forms and types.

So where do we look? When we open our toolbox, what do we reach for? In Toronto, we've begun to look to our low-rise neighbourhoods, where change has been limited, but where the space exists to add crucial missing middle ground-related housing that is needed now.

Solutions that address the missing middle will not rapidly increase supply nor will they provide deeply affordable options, but they will begin to fundamentally expand the potential of our low-rise communities. These solutions expand housing options and choices by:

- Creating more rental opportunities – especially in areas where there are limited rental options;
- Providing more opportunities for homeowners to generate income, which could help offset the cost of owning a home; and
- Providing opportunities for multi-generational living and aging in place.

It is in this context that a new chapter on the evolution of Toronto is being written – from the inside out. Avoiding a total rebuild of neighbourhoods such as the polarizing blockbusting that took place in the 1960s, Toronto’s Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods (EHON) initiative is looking at all low-rise housing types across the city without exception.

THE EHON APPROACH

Like renovating a house, room by room, seeing what new housing potential can be realized step by step, EHON takes a systematic approach. After you’ve fixed the roof, repaired the foundation, and replaced the HVAC and the wiring – the essentials of the house – you have a new home. You didn’t shock the neighbours or dramatically change the scale of the neighbourhood; everyone got comfortable with the new direction, you built momentum as you went, and people saw what was hiding in plain sight.

The official plan (OP) and zoning provide the policy and regulatory framework: the foundation for the renovation. This has included moving the OP neighbourhoods policies into a more neutral, if not permissive position, avoiding emphasis on idiosyncratic concepts of character. Modernizing the zoning bylaw is like updating the HVAC and rewiring the house: it simplifies and sets the stage for regulation that maximizes opportunity for housing creativity, innovation, and more inclusive outcomes.

A house is a complicated structure, with a lot of different mechanics. Like a well-designed renovation, holistically aligning objectives helps modify the role of the municipality from an enabler to an active facilitator of housing delivery. This includes making it possible to build as-of-right or testing feasibility by eliminating development charges and parks levies. In some cases, it’s been important to prioritize housing safety through municipal licensing, as Toronto did with multi-tenant homes (also known as rooming houses).

Aligning objectives also requires responding to social priorities – to achieve more inclusive housing outcomes, to adapt urban form to changing climate, and to acknowledge affordability and immigration pressures. It means taking into consideration economic conditions, including interest rates, economies of scale, cost of material and labour, and supply chain issues that have recently slowed the building process. And through it all, change must be driven within a more flexible provincial planning policy direction.

Meanwhile, as the house was being built, through meaningful engagement, neighbours and others who might not otherwise have been part of the conversation came on board. For example, through just one of the EHON components, the *Multiplex Study*, Toronto City staff sought public engagement through a multitude of channels, reaching thousands of Torontonians. This included virtual community consultation meetings (both city-wide and ward-based), workshops, roundtables, interviews, email correspondence, an online survey, panels, and roundtables hosted by partner organizations, in-person “Jane’s Walks” highlighting multiplex building types, and even a Reddit “Ask Me Anything” event. This broad reach not only provided

our team with valuable input into the policy recommendations, but also ensured critical public awareness of the proposal.

“Toronto now has permissions in place for laneway suites, secondary suites, and garden suites; multi-tenant homes have been legalized; multiplexes are ‘as-of-right’ up to four units with form-based zoning, and there are no minimum parking requirements.”

BUILDING CHANGE

Toronto now has permissions in place for laneway suites, secondary suites, and garden suites; multi-tenant homes have been legalized; multiplexes are “as-of-right” up to four units with form-based zoning, and there are no minimum parking requirements. Also, through the EHON initiative, Toronto will expand permissions along major streets that traverse low-rise neighbourhoods and enable local retail and service uses city-wide. The result? A significant uptake in new housing possibilities and meaningful change in people’s lives today and for generations to come. More than 1,500 building permit applications have been filed for laneway suites, garden suites, and multiplexes since Toronto City Council began expanding permissions for ground-related housing just a few years ago. That number will continue to grow as property owners position themselves to take advantage of these new opportunities.

We need to keep going to optimize the opportunity and establish good precedents. That includes tracking projects, monitoring trends to identify positive or negative consequences, and continuing to communicate outcomes. It also includes looking for other missing middle opportunities as the city form evolves, inspiring creativity and advocacy for provincial or federal policy or program changes that support missing middle housing such as Ontario Building Code reform. All the while, continuing to bring mixed housing types and tenures in places like larger-scale revitalizations of shopping mall sites to avoid a one-size-fits-all approach.

What we’ve learned so far: you can build change in your city from the inside out. Establish success and momentum, demystify and generate confidence that the sky will not fall, that you can actually reimagine the city one opportunity at a time, establish a new direction for everyone’s benefit and then just start building it. (Y)



Gregg Lintern, RPP, is a Member of OPPI and the former Chief Planner and Executive Director of City Planning for the City of Toronto from 2017 to 2023.



Planning for Ontario's housing needs: How do we effectively address current structural issues and plan for growth?

BY ERIK KARVINEN, RPP

Ontario's housing market is facing two major interconnected challenges – a lack of market choice and erosion in affordability. While municipalities are on the front line in facing these challenges, our current state of housing is largely an outcome of a broader range of factors that have influenced the market over the past decade.

Ontario has experienced strong population growth, which has placed strong demand pressures on a broad range of housing types. Housing demand has been driven in part by strong immigration in permanent and non-permanent residents. Evolving demographic and socio-economic conditions across the province also play a key role in understanding current and future housing needs. For example, the housing needs of younger generations, millennials (who are now in their peak household formation years), and aging baby boomers are vastly different.

Over the past decade, home prices and rental rates have also steadily increased, which has eroded housing affordability across the housing continuum. Housing cost appreciation further accelerated through COVID, while during the post-pandemic economic rebound, the erosion of housing affordability continues to worsen driven by inflationary pressures and a rising interest-rate environment.

As the province's population continues to grow, demand for new housing products across Ontario is anticipated. Looking forward, evolving socio-economic conditions, such as greater cultural diversity, an aging population, growing demand from new families, and eroding housing affordability, will require that municipalities promote and support a broad range of new housing products by location, built form, tenure, and price/affordability. This includes innovative approaches to accommodate new purpose-built rental housing, as well as various other ownership housing products that are attractive to a broad range of demographic groups.

Provincial policy direction is increasingly focused on housing market choice and expanding housing supply across Ontario. In the fall of 2022, the Province of Ontario introduced the *More Homes Built Faster Act* (Bill 23) with the aim to increase housing supply and attainable housing options. The province's plan is to address the housing crisis by targeting the creation of 1.5 million homes over the next 10 years. To implement this, the Act introduced a number of changes which seek to increase the supply of housing. This included assigning municipal housing targets and identifying the number of new housing units needed by 2031, impacting Ontario's largest and fastest growing single/lower tier municipalities.

“This goal to construct 1.5 million new homes over the next decade is a notable challenge.”

This goal to construct 1.5 million new homes over the next decade is a notable challenge. To meet this provincial target, Ontario-wide housing development activity will need to increase by about 50 per cent over the next decade. While the municipal housing targets are intended to provide guidance to impacted municipalities in achieving this goal, the high-level nature of the housing targets, which lack detail regarding housing form, tenure, or affordability, make their application challenging for municipalities. Reconciling the province's housing targets with approved forecasts and local planning initiatives to enable/support housing supply growth requires more rigorous assessments that embrace the local context of Ontario's diverse urban and rural municipalities.


Building on provincial policy direction, municipalities play a key role in addressing the challenges in the housing sector through effective local plans, policies, and programs, which enable and support attainable and affordable housing development across the housing continuum. Housing needs should be addressed through a local lens and considered within a broader growth management framework, which reflects existing population, labour, and employment/economic conditions and future growth potential. Housing needs must also be broadly assessed through a fiscal and housing affordability lens.

It is vital that municipalities regularly assess and monitor future housing demand against available housing supply opportunities through development in residential intensification areas and the development potential on vacant urban greenfield lands. This requires an examination of housing needs by location as well as by built form, tenure, and affordability. This is necessary to identify where barriers to housing choice and affordability exist and where ongoing unmet housing needs are likely to persist over the near to

longer term. This should be completed through a comprehensive assessment that is evidence-based, using a range of federal, provincial, and local community housing data indicators combined with input from community stakeholders.

To address local housing needs, municipalities should develop local housing action and implementation plans that identify tailored financial and regulatory tools and programs, as well as planning policies to support and enable housing supply expansion. These plans should be designed to be applicable and appropriate for the community, leveraging federal and provincial programs and incentives.

“Ontario's housing crisis is experienced through circumstances that are unique to each community.”

Ontario's housing crisis is experienced through circumstances that are unique to each community. Ultimately, to be most effective, solutions need to be identified, developed, and implemented at the local level in partnership with higher levels of government as well as private and non-profit housing sectors. 



Erik Karvinen, MCIP, RPP, PLE, is a Member of OPPI, a Manager with Watson & Associates Economists Ltd, and a Land Economist with expertise in demographic and economic forecasting, housing studies, real estate market analysis, and strategic policy development. Over the past decade, he has successfully managed a range of high-profile planning, economic, and finance studies for municipal clients across Canada. These studies have explored issues related to long-term growth and urban land needs, economic development, housing needs, and strategic policy recommendations.

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Credit: CP Planning



A blueprint for equity: Confronting systemic racism in Ontario's housing landscape

BY CHERYLL CASE

In the ongoing quest for affordable housing, the *Roadmap for Redevelopment Plans to Confront Systemic Racism* (Roadmap) stands as a beacon of hope and action. In 2022, over 35 organizations across Ontario provided a letter supporting our application to receive funding from the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Housing Supply Challenge. The diversity of stakeholders, ranging from affordable housing developers to academics to municipal leaders to private sector planning firms, identified that a seismic shift in planning is needed in order to get Ontario on track to meet the housing needs of racialized communities.

THE ROADMAP FOR REDEVELOPMENT PLANS TO CONFRONT SYSTEMIC RACISM

Between November 2022 and November 2023, our team and collaborators implemented year one of the Roadmap. Affordable housing developers brought invaluable expertise in development, municipal leaders applied their duty to improve systems, academics shared in community capacity development, private sector planning

firms shared their experience of the tenacity required to navigate the complexities of urban development and regulatory frameworks, while community brought their passion.

“Our goal is to turn advocates into developers.”

A core component of the seismic shift the Roadmap is beginning to make progress on is building professional networks between racialized communities and housing industry leaders, while also resourcing these racialized communities with the knowledge and skills required to advance in affordable housing development. Our goal is to turn advocates into developers. This connection and knowledge lay the groundwork for community to transform their passion for progress into tangible results.

The Roadmap's inception was driven by the recognition of the severe displacement of racialized communities, especially in areas adjacent to new public transit infrastructure. These communities, predominantly made up of racialized renters, have been disproportionately affected by the gentrification and displacement that is resulting from a lack of affordable housing policy responses to transit construction. This pattern of displacement is seen across Ontario – notably, in Toronto, Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo, Peel Region, and Ottawa.

A CASE STUDY ON ADDRESSING ANTI-BLACK RACISM

The Roadmap is supporting various racialized communities, including Black communities in particular. Our work in Little Jamaica, Toronto, exemplifies the impact of the Roadmap's approach. The area, known for its vibrant cultural identity and significant Black population, has seen accelerated displacement due to the Eglinton LRT. Here, we are building solidarity between racial groups to collaboratively establish a community land trust for affordable housing retention and development.

The Little Jamaica Coalition is stewarded by two of the neighbourhood's resident-led volunteer organizations, the Oakwood Vaughan Community Organization – a white-led organization – and the Keele Eglinton Residents Association – a Black-led organization. Through the Roadmap, the coalition has received mentorship and coaching on development and fundraising. Further, this coalition is also negotiating with developers and the City of Toronto to increase affordable housing supply in their neighbourhood.

“Whether it is start-up groups or well-established affordable housing development organizations, all can benefit from increased collaboration.”

NEXT STEPS

Whether it is start-up groups or well-established affordable housing development organizations, all can benefit from increased collaboration. This is why our commitment to turning advocates into developers is particularly noteworthy. This process expands the

labour pool of solution builders and implementors – a key resource to ensuring Ontario's housing needs are met. We note the Ontario Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing identified that Ontario needs to increase its supply of urban planning workers in order for the province to meet its development goals.

“The planning industry is rich with knowledge, and the Roadmap works to ensure that it is also rich with the power of people.”

Our process of bringing our development expertise and relationships is generating meaningful results. At the heart of the Roadmap's human rights-based strategy is to catalyze the passion of every-day community members. The planning industry is rich with knowledge, and the Roadmap works to ensure that it is also rich with the power of people. Over the 2024 year, we look forward to continuing to deepen partnerships so that together, we can build and sustain a future where equitable housing is a reality for all, particularly for marginalized racialized communities.



Cheryll Case is the founder of CP Planning, a non-profit that integrates human rights values into community planning. Since 2017, her leadership in the co-design of planning strategies has aligned for public, non-profit, and private sector organizations to invest in community-led solutions that uphold the rights of marginalized people to have access to good housing, good jobs, and an adequate standard of living.

An advertisement for plotpilot by canopy mapping co. The background is a dark blue with a network of white lines. The text reads: "transform land planning with the power of plotpilot". Below this, it says "Zoning, official plan, circulation, and site maps in a matter of mere moments." There is a black button with the text "canopymapping.co" and a right-pointing arrow. At the bottom, the logo "plotpilot by canopy mapping co." is displayed. On the right side, there is a smartphone and a laptop showing the plotpilot software interface, which includes a map and various data fields.

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Planning with purpose

BY MITCHELL J. SILVER, FAICP, HON. ASLA



“Planners are essentially guardians of the future.”

Transformed parks as part of the Community Parks Initiative, New York, NY. Credit: McAdams

In September 2023, I had the privilege of presenting a keynote address titled “Planning with Purpose” to more than 1,000 in-person and virtual attendees at the Ontario Professional Planning Institute’s conference in Ottawa. The message was intended to inspire planners at any stage of their professional careers. Why is planning with purpose necessary? Can a planner plan without a purpose? I have personally found planning with purpose rewarding, particularly due to the challenges our communities are facing.

“...purpose is an abiding intention to achieve a long-term goal that is both personally meaningful and makes a positive mark on the world.”

According to *Great Good Magazine*, a publication for science-based insights for a meaningful life, to psychologists, purpose is an abiding intention to achieve

a long-term goal that is both personally meaningful and makes a positive mark on the world.

I will never forget a conversation I had with Dr. Cheryl Contant 15 years ago. At the time, Dr. Contant was a planning professor. Today, she is CEO of Advancing Your Strengths. I recall her telling me a story about the first day of class. She asked her students to write a short essay about why they wanted to be planners. The future was unknown but optimistic. They wanted to make places better for people. Fast forward 10 years later. Students returned to the university for a reunion and Dr. Contant distributed the essays for those students who were present. As the students read their essays, some choked up, some had forgotten what they wrote. After a decade as planning practitioners and all the challenges that go along with planning, some have become disheartened, cynical, and frustrated. They had forgotten why they chose a career in planning in the first place. They had forgotten their sense of purpose. Dr. Contant’s story ignited a fire in me. Planners must not forget our purpose. There is too much at stake. I was determined to use that lesson to motivate myself, the staff, and my fellow planners.

WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF PLANNING?

As planners, we have a special calling to protect the public health, safety, and welfare. In other words, to be protectors or healers of people of the planet. Planners

manage growth and change and deal with the risks and uncertainty about the future, as planners must be concerned with present and future generations.

“Trends are dynamic and change over time.”

Planners are essentially guardians of the future. I strongly encourage planners to anticipate and prepare their communities for the impacts of emerging trends. For the past 20 years, I have created a list of emerging trends and challenges that communities may encounter. I update the list annually. Every planner should create a list and communicate with their staff or colleagues, clients, or community. Every community is different and as planners, we should not just focus on developing a vision for the future but also be clear about the problems a community needs to solve. Trends are dynamic and change over time. Therefore, I encourage planners to monitor trends and challenges like a stockbroker watches the market to ensure our communities are prepared.

If you are unaware of some of the emerging trends, there are a few sources you can use as a starting point: the American Planning Association, Urban Land Institute, and a popular planner's blog, *Planetizen*, to name a few.

OUR CODE OF ETHICS GIVES PURPOSE

I strongly believe our code of ethics gives our profession purpose by establishing aspirational values and rules for professional conduct. In January 2022, I wrote an article titled “Lead and Inspire with Purpose: AICP Code of Ethics Update” for the American Planning Association's *Interact*. In that article, I stated that as professionals, we embrace guiding principles to conduct ourselves with honesty, integrity, and purpose. A code of ethics fulfills that role in so many ways. The AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct guides and inspires ethical decision-making and protects AICP-certified planners when faced with controversial or difficult choices.

I have always been inspired by the AICP's Code of Ethics. I read the aspirational principles at least twice a year. Each time I read them, I am filled with a renewed sense of energy and purpose. I have read the code of ethics of other allied professionals and I can tell you, firsthand, that the planners' code is distinct. It is inspirational and aspirational and truly emphasizes our pursuit to protect public health, safety, and welfare. Our Code of Ethics makes me proud to call myself a planner.

To underscore my point, I included a summary of the code of ethics of the American and Canadian associations.

The American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct includes five aspirational categories in Part A.

1. People who participate in the planning process shall continuously pursue and faithfully serve the public interest.
2. People who participate in the planning process shall do so with integrity.
3. People who participate in the planning process shall work to achieve economic, social, and racial equity.
4. People who participate in the planning process shall safeguard the public trust.

5. Practicing planners shall improve planning knowledge and increase understanding of planning activities.

To read the entire AICP Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct, visit www.planning.org/ethics/ethicscode/.

The Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP-ICU) Professional Code lists the following Statement of Values:

1. To respect and integrate the needs of future generations
2. To overcome or compensate for jurisdictional limitations
3. To value the natural and cultural environment
4. To recognize and react positively to uncertainty
5. To respect diversity
6. To balance the needs of communities and individuals
7. To foster public participation
8. To articulate and communicate values

The CIP Statement of Values is powerful and praiseworthy, and I strongly urge members of the Institute to not only practice ethically and responsibly but also to practice and live ethically and responsibly daily.

To read the entire CIP-ICU Professional Code of Conduct and Ethics, visit www.cip-icu.ca/membership/professional-codes-of-conduct-ethics/.

THE PLEDGE

Two associations take their code of ethics an additional step by pledging to adhere to their purpose – the National Society of Professional Engineers (NSPE) and the AICP. These are prime examples that as professionals, we can be profit-driven or purpose-driven or both. Making a solemn promise or pledge is admirable and should be used as a guidepost throughout our professional journey.

Upon receiving a professional license, an engineer makes the following statement:

I pledge to give the utmost of performance; to participate in none but honest enterprise; to live and work according to the highest standards of professional conduct; to place service before profit, the honor and standing of my profession before personal advantage, and the public welfare above all other considerations. In humility, I make this pledge.

Once an American planner passes an examination and becomes a certified planner, they are encouraged to sign the Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct.

EXAMPLES OF PURPOSE-DRIVEN PLANNING

During the keynote, I shared what purpose-driven planning looks like. Examples included powerful stories and transformative outcomes from the New York City Parks Department's Community Parks Initiative, Reimagining the Public Realm, and Parks Without Borders, as well as other projects from around the country that centred on repairing past harm and planning and designing with empathy.

Repairing past harm is important and is becoming more prevalent and consistent with the code of ethics of AICP and CIP-ICU. As planners, we must acknowledge unjust planning practices that



Adaptation Transformation Conference in Ottawa ended with an impactful keynote speech from Mitchell Silver, Principal for urban planning at McAdams, who spoke about planning urban parks in New York City and the Code of Ethics. He concluded with an insightful perspective on the current climate in the profession, noting that planners can either be “bitter or better” and encouraged attendees to choose the latter.

have harmed certain segments of the population intentionally or unintentionally. I shared a list of some unjust planning practices as well as a list of approaches and tools for planners to address past harm. Planning and designing with empathy means that we as planners and designers must attain the ability to understand how people feel in a situation from their point of view rather than our own. Repairing past harm and planning and designing with empathy is summarized in an Afterward I wrote in *Empathic Design: Perspectives on Creating Inclusive Spaces*, edited by Elgin Cleckley and published by Island Press.

“...we must acknowledge unjust planning practices that have harmed certain segments of the population intentionally or unintentionally.”

COMMITTING TO OUR PURPOSE

As I stated at the closing of my keynote at the OPPI Ottawa conference, when it comes to your professional obligation to protect the public welfare, is your approach intentional or incidental? Explicit or implicit? We are experiencing significant disruptions and emerging trends and challenges. Now more than ever, we must

understand our professional obligation to serve the public interest and protect public health, safety, and welfare. We must embrace our sense of purpose, code, and values as planners and to plan for the future but to also address past harm. Let us commit to our purpose and pledge today to be guardians, healers, and protectors. Because our communities need us, our countries need us, our planet needs us. 🌍



Mitchell Silver, FAICP, is a principal with McAdams, a land planning and design company. He is a former president of the American Planning Association and the American Institute of Certified Planners. He served as commissioner of New York City Department of Parks and Recreation and he was a keynote speaker for the OPPI Annual Conference in Ottawa in September 2023.

An advertisement for Crozier Consulting Engineers. The background is a dark aerial view of a residential development. On the left, there is a logo consisting of a green circle with a white 'C' inside, followed by the text 'CROZIER CONSULTING ENGINEERS' and 'theCROZIERWAY.ca'. In the center, the text 'GET IT APPROVED, GET IT BUILT.' is written in large, white, bold letters. At the bottom, the locations 'COLLINGWOOD | MILTON | TORONTO | BRADFORD | GUELPH' are listed. On the right side, there are three inset images showing different types of residential buildings: a high-rise apartment building, a two-story house, and a multi-story brick building.

Urbanizing suburbia: *Examples from Ontario*

BY DAVID L.A. GORDON, FCIP, RPP, ALEX TARANU, FCIP, RPP, AND MIRANDA BRINTNELL

	Population in 2016* ¹		Population in 2021* ¹		Population Growth 2016 - 2021		Share of Population Growth 2016 - 2021	Share of Population Growth 2006 - 2016
Active Core	3,472,309	14%	3,692,375	14%	220,066	14%	13%	8%
Transit Suburb	2,939,816	12%	3,030,827	11%	91,011	11%	5%	7%
Auto Suburb	17,212,730	67%	18,350,811	67%	1,138,081	67%	66%	75%
Exurban	1,904,205	7%	2,181,756	8%	277,551	8%	16%	10%
TOTAL CMA	25,548,950	100%	27,281,056	100%	1,732,102	7%	100%	100%

Table 1: Canadian Metropolitan Neighbourhood Population Distribution for 2016 and 2021. Source: Canadian Suburbs Atlas.
* Values do not include unclassified census tracts.¹ These are 2016 values, adjusted for new census tracts.

Urbanizing suburbia is important because Canada is a suburban nation. More than two-thirds of our country's total population lives in some form of suburb. In all our largest metropolitan areas, the portion of suburban residents is over 80 per cent, including the Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal regions.¹ Their downtowns may be full of new condominium and apartment towers, but there is four times as much population growth on the suburban edges of the regions.

The *Canadian Suburbs Atlas* uses the recently released 2021 census data to update previous research on the extent of suburbs. We found that within our metropolitan areas, 86 per cent of the population lived in transit suburbs, auto suburbs, or exurbs, while only 14 per cent lived in active core neighbourhoods in 2021.

"... 86 per cent of the population lived in transit suburbs, auto suburbs, or exurban areas, while only 14 per cent lived in active core neighbourhoods in 2021."

Our research for the 2006-2016 period estimated that 67.5 per cent of all Canadians lived in some form of suburb. This proportion declined slightly to 66 per cent by 2021. Although over 1.1 million

more people live in new automobile suburbs, the proportion of the Canadian population living in suburbs declined slightly and is linked to the sizeable increase of new apartment building construction projects, estimated to house over 220,000 people in the active core neighbourhoods during this period.

This change was the first decline in the proportion of the suburban population observed in the past 15 years of analysis. The 2026 Census will clarify if this was the beginning of a new trend or merely anomalous effects of the pandemic.

"...82 per cent of the metropolitan population growth from 2016 to 2021 was in auto suburbs and exurbs..."

Canada's population growth from 2016 to 2021 showed that active core neighbourhoods and transit suburbs grew by six per cent and three per cent respectively, well below the national average. The auto suburbs and the exurban areas grew by seven per cent and 15 per cent, matching and exceeding the national average. The net effect of this trend is that 82 per cent of the metropolitan population growth from 2016 to 2021 was in auto suburbs and exurban areas (Table 1). Only 18 per cent of the population growth was in more sustainable active cores and transit suburbs.

In Ontario's 14 mid-sized Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs), sizable growth has occurred. The cities range from Belleville to Hamilton, with active cores and transit suburbs similar to Toronto and Ottawa. However, the mid-sized metro areas showed more growth in exurban areas at the edges. The explanation is long-distance commutes are often more difficult (more time, expenses) in bigger metro areas.

Many people overestimate the importance of the highly visible downtown cores and underestimate the vast growth happening in the suburban edges of our metropolitan regions. The population in low-density auto suburbs and exurbs is still growing four times faster than inner cities and inner suburbs across Canada. Despite their inner-city condo booms, even metropolitan areas such as Toronto and Vancouver saw 3.4 and 2.4 times as much population growth in auto suburbs and exurban areas, compared to active cores and transit suburbs. Therefore, Ontario cities must do better at urbanizing their suburbs; a process that is also known as sprawl repair² or retrofitting suburbia.³

EXAMPLES OF URBANIZING SUBURBIA

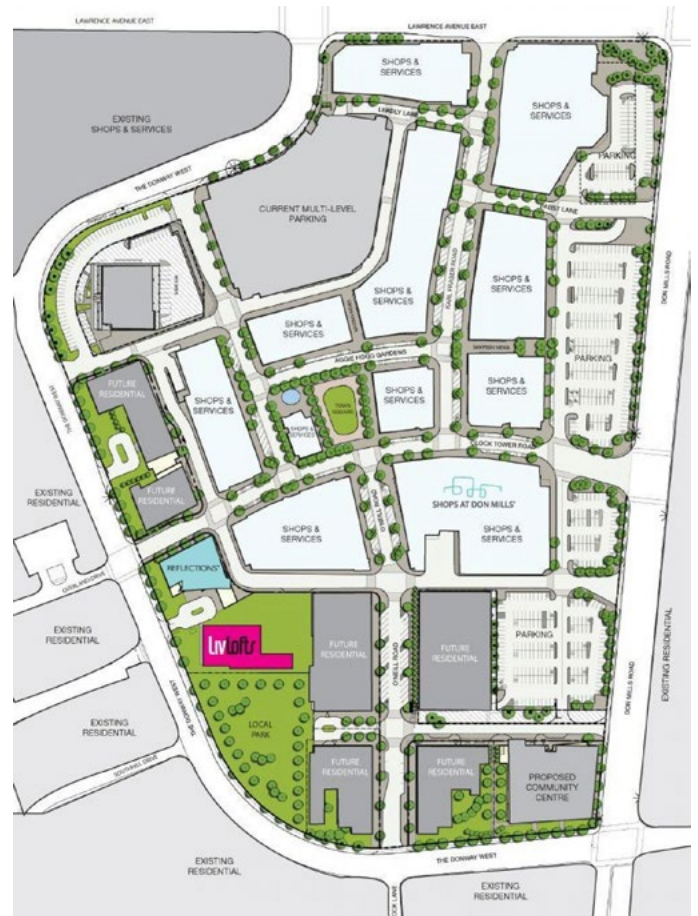
Ontario is reclaiming walkable urban spaces especially as populations grow. Retrofitting suburbia can be done at different scales. These different types of sprawl repair are illustrated in the following examples.



SUBURBAN CITY CENTRES SUCH AS MARKHAM CITY CENTRE

Up and coming Markham Centre is an advanced example of a mixed-use suburban city centre. The built environment is designed for convenient travel for transit users, cyclists, and pedestrians. The transit system includes a GO station and Viva, a bus rapid transit service designed for conversion to LRT. Nearby are the Pan Am Sports Centre and Unionville GO station. A mix of urban residential building types is complemented by new employment growth. The high density-urban core includes York University’s Markham Campus. Phase I completion is expected in 2024.

Sources: Gladki Planning Associates, DTAH and Ken Greenberg; Markham Centre Secondary Plan Update, City of Markham



MALL CONVERSIONS, EXEMPLIFIED BY THE SHOPS AT DON MILLS

The Shops at Don Mills is a mixed-use building complex on private streets. The development replaced parking lots that surrounded a struggling community shopping centre. Residential development reinforced this early suburban mall conversion to residential development, paving the way for similar projects across Ontario.

Sources: Authors’ collections



COMMUTER RAIL TRANSIT-ORIENTATED DEVELOPMENT, EXEMPLIFIED BY MOUNT PLEASANT, BRAMPTON

Brampton’s Mount Pleasant community is centred on a new mobility hub on the GO Kitchener line. Mount Pleasant South Village advances transit-oriented, walkable, affordable, sustainable development principles to the next level by innovating with more intense and urban forms. Its complete streets are a model of contemporary urban development for the city. Surprisingly, Mount Pleasant also includes a substantial affordable housing component in this 26-storey apartment complex developed by the Daniels Corporation.

Sources: Authors’ collections



TRANSIT-ORIENTED COMMUNITIES SUCH AS TORONTO’S PARKWAY FOREST

Parkway Forest combines the best features of an apartment complex intensification and transit-oriented development near Toronto’s Don Mills and Sheppard Avenues. This 1960s “towers in the parking lot” design was infilled with medium-rise apartments on new streets and mixed-use buildings that are close to the new subway station. A new pedestrian street leading to the station is marked by colourful public art.

Sources: The Council for Canadian Urbanism



SUBURBAN ARTERIAL ROAD CONVERSIONS SUCH AS SCARBOROUGH’S GOLDEN MILE

Scarborough’s Golden Mile was a classic example of an automobile-oriented suburban arterial corridor. This greyfield will be transformed into over 30,000 new dwellings for over 40,000 new residents. The many redevelopment projects in the corridor include a substantial component of affordable housing and a community benefits framework developed in collaboration with the United Way.

Sources: Golden Mile Plaza Revitalization by Giannone Petricone Associates

15-Minute Neighbourhood



15-MINUTE NEIGHBOURHOODS, AS PROPOSED BY OTTAWA AND MISSISSAUGA

The new City of Ottawa Official Plan has made building suburban 15-minute neighbourhoods a primary objective. They will rely on sustainable mobility. The principles of these complete communities are shown in the image from the Official Plan.

Source: City of Ottawa



SMALL-SCALE MISSING-MIDDLE INFILL IN FORMER SINGLE-FAMILY RESIDENTIAL ZONES

The Cumberland Apartments in Hamilton (lower left) is an example of a small-scale sixplex infill in a single-family residential zone. Ontario has thousands of these small wartime housing bungalows (above) on larger suburban lots, which are opportunities for “missing middle” intensification under the new provincial policies. The project is the winner of a 2023 Hamilton Urban Design Award.

Sources: Lintack Architects Inc., G+E Apartments and GSP Group

Urbanizing suburbia will be a major task for the next generation of planners. The Council for Canadian Urbanism advocates for more sustainable suburban design⁴ and has identified many good precedents across the country, such as the projects shown above. The task is a huge one, but if urbanists want to make a difference, we must focus on urbanizing suburbia, despite all its challenges, in the years ahead. (Y)

1 Gordon, D.L.A. and Herteg, R. *Canadian Suburbs Atlas*, 2023. <https://www.canu.ca/canu-working-papers>.

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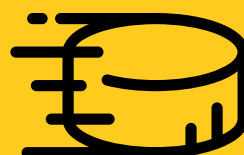
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Recreation master planning and equity, diversity, and inclusion in NHL Hockey

BY CHARLES HOSTOVSKY, RPP

Recreation master planning is one area of our planning practice that does not get a lot of attention in the media. At the same time, we celebrate Black History Month each February, and Canadians have been recognizing the struggles, systemic discrimination, and contributions African Canadian/American players have made in our national obsession with hockey. CBC's Hockey Night in Canada, in the excellent new TSN/Crave documentary film *Black Ice*, has highlighted the need for equity in hockey. We also recognize the wonderful pioneers of Black hockey such as Herb Carnegie, CM, O Ont, OMC, and Willie O'Ree, CM, ONB. The general consensus is that Black players have been and continue to be underrepresented and face barriers in the sport of hockey.

I am a long-time player in a Hamilton-based old-timers hockey league and have raised four now-adult kids who played house league through to AAA and junior/university hockey in Greater Toronto-Hamilton-Niagara leagues. Hockey has been a big and expensive part of my family's privileged life. As a recently retired professor of geography and city planning, I wanted to deconstruct the geography and recreation planning of Black NHL hockey with a view to promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) in the sport. Secondly, we need to examine the role recreation planning and infrastructure spending play in promoting EDI in the sport.

HAMILTON RECREATION

First, let's examine planning for hockey infrastructure, in particular, the availability of indoor arena hockey rinks that are fundamental to developing hockey players. In my hometown of

Hamilton, we have 28 city and private hockey rinks to service a population of 580,000. In Canada, we find hockey arenas in almost every town coast to coast to coast, so ice time is generally not a major issue (except for inequitable scheduling for girl's hockey and very early morning practice times). Notwithstanding my partner and I have often had the stressful task of getting kids up at 6 a.m. for practice due to fully booked arenas.

“[Hamilton] plans to build three new areas and expand existing ones to meet the demands of a growing population.”

Hamilton's Recreation Master Plan's goal is “to ensure the City's recreation portfolio is responsive to current and future needs over the next 10 to 20 years and beyond in a responsible, equitable and cost-effective manner.”¹ The city plans to build three new areas and expand existing ones to meet the demands of a growing population. Hamilton's Recreation Master Plan is tied in with the Growth Related Integrated Development Strategy (GRIDS 2) and other related city planning initiatives.

THE HOCKEY PLAYERS

With a view to recreation facility planning, let's examine equity and diversity in the Canadian-born players in the NHL, who represent the largest source of talent. XLM Team Solutions (2022) reports there are 409 Canadian skaters, 43 per cent of all players.²

We need to recognize that the proportion of Black Canadians has been growing in our country, and that it takes 20 years to develop a child from a toddler to the Minor Midget draft to Junior and then NHL calibre skills. Hence, when we examine the relevant 2001, 20+ year old Canadian census, that data indicates that 2.2 per cent of Canadians were Black (which has grown to about 4 per cent in 2023). These numbers indicate that if African Canadian players presently in the NHL are proportional to that 2.2 per cent 2001 census, there should be nine (9) on the ice. Wikipedia's "List of Black NHL Players" lists 19 African Canadians presently in the NHL.³ Hence, Canadian Black players are more than double the expected representation. We should be proud of these numbers. Clearly, these demographics indicate that access to arena facilities is not a major problem in developing players of colour.

"If this cohort is proportional to the population, there should be 34 Black NHLers in the US. However, there are only 10, less than a third of the expected representation."

The EDI problem lies with the second largest cohort in the NHL who were born in the United States. XL reports 262 Americans NHLers, 27 per cent of the league. The 2000 U.S. Census indicates that 13 per cent of the population identified as African American. Hence, if this cohort is proportional to the population, there should be 34 Black NHLers in the U.S. However, there are only 10, less than a third of the expected representation.

So how are these over and under representations explained? I would first hypothesize that planning for hockey recreational infrastructure plays a critical role.

THE ROLE OF RECREATION INFRASTRUCTURE

I was a faculty member for five years in Washington, DC, which has a population of 712,000, so I will examine the District as a case study to juxtapose against Hamilton, Ontario. My son and I played hockey in the one and only arena in the District – The Fort Dupont Arena, which is booked 100 per cent of the time. Fort Dupont is located in Anacostia, an impoverished African American neighbourhood and was built there at least in part funded by a former NHLer to promote hockey to DC African Americans. Half of the population of DC is African American, so it is simply impossible to get more African American kids involved in hockey there without spending tens to hundreds of millions of dollars in new arena builds. Plans to renovate and add a US\$33 million second rink were shelved due to the high cost.⁴ The DC Ready2Play Parks and Recreation Master Plan (2023) has no mention of adding new arena pads.⁵ As a result, it is very difficult if not impossible to promote new hockey to the African American children in DC.

We can extrapolate this demographic and economic situation to most U.S. cities. There are other issues such as systemic poverty experienced by African Americans combined with the high cost of hockey, as well as promoting the game in a country that prefers football, basketball, and baseball. Outdoor courts and fields exist at little cost at most schools and public places almost everywhere, and

the cost to play is very low compared to ice hockey. We can clearly see the large proportion of African Americans in these three other sports at the professional level. When we consider there are about 2,900 arenas in Canada and only about 2,400 in the entire U.S., then it is clear access to ice surfaces is a major problem in promoting Black hockey in the U.S.

"...there are about 2,900 arenas in Canada and only about 2,400 in the entire U.S...."

Europeans represent 30 per cent of the NHL, with Sweden at 99 skaters and Russia the fourth largest cohort with 55. There is no observable Black population in Russia. Finland, Czechia, and Slovakia represented the bulk of the rest of the European skaters of which there are only four active Black European NHLers (1.4 per cent). Overall, the population African Europeans in European hockey countries is so small that the four could be considered representative, and it is unlikely there will be significant increase over the next generation of players.

PROMOTING EDI IN HOCKEY

So, are Black players underrepresented in the NHL? Yes and no. Clearly, the issue with numbers is with the African Americans. Do these numbers mean that we as Canadians can become smug and not continue to promote the game to Black Canadians? No. Also the need in Canada is to heavily subsidize the high cost for recently immigrated BIPOC kids (who are overrepresented in the poverty data) so that they can have the opportunity to play hockey. BIPOC kids need to see themselves in larger numbers in the game on TV in all of North America. But presently, because of lack of planning, expensive hockey arena infrastructure and cultural preferences in the U.S., combined with the low number of Black European demographics in hockey intensive countries, the majority of Black players will continue to come from Canadian communities.

"First Nation, Metis, and Inuit representation is pitifully small in the NHL..."

Let's touch on other demographic disparities. First Nation, Metis, and Inuit representation is pitifully small in the NHL with only 10 active players when they represent 4.3 per cent of all Canadians and that population is growing at twice the pace of growth of the non-Indigenous population according to Statistics Canada.⁶ They have been in North America for millennia longer than the rest of us. Many attribute the Indigenous game of lacrosse at least in part with the creation of ice hockey. Clearly there are systemic barriers to our First Nations.

Asian, South Asian, and Middle Eastern Canadians now represent 20 per cent of Canada's population. NHLers like Nick Suzuki and Nazim Kadri are so few and far between that a statistical analysis of NHL Asian demographics becomes redundant.

Lastly, in women's professional hockey, the number of BIPOC players is too small to even discuss. However, women have historically battled and continue to battle sexism in the sport, and

gender equity is their first and most important battle. Professional hockey league women need to need to be paid fairly. The CBC reports that the Premier Hockey Federation salaries are a mere \$10k to \$35k.⁷ One will note the Canadian female soccer team recently went on strike for higher pay – maybe the hockey teams should as well.

To summarize, the representation of Black players in the NHL is very low for two main reasons:

1. In the U.S., there is a lack of recreation planning initiatives to build more arenas because of a lack of interest in hockey within the African American population relative to other (inexpensive) sports, combined with systemic poverty and the high cost of playing hockey. Kevin Costner gave us the baseball slogan “If you build it, they will come.” Unfortunately, it is unlikely the Americans will build it.
2. European hockey countries have very low Black demographics from which to draw players. Thus, if we are going to increase the presence of NHL “Black Ice,” it is going to be up to Canadians to do so. Our Black population since the 2001 census has doubled due to immigration and refugees, many at much lower income levels compared to average Canadians. We have the arenas, now let’s provide the financial subsidies in our children’s leagues for male, female, LGBTQ+, African Canadians, as well as Asian Canadians and our First Nations, Metis, and Inuit Peoples.

Like Hamilton’s Recreation Master Plan, let’s ensure that other municipalities continue to plan for growth in hockey for all Canadians in an equitable, diversified, and inclusive manner. ♻️

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- 4 WTOP News. Plans to renovate DC’s Fort Dupont Ice Arena hit a freeze. <https://wtop.com/dc/2022/02/plans-to-renovate-a-dcs-fort-dupont-ice-arena-hit-a-freeze/>
- 5 Ready2Play Master Plan. <https://ready2playdc.com/>
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- 7 CBC Sports. Women’s hockey league to increase salary cap, add 2 teams. <https://www.cbc.ca/sports/hockey/phf-premier-hockey-womens-league-increase-salary-cap-expansion-1.6318752>



Charles Hostovsky, PHD, MCIP, RPP, is a Member of OPPI and a semi-retired Professor of Geography and Planning, presently a funded Research Associate at McMaster University, and a self-employed consultant. He has been humbled to receive two teaching awards, was one of the Project Managers on two consulting teams that won CIP awards and is a Canadian Association of Geographers award holder.

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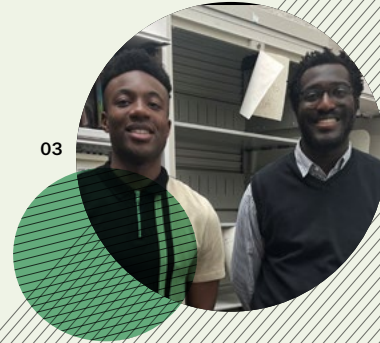
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City of Markham and MIPOC partnership: Reducing participation barriers for racialized planners

BY CAROLYN CAMILLERI

Last October, the City of Markham and the Mentorship Initiative for Indigenous and Planners of Colour (MIPOC) announced the launch of a new partnership to enhance inclusion and reduce participation barriers for planners from racialized communities who are aspiring to gain experience in the field. The result: two, four-month-long, paid internships at the City of Markham and a meaningful step towards fostering diversity and providing equal opportunities in the planning profession.

How these opportunities were set up, why they are needed, and, importantly, why they are vital to the future of the profession will hopefully inspire other Ontario municipalities and senior planners to follow suit.

BACKGROUND

Established in 2019, MIPOC is a volunteer-run organization of free-thinking, multifaceted planners who are dedicated to advancing diversity and representation in city building. The objective of the mentorship program is to create and foster trusting relationships between planners, planning students, and aspiring planners within a supportive space dedicated to mutual professional and personal development.

Jc Elijah M. Bawuah is President of MIPOC and says the organization goes beyond providing experiential learning opportunities for racialized planners.

“It’s the space we co-create with everyone,” says Bawuah, an urban planner and public consultant who has worked on various projects across Ontario, including development applications, master plans, and new park and community centre developments. “This is a unique, inclusive space that provides a sense of safety, where folks come not just to learn and grow as planning professionals, but also to seek out emotional, professional, or skills-related advice and support from folks within the program.”

He understands well the need for such a space. His work includes co-developing collaborative consultations centring the lived experiences and voices of Toronto’s diverse urban stakeholders. As a former committee member of the City of Toronto’s 2SLGBTQ+ Council Advisory Body, Bawuah advised on strategies and initiatives to tactfully resolve barriers for the queer community.

“MIPOC really acts as this space that many of us don’t really get within our work environment, where we’re able to talk about unique professional encounters we may have with colleagues or any situations or experiences that we may want to talk about to another

1) As President of MIPOC, Jc Elijah M. Bawuah’s leadership is rooted in vulnerability and advocating for the greater good, while fostering collaborative environments and prioritizing equity in how we think about and facilitate city-building practices.

2) The link between MIPOC and the City of Markham is Giulio Cescato, RPP, Director of Planning and Urban Design, Development Services Commission, who was involved with the inaugural MIPOC cohort in 2019.

3) MIPOC planning interns John Kitoko (left) and Theo Ako-Manieson at the City of Markham



racialized planner, that we wouldn't necessarily be able to talk about within the workplace," says Bawuah.

He says that space became a key motivation to continue the MIPOC program after an almost three-year hiatus. The break also allowed them to focus on developing the program – operation, support, expansion, funding – as well as improving the program comprehensively. Restarting in 2024 with two internships at the City of Markham is an exciting example for other municipalities.

"Since Markham is sort of taking the wheel on this, folks probably will look to Markham and see how they set it up," says Bawuah.

That is the hope.

MIPOC MEETS MARKHAM

The link between MIPOC and the City of Markham is Giulio Cescato, RPP, Director of Planning and Urban Design, Development Services Commission. His connections with Cheryll Case, founder of CP Planning, and Abigail Moriah, RPP, co-founder of the Black Planning Project, led to his involvement with the inaugural MIPOC cohort in 2019 while he was with the City of Toronto, and continued when he left the City for Arcadis IBI Group.

When Cescato moved to the City of Markham, his former manager at Arcadis, Scott Arbuckle, encouraged him to establish a role for MIPOC there. With full support from Andy Taylor, City of Markham's Chief

Administrative Officer, and Arvin Prasad, Commissioner of Development Services, Cescato teamed up with Jamaal Kossy, Markham's Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Specialist, to create the two intern positions.

Cescato says setting up the program at the City of Markham was perhaps easier because he was able to make the decision almost entirely on his own.

"I do think these things are easier to set up than maybe people want to make it out to be," says Cescato. "Obviously, you've got to think about equity within the HR process and making sure there's an understanding and fair process on how to engage. But the costs are quite low to implement an internship program. Our budgetary impact is quite negligible, even though it's a paid internship and it pays a decent amount of money."

The program also aligns perfectly with the City of Markham's strategic plans for diversity and eliminating anti-Black racism.

"It's a really impactful way for us to do some tangible work... and on a high level, potentially to change some folks' lives," says Kossy. "This internship is not just about bringing in [the interns] but putting them in positions where they're able to succeed."

Interns will gain experience in a variety of planning areas, including development reviews, design principles, site planning, economic development and culture, and more. At the same time, it's an opportunity for interns to establish their networks and build relationships – and hopefully, find permanent positions.

“Our goal is to be able to provide interns with employment moving forward,” says Kossy. “At the least, we’ll be able to provide them with tools, strengthen their resume, and provide experience, so they’re able to translate the work that they do to another full-time position elsewhere. The real benefit of the program, from my aspect, is the ability to reduce barriers as a line of entry to the planning profession.”

Representation is one of those barriers.

“It is extremely important work to increase representation in city planning in Ontario in particular but in the profession in general as well,” says Cescato.

What it really speaks to is relationships, he says, adding that white people especially say planning is a small world.

“We all seemingly know each other. If you ask anybody in Southern Ontario who I am, they will probably at least have a vague notion of who I am,” says Cescato. “But those opportunities were built through going to networking events, getting introduced to people, getting walked around. You tend to get introduced to and walked around by the people who look like you and people who have the same kind of social status. And that’s really the importance of something like MIIPOC – opening doors, creating relationships, and getting people facetime in the profession, which is what helps people advance their careers and feel welcomed in their careers.”

With the current planner shortage in Ontario, motivation is high to welcome new planners to the profession, especially a diverse representation.

GETTING INVOLVED

Even during MIIPOC’s hiatus, Bawuah says there has always been significant interest from mentees.

“That echoes the experience of racialized folks within the planning industry and even early on as students,” he says.

Finding enough internships can be challenging, so much so, that the lack of positions is highlighted in the mentee application and emphasized at the first orientation.

“We’re transparent about it from the very start of the application process, so people are aware that it cannot be guaranteed that every mentee will receive an internship,” says Bawuah.

To this point, mentors and others who want to get involved in the program have mainly been from MIIPOC’s personal networks. Interest from outside those circles is growing.

“It’s a snowball effect that we rely on,” says Bawuah. “It starts from our own personal contacts and then snowballs into recommendations that those personal contacts provide.”

Becoming a mentor starts with a CV to outline professional experience, followed by anything that

may not be traditional work but that relates to MIIPOC’s mission.

“That’s where they can put their equity-related work and things they wouldn’t maybe put into a [typical] CV,” says Bawuah.

The next step is a meeting.


“We ask a series of questions to understand their level of understanding of inclusion within the city-building industry – what they know, what they don’t know – and this helps us understand if they are sensitive to the individualized experience of racialized folks within the industry,” says Bawuah.

The goal is to ensure the mentor doesn’t unintentionally make the mentee’s experience of being a racialized person worse but is instead sensitive to the individual’s experience navigating and growing within the industry.

This year, MIIPOC has started working on materials for mentors and mentees, including information about MIIPOC’s goals and strategies and questions to frame the interview discussion and provide a path to follow.

“We think this material will be helpful as a constant reminder, especially to mentors, of why they are actually mentors and the purpose and what’s currently going on within the industry and why there’s a call for MIIPOC’s existence and why the mentees want to be a part of this program,” says Bawuah.

It isn’t only mentees who are calling for programs like MIIPOC’s – the whole profession depends on this kind of action. Cescato encourages planners – especially those who are senior in the profession – to volunteer for MIIPOC and think about how to translate the experience into helping people enter the profession. Municipalities in particular need to embrace programs like MIIPOC.

“Ultimately, if we don’t diversify planning voices, if we don’t change the face of the profession, we’re always going to get the same outcomes and we need to think broadly about things,” says Cescato. “The housing crisis is top of mind for many people, but often that conversation gets focused on how difficult it is to enter the housing market. And what gets lost there is lower income people, racialized people, the neighbourhoods they live in, how they’re impacted by the housing crisis and whether they can access the housing market. If we don’t diversify our voices, if we don’t diversify our consultation, if we don’t diversify our professional class, I don’t think we’ll be well equipped to handle those questions and solve those problems.” 

Find more information on MIIPPOC, including contact information and requirements for mentors and mentees, at <https://miipoc.com>.

The Popular Audit of the Historic Centre of Salvador, Bahia, Brazil

A CASE STUDY REPORT FROM GLÓRIA CECÍLIA FIGUEIREDO



On September 28, 2023, Glória Cecília Figueiredo from the Faculty of Architecture at the Federal University of Bahia (UFBA), Brazil, began a three-month partnership with OPPI and the Black Planning Project.*

Figueiredo is a Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at UFBA's Architecture School. She is also a member of the Lugar Comum research group, the Black cities network, and the Pipoco Platform team. Figueiredo is one of the coordinators of the Popular Audit in the Historic Centre of Salvador, Brazil, together with the Associação de Moradores e Amigos do Centro Histórico de Salvador and the Articulação de Movimentos e Comunidades do Centro Antigo de Salvador. In 2020, she was a visiting Professor at the Bartlett Development Planning Unit of the University College, London, U.K.

One of several projects Figueiredo worked on during her partnership in Canada was the completion of a case study of the Popular Audit of the Historic Centre of Salvador as an experience in Black planning. Here is an excerpt:

The Historic Centre of Salvador underwent different protection attempts that led to its listing by the National Historic and Artistic Heritage Institute (IPHAN) in 1984 and the declaration of World Heritage Site by UNESCO in 1985.

The state government sought to generate market value in the Historic Centre by positioning Salvador in the network of tourist circuits of global historic cities and mobilizing a folkloristic narrative that celebrated Afro-Bahian culture, at the same time as dispossessing its residents and cultural agents.

That violence gave rise to a protest movement led by an alliance of residents and solidarity sectors of Bahian civil society who together did not passively accept the evictions.

In 2002, a group of residents, mainly composed of Black women who created the neighbourhood association AMACH, joined forces to fight the policy of evictions in the Historic Centre of Salvador. They

did not accept the low-value compensations and resettlement in neighbourhoods far from the Centre being offered by the Companhia de Desenvolvimento Urbano do Estado da Bahia (CONDER), the public company implementing the Recuperation Programme. They refused to leave their homes.

Keep reading... the full report on the case study is published on OPPI's Planning Exchange blog at <https://ontarioplanners.ca/blog/planning-exchange>.

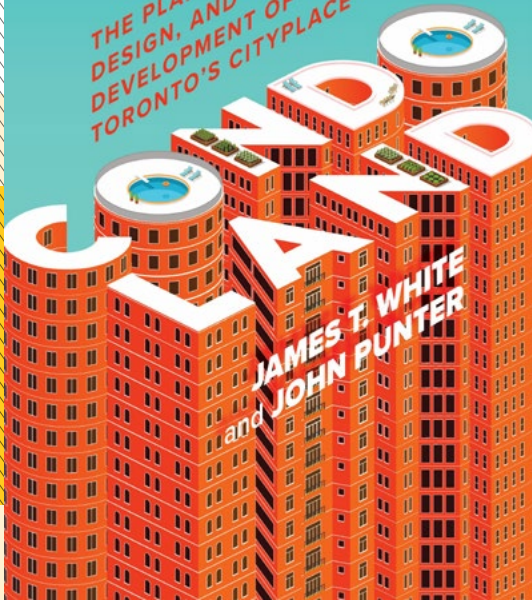
**The Black Planning Project amplifies Black voices and perspectives in city and community building, planning, and development with the goal of reshaping planning practice and facilitating more sustainable and resilient communities. Learn more at <https://www.blackplanningproject.com>.*

→ LEARN MORE

Read "Anti-Racist Planning Practices in Brazil and Canada: Experiences, Learning and Exchanges" by Abigail Moriah, RPP, and Glória Cecília dos Santos Figueiredo. The article was published on the Planning Exchange Blog on February 1, 2024 and includes links to the case study panels designed by Flora Menezes Tavares.

Watch "Experiences, Learning, and Exchanges: Anti-Racist Planning Practices in Brazil and Canada," recording of a webinar aired on February 16, 2024. The webinar was jointly hosted by OPPI, Faculdade de Arquitetura Universidade Federal da Bahia (FAUFBA), and Black Planning Project. In it, community leaders from Brazil and Canada discussed how they engaged with city planners to address development pressures in their community. OPPI Members can watch the recorded webinar on Planners Connect: <https://plannersconnect.ontarioplanners.ca/viewdocument/experiences-learning-and-exchange?CommunityKey=3e9dbe8a-5c69-4714-932c-7b9a7f658bce&tab=librarydocuments>

THE PLANNING,
DESIGN, AND
DEVELOPMENT OF
TORONTO'S CITYPLACE



FEATURE

Condoland: Lessons from the failure of CityPlace

REVIEW BY GLENN MILLER, FCIP

Hardly a day goes by without another article offering solutions to Canada's housing crisis. For most commentators, the answer is simple: build more housing. Speed up approvals, approve more units, and remove those annoying constraints on growth imposed by planners! Lost in the conversation, however, is whether we are building housing that matches the demographic needs of our population. Toronto's latest condo monitor, for example, reports that 50 per cent of condos built in the city since 2002 are one-bedroom units. Not that useful for young families aspiring to home ownership.

This dilemma brings to mind *Condoland: The Planning, Design, and Development of Toronto's CityPlace* (UBC Press, 2023) a book by urban design academics James White and John Punter. Although their focus is to critique the complex forces behind Toronto's approach to "vertical urbanism," *Condoland* has lessons for any city struggling to balance density, intensification, and housing affordability.


"The authors describe CityPlace as a 'megaproject.' This is not intended as a compliment."

The setting for this forensic evaluation of high-rise living is CityPlace, a 30-tower neighbourhood of massive condos built over a 20-year period on former railway lands close to Toronto's waterfront. The authors describe CityPlace as a "megaproject." This is not intended as a compliment.

Noting that other large redevelopment projects such as Regent Park or the Canary District have been well received, White and Punter question how the same planning regime could have failed so badly with CityPlace. Constructed on 44 acres of remediated land originally owned by CN Real Estate, CityPlace was developed entirely

by Vancouver-based Concord Adex. City officials were apparently so impressed with that company's track record in helping to establish "Vancouver-ism" – a design philosophy reliant on human-scaled podiums and wafer-thin towers – that the original plan to parcel out building sites to different builders for the sake of variety was abandoned. The resulting high rises, characterized by large floorplates, minimal space between tall towers, and the use of cheap materials, lack a sense of place, the authors observe, provocatively leaving unanswered the question: can a megaproject ever become a community? On the bigger question of whether vertical urbanization makes for a good city, they are in no doubt. It doesn't.

Condoland evaluates socio-economic impacts as well as design decisions, bolstered by painstaking research and faithful documentation of a lengthy process that generated an endless stream of formal reviews, plans, and design guidelines (listed in an appendix). Despite all the good intentions and statements of principle, the authors believe that CityPlace missed the mark when it came to implementation. For example, we learn that affordable housing targets were sacrificed, a problem they attribute to "let's make a deal" planning and poorly managed urban design. Only four per cent of residences qualify as affordable rather than the 25 per cent goal identified at the outset. Perhaps Vancouver's planners were just better negotiators, the authors suggest.

This deep dive into the mechanics of high-rise development suggests that relying exclusively on condo towers to deliver density at scale can miss the mark if not handled carefully – useful insights for determining how best to address the country's housing crisis. 



Glenn Miller, FCIP, RPP (RETIRED), is a senior associate with the Canadian Urban Institute. An earlier version of this review was published in SPACING.

POLICY

The politics of housing is driving upzoning across the country, and it is not a bad thing

BY SAAD BAIG



“The housing crisis is leading to the end of single-family zoning in Canada.”

In late 2022, the Ontario government passed legislation to require municipalities to allow up to three units on residential lots. Recently, the federal housing minister leveraged the Housing Accelerator Fund to encourage large municipalities to go even further – to allow four units on all residential lots.

It is safe to say that the housing crisis is leading to the end of single-family zoning in Canada. However, that may not be the end of the push to upzone our cities.

Canada's largest city is studying a proposal to allow six-storey 30-unit buildings by right across all major streets, even in neighbourhoods. On the West Coast, the Province of British Columbia is upzoning all land within 800 metres of certain rapid transit stations. The approach effectively creates a height and density transition zone where the minimum allowable height within the first 200 metres is up to 20 storeys, followed by up to 12 storeys from 200 to 400 metres, then up to eight storeys from 400 to 800 metres of transit stations. If replicated in Ontario, this approach would transform the landscape of many neighbourhoods in cities like Toronto, likely for the better.

“Expect the political push towards broad upzoning to continue.”

Expect the political push towards broad upzoning to continue. Millennials are now the largest voting bloc in the country. Older Gen Zs are at an age when they are looking for housing of their own. Couple this with the decline of mainstream media and rise of independent voices through platforms where younger cohorts have expertise, and we can fully expect the housing challenge to dominate public conversation and, in turn, political action for years to come.

Solving the housing crisis is complex. To build the number of homes we need to build, a multitude of factors need to align. We need supportive infrastructure like water and wastewater pipes that need to be planned years in advance. We need enough trades to build homes. We need to become more productive in how we build those homes. Homes need to become more economical to build to be able to charge prices most people can afford. Governments need large-scale initiatives to subsidize homes that are below market for those who cannot afford to pay market prices.

These are all complex objectives that must be addressed. But upzoning can be seen as an easy measure you can implement today. That is why we should not be surprised to see this trend continue with political actors leading the drive to upzone our cities while other aspects play catch up.

It may not be a bad thing if it leads to more of our communities becoming like older European cities that have sustained hundreds of years of boom-and-bust economic cycles. And, less like post-war North American sprawling suburbia – a built form that leads to poor health outcomes, is bad for the environment, and results in higher taxes and a lower quality of life.

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ACADEMIC

Affordable housing is more than a big city problem: Rural Greenbelt housing and implications for planners

BY NATALIE MAJDA, AMANDA MORIELLI, MICHAEL RICCI, AND KARSTEN BRIX



“...rural Ontarians are also experiencing a housing crisis...”

Recent planning political actions, directions, and commitments show that provincial and federal governments increasingly recognize housing affordability as a key priority. While housing discourse often focuses on urban issues, rural Ontarians are also experiencing a housing crisis with arguably higher stakes given additional strains of protecting productive farmland and natural resources and managing servicing and staff capacities.

HOUSING IS A CRISIS IN RURAL COMMUNITIES, TOO

The 2021 Statistics Canada census shows that the state of housing in rural Greenbelt communities is mired with issues of affordability, lack of housing stock diversity, and low supply relative to population and income levels. There is limited research on rental availability versus demand, though interviews with staff in rural municipalities and news reports suggest there is a rental crisis in rural communities as well, exacerbated by factors like Airbnbs supplanting rental units in tourist areas.¹

The issue of affordable housing, then, is not just an urban one: it's seeping into our rural Greenbelt landscapes, with critical implications for equitable rural housing, rural economic vitality, Ontario's food system security, natural and environmental conservation mandates, climate change, and Indigenous reconciliation.

Is it possible to build suitable, affordable housing in rural Greenbelt communities given their protective mandates as spelled

out in the *Greenbelt Act*? Drawing on case studies across Canada and the United States, academic literature, and the mainstream press, we argue that it is possible. Planners can leverage various financial and legal tools to increase housing sensitively in rural Greenbelt communities, while balancing natural conservation needs and supporting economic growth and vitality.

HOUSING DOES NOT NEED TO SACRIFICE LAND CONSERVATION

As part of a professional planning course at the University of Waterloo, we researched and prepared a report on the state of affordable housing in the Greenbelt. We used census data and academic and grey literature to assess the state of Greenbelt housing and its implications for planners, residents, and other stakeholders. This research was supervised by Sean Hertel, MES, MCIP, RPP, and Dana Anderson, MA, FCIP, RPP.

We found that the Greater Golden Horseshoe's Greenbelt is facing a housing crisis that is characterized by issues of housing affordability, supply, and diversity. This challenges the Greenbelt communities' ability to support current and future/prospective housing needs, inclusive of all life stages and income levels. Rural housing issues also hinder the Greenbelt's economic vitality by making it harder to attract and retain employers/employees.

While more housing is needed, it doesn't have to be at the cost of significant land consumption that compromises some of Ontario's best farmland and most sensitive heritage and water resource systems. Prominent low-density housing development models are among the most harmful for agricultural land consumption and natural system health and integrity. It also creates the greatest servicing strains.



“...housing can be effectively managed alongside conservation mandates.”

All photos of the Greenbelt were taken by Amanda Morielli

The approaches to building housing in nature- and agriculture-rich areas vary. Some communities lean on conservation agreements (a tool written about extensively in academic and grey literature) which set aside protected open space within each development application. This is generally informed by current, comprehensive data about key natural and agricultural areas. Effective conservation agreements need to coordinate protected open spaces between neighbouring land parcels to create connected open space networks over time.

Additionally, some communities enter into easement agreements for farmland and natural system areas to protect the most at-risk, rare, and/or productive areas in a community.

The third key approach used across case studies and referenced in the literature is integrating housing density principles and long-term policies or plans like an official plan. These should explicitly reference protecting certain agricultural or natural system areas and should be informed by “Smart Growth” principles, using current data on key natural and agricultural areas.

These tools have been used with varying success across Canada, the United States, and Britain in natural protection areas similar to the Greenbelt facing comparable housing challenges. With effective stakeholder buy-in, consistent usage, collecting and using current agricultural and natural system data, and coordinating with neighbouring municipalities, tool efficacy generally increases.

“Canada’s rural landscapes are layered with the historic and present occupations of diverse Indigenous Nations and People.”

Importantly, while much literature discusses ways to incentivize affordable housing and balance housing growth with conservation mandates, there is little discussion about how to achieve this in a reconciliatory manner. Canada’s rural landscapes are layered with the historic and present occupations of diverse Indigenous Nations and People. Greenbelt land and its resources have varied

meaning and importance to Indigenous Nations and People. As part of our professional reconciliation commitments, it is important to recognize and partner with Indigenous Nations to collaboratively plan and implement thoughtful housing growth strategies going forward.

Densifying construction through policy directives or conservation agreements, supported with current data on key agricultural and natural system areas in one’s municipality or region, can be leveraged as tools to increase housing while minimizing natural and agricultural land consumption impacts. Increasing use of these tools in protected area communities across the United States, Britain, and Canada demonstrates that housing can be effectively managed alongside conservation mandates.

CASE STUDY HIGHLIGHTS

Through our research, we found some local case study examples that had strong approaches to increasing rural affordable housing while preserving natural and agricultural lands:

1. Saugeen Shores, Ontario

Saugeen Shores, a community with a large rural land area, designed a system to expedite affordable housing using a Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) and as-of-right permissions for additional dwelling units (ADUs). The CPPS combines zoning, site plan, and minor variance applications into one process with shorter approval timelines. ADUs support as-of-right housing densification on existing residential parcels. New rental developments are also incentivized and supported by allowing development charges to be paid over five years, lowering up-front costs for builders.

2. Prince Edward County, Ontario

Prince Edward County’s innovative Affordable Housing Corporation (PECAHC) addresses low affordable the housing supply in the area by merging existing municipal corporate, land, and financial resources with community stakeholder expertise, visioning, and time. The PECAHC is a single-member, non-share capital corporation with the



municipality as the sole member. This means the corporation can acquire assets, obtain loans, and establish housing programs with more targeted resources.

3. Mont-Tremblant, Quebec

The Campus Ryan housing project in Mont Tremblant is anticipated to provide over 220 furnished, affordable rental housing units to support, attract, and retain local workers. Private-led and council-supported municipal zoning changes to the site helped permit this dense housing development. This model provides accessible, affordable rental accommodations for local, seasonal workers.


WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR PLANNERS?

Ontario's housing crisis is not just an urban one. Farmers, workers, diverse Indigenous People and communities, young families, retirees, and immigrants living in Greenbelt rural communities are facing a housing crisis with unique stakes, implicating housing security, natural and agricultural land conservation, food system security, Indigenous reconciliation, and climate change issues.

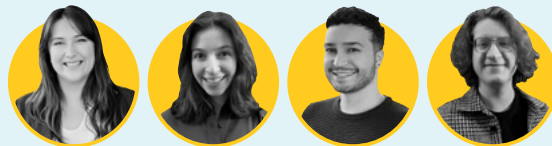
Planners can navigate meeting rural housing needs by delivering on conservation, economic vitality, and climate change mandates per the *Greenbelt Act* through approaches, including:

- Using conservation agreements and easement agreements to protect key agricultural and natural system areas in new and existing land parcels;
- Generating and maintaining key agricultural and natural system area maps/data to inform policy and development application decisions;
- Exploring municipally supported affordable housing models such as the Prince Edward County Affordable Housing Corporation or Saugeen Shores' Community Planning Permit Systems;

- Integrating housing-density language and visioning into long-term plans, including official plans, informed by priority agricultural and natural system area data and Smart Growth principles.

As we navigate Ontario's housing crisis, we should be careful not to overshadow rural housing issues with urban housing discourse and solutions. Nor should we treat them the same – rural housing issues require unique interventions given their environmental, economic, servicing, and capacity contexts. 

1 See Greenbelt Foundation "Growing Close to Home: Creating Complete Rural Communities" report, 2020. https://www.Greenbelt.ca/complete_communities



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ACADEMIC

Rendering visible tenant displacement throughout Ontario

BY BRIAN DOUCET

Addressing the root causes of the housing crisis is about more than building new supply. The loss of existing housing, particularly units that are affordable to those on low and moderate incomes is an overlooked aspect of contemporary housing debates, as well as a major contributor to displacement and dislocation across Ontario and beyond.

Recent analysis has shown that in cities such as Hamilton, more than 20 units of affordable private-market housing (renting under \$750/month) are lost for every new unit constructed. Some of these units are lost when buildings are physically demolished, usually making way for greater density. Renovations also lead to much higher rents for the same units. However, in many other cases, landlords do nothing apart from raise the rent once a tenant moves out, taking advantage of a lack of rent control in Ontario (and most of Canada) on vacant units.

“Displacement is one of the most important concepts in housing, yet one of the most overlooked.”

All these scenarios are closely related to displacement. Displacement is one of the most important concepts in housing, yet one of the most overlooked. It is a complex term that can be summarized as a process that results in the outmigration of residents for reasons outside of their control. This occurs despite tenants having met all previously imposed conditions of occupancy, as well as due to it becoming impossible, dangerous, or unaffordable to continue residing there.

Mainstream discourse focuses on how tenants leave voluntarily: they move cities, marry, divorce, buy a house, or want a different type of apartment in a different location. But this passive approach ignores how, in many cases, landlords actively push tenants out. This can be done through renovations (when tenants are evicted for renovations), demovictions (when eviction happens due to

demolition), or simply to raise rents by taking advantage of the loopholes in rent control.

However, there are no reliable and comprehensive numbers to quantify how much displacement actually occurs. This is a problem because planners typically look to data for guidance on how to make housing plans. As a result, these issues and the ways in which they are experienced can easily be invisible to decision-makers and those who inform them. The limited data that does exist significantly undercounts what is actually going on and is incapable of making visible tenant experiences of dislocation, trauma, harassment, and intimidation.

That is why researchers at the Social Planning Network of Ontario partnered with University of Waterloo’s School of Planning to examine the lived experiences of displacement. Rather than try to quantify the scale of displacement, our research, released in the fall of 2023, focused on the questions of what displacement looks like from the perspective of tenants. From this, we can better understand how displacement happens.

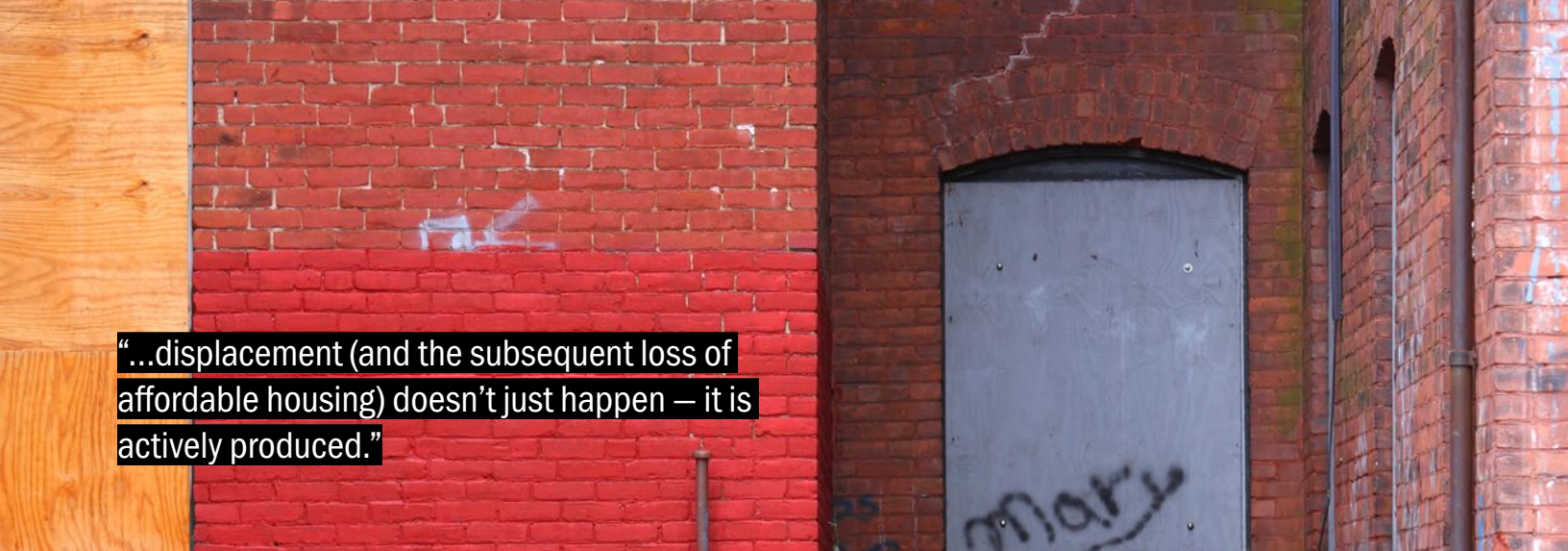
To do this, we interviewed 113 tenants in four very different communities across Ontario, Oxford County, York Region, Kingston, and Cornwall, who all had personal experiences with displacement. The research was carried out by the respective local planning councils. Interviews were conducted by local engagement coordinators, some of whom had their own lived experiences with housing precarity and displacement.

Despite the varying locations, we found many common tenant experiences and landlord tactics. We argue that displacement (and the subsequent loss of affordable housing) doesn’t just happen – it is actively produced. Analyzing all the stories and experiences of more than 150 instances of displacement (some tenants we spoke with were displaced more than once) helps us to move beyond anecdotes to see bigger trends and processes.

“...formal, court-enforced evictions represent only the tip of the iceberg...”

HOW DISPLACEMENT HAPPENS

As noted above, there are no statistics to measure the full extent of displacement. While eviction hearings are documented, our



“...displacement (and the subsequent loss of affordable housing) doesn’t just happen — it is actively produced.”

research echoes the work of others which demonstrates that formal, court-enforced evictions represent only the tip of the iceberg when it comes to displacement. Broadly, we have identified three categories of displacement that all centre on the power landlords have over tenants.

Informal displacement tactics. In these instances, landlords simply tell tenants that they have to leave, hoping this will be enough to force them out. Often this works, particularly if tenants are vulnerable, scared, don’t know their rights, or have language barriers. There are a number of tactics that landlords will deploy, including “cash for keys” – offering tenants a few thousand dollars if they break their lease and move out. In other instances, landlords will neglect the property, cutting back on maintenance, pest control, repairs, and other responsibilities that ensure a safe, secure dwelling. Rather than seeing this as bad management, it was clear from the tenants we spoke with that they see this is part of a deliberate strategy to make conditions so unbearable that they have no choice but to leave.

Semi-formal displacement tactics. In these cases, tenants are presented with a formal eviction notice, such as an N12 (when tenants are evicted because the landlord or someone in their family wants to live in the unit themselves), or N13 (when the landlord wants to demolish, renovate, or convert the unit). Landlords can easily “give notice” to tenants that they will be filing one of these formal evictions, a move that can prompt tenants to leave, again, often out of fear of being made homeless. Whether or not these notices are filed with the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB) is often irrelevant: tenants are exhausted, panicked, and see the writing on the wall.

The threat of a formal eviction is often enough to force a tenant out.

It is important to stress that these two types of displacement represented the vast majority of the experiences from the tenants we spoke with across Ontario. Equally important, none of these examples of displacement will show up within conventional statistics. Officially, these moves would all be considered “voluntary” – tenants willingly agree to end their tenancy (N11) or simply move on. In the literal sense, tenants are not “forced” to leave.

However, after speaking with so many tenants who have moved

because of these informal and semi-formal tactics, it is clear that these moves are anything but voluntary. Tenants would have preferred to stay but felt they had no choice. Therefore, these types of moves need to be seen as part of the displacement process, even though they are invisible within the formal data.

Formal evictions: Representing a very small fraction of displacement experiences we heard, landlords in this case use official eviction notices, follow timelines, and file their evictions with the Landlord and Tenant Board (LTB). The eviction is ordered and enforced by the LTB, therefore requiring tenants to leave. While this can also include at-fault evictions, such as the non-payment of rent, formal evictions can also occur in bad faith, such as when landlords wait to cash a tenant’s rent cheque until the end of the month, a strategy to provoke an at-fault eviction if their bank account has insufficient funds.

WHAT CAN PLANNERS DO?

The most important thing is to start talking about and centring tenant experiences within municipal planning, policy, and political debates. Planners need to be aware of what official data show, and do not show, and actively incorporate other sources of knowledge, including tenant experiences, if they are to have a full perspective of the housing crisis.

“Kitchener’s award-winning affordable housing strategy does a good job of this...”

Because so much of the displacement story is hidden within official statistics, the scope, scale, and experiences of displacement fall under the radar. Engaging meaningfully with tenants through building housing policy around their lived experiences is a good place to start. Kitchener’s award-winning affordable housing strategy does a good job of this and, importantly, has produced some tangible results, not just more talk! (Note: I sat on the city’s affordable housing strategy advisory committee.)

With tenant voices prominently at the decision-making table, it quickly becomes clear that focusing on adding more market-rate supply will do little to address either the root causes of the housing

crisis or the day-to-day challenges faced by lower-income tenants.

Fortunately, there are several planning and policy approaches that can make a significant difference. Rent control is one of the best ways to protect existing affordable housing. Specifically, it closes the loophole that has contributed to so much displacement: the ability for landlords to charge whatever they want when a unit becomes vacant. Vacancy decontrol was introduced by the Mike Harris government in the mid-1990s. While many economists critique the idea of rent control, empirical evidence in Ontario and elsewhere shows that strong rent control and tenant protections have little impact on the supply of new housing.

In many cases, it makes sense to demolish an older (and therefore affordable) low-rise rental building to construct a taller and denser tower. However, without rules to protect tenants and replace the affordable units that are lost, displacement occurs and affordable housing is lost. Rental replacement bylaws are an effective tool to ensure that, at the very least, the tenants residing in the old building can return to similar units at similar prices once the new one is constructed.

In Ontario, Toronto, Mississauga, and Oakville all have various forms of rental replacement bylaws, and Kitchener is now exploring the policy. However, the best rules in Canada are in Burnaby, British Columbia. Their Tenant Assistance Policy clearly articulates the responsibilities of the landlord or rezoning applicant. These include a rental top up for temporary accommodation, cover a tenant's moving costs, and provide a similar unit at similar rents in the new building. These replacement units can form part of the overall requirement to have 20 per cent of units rented at below-market rates.

Anti-renoviction bylaws have also proven incredibly effective in all but eliminating this cruel and unjust practice. New Westminster, B.C., introduced the first such bylaw in 2019. In the three years prior to this, there were 333 renovictions within this small city; in the first two years after, there were none. The B.C. government has since enacted similar legislation province wide. In Ontario, Hamilton is currently developing its own anti-renoviction bylaw.

“Hamilton is currently developing its own anti-renoviction bylaw.”

While protecting existing housing will help curtail displacements, adding new supply that is affordable to those on low and moderate incomes is also essential. To do this, planners need to think beyond the market and use tools at their disposal to enable the construction of housing that private developers are unwilling or unable to build.

Central to this is public land. With no acquisition costs, many more options become financially viable, enabling municipal governments and other public entities to work with non-profits to develop a range of genuinely affordable housing projects. Unfortunately, there are still too many examples of missed opportunities, such as the former Delta Secondary School in Hamilton. After the city passed on its right to acquire the site under

the Ontario Realty Directive, it was sold to a private developer for three times its appraised value.

Last year, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau pledged to ensure affordable housing would be built along Hamilton's LRT line. With few city-owned plots left and sites like Delta gone, it will come down to what happens to the land that Metrolinx owns to determine whether or not significant new affordable housing will be built. However, their track record is not good; in 2022, Metrolinx sold off a parking lot at the Port Credit GO station to a private developer for \$64.5 million with no provision for any affordable housing.

It's not all bad news. One of the tangible outcomes of Kitchener's affordable housing strategy was thinking differently about city-owned land. The city recently leased (for a nominal fee) a small parcel near an LRT stop to the YW, who obtained rapid housing financing from the federal government. Today, two buildings of supportive housing for single women and families stand where there was only a grassy field a few short years ago.

None of this is rocket science. We know solutions that work to protect tenants and we know how to implement them. The challenge is shifting the power relations, both between landlords and tenants, as well as in terms of those who make and shape cities. Only then can we start to imagine a context where renovictions and unjust displacements are not a major part of the housing landscape. ♻️

Note: This article is based on the research report *The Many Faces of Urban and Rural Displacement*, written in collaboration between the Social Planning Network of Ontario (SPNO) and the University of Waterloo (UW), which can be accessed at: <https://www.spno.ca/>. That report was written by Emma McDougall and Brian Doucet (UW), Rose Vandermeer (SPNO), Yvonne Kelly (Social Planning Council York Region), Dilyn Reid-Davies (Social Planning Council of Kingston and District), Kama Vandervyvere (Social Planning Council Oxford), and Anna Lafrance (Social Development Council of Cornwall and Area).



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ACADEMIC

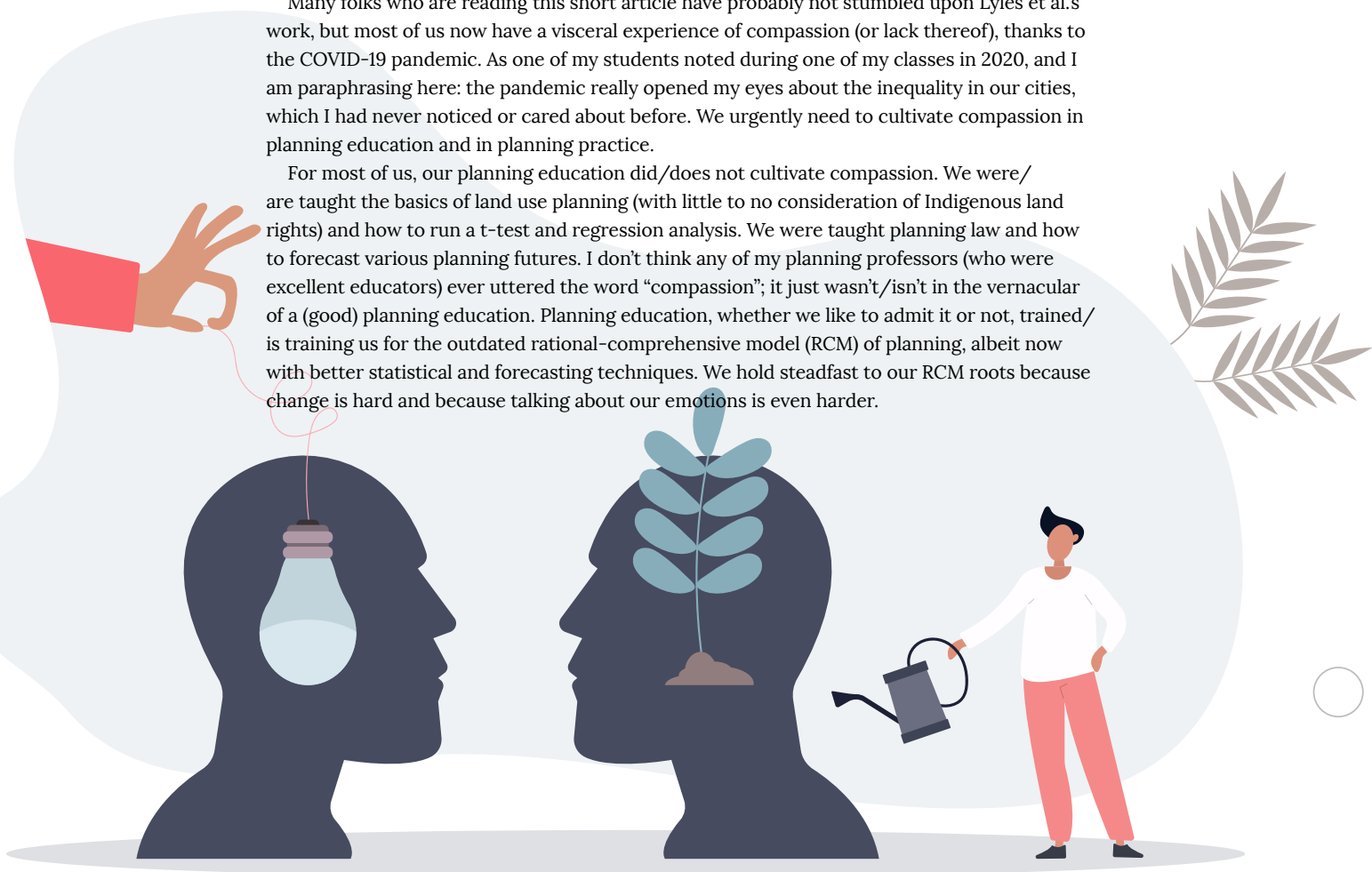
A wiser approach to planning education and practice

BY CARRIE L. MITCHELL

A few years back, colleagues published an article in the *Journal of Planning Literature* on the prospect of compassionate planning.¹ Compassion, or the “awareness of and motivation to increase care and reduce suffering,” is not pity nor is it a “touchy-feely platitude.”² Rather, they argue it is a call for “deep reflection and persistence transformation” which can/should happen at the individual level but also, importantly, within groups and systems (i.e., the urban system). Most importantly, they argue compassionate can, and should, be cultivated.

Many folks who are reading this short article have probably not stumbled upon Lyles et al.’s work, but most of us now have a visceral experience of compassion (or lack thereof), thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic. As one of my students noted during one of my classes in 2020, and I am paraphrasing here: the pandemic really opened my eyes about the inequality in our cities, which I had never noticed or cared about before. We urgently need to cultivate compassion in planning education and in planning practice.

For most of us, our planning education did/does not cultivate compassion. We were/are taught the basics of land use planning (with little to no consideration of Indigenous land rights) and how to run a t-test and regression analysis. We were taught planning law and how to forecast various planning futures. I don’t think any of my planning professors (who were excellent educators) ever uttered the word “compassion”; it just wasn’t/isn’t in the vernacular of a (good) planning education. Planning education, whether we like to admit it or not, trained/is training us for the outdated rational-comprehensive model (RCM) of planning, albeit now with better statistical and forecasting techniques. We hold steadfast to our RCM roots because change is hard and because talking about our emotions is even harder.



Fast forward to 2024. We have a global climate crisis, national housing crisis, and a mental health crisis.^{3,4,5} Seven hundred million people worldwide live on less than USD \$2.15/day, the extreme poverty line.⁶ We are in the middle of a critical period of truth and reconciliation. Now is the time to think about how we teach and practice compassion in our day-to-day work. Specifically, I challenge us to examine how we can better cultivate compassion in our classrooms, our boardrooms, and our cities.

COMPASSION IN PLANNING EDUCATION

Over the last decade of teaching in a school of planning, I have witnessed first-hand the challenges of our young adults in terms of managing an academic workload along with other important commitments, such as jobs and family. As a researcher, however, I need more than anecdotal evidence to convince myself (and others) about the significance of a problem and potential solutions. So, in late 2023, I asked 155 of our first-year planning students how they could move “from surviving to thriving” on campus. This question was catalyzed by a larger commitment by the University of Waterloo to focus on student experience and engagement.

What did our students tell us? They told us they need a more compassionate education. Over 50 per cent of the comments we received focused on a lack of well-being in courses and curriculum. Students tell us they want to move beyond traditional lectures where we talk at them, to hands-on activities where we learn with them. They need instructors who can communicate well and who prioritize well-being in their classroom. Our students also report wanting more community: more connections with peers, more social and community events, and more faculty-student interaction. These students are, after all, a cohort who were confined to their homes and e-learning during the pandemic. They need mentors – faculty, staff, peers, and alumni to help guide them. Finally, they need us to better communicate with each other and with respect to the available support services available to them within our university community.


“...they need a more compassionate education.”

For our part, we are introducing more compassion into planning education through a new initiative called WISER, or well-being in students’ education and research. Think of WISER as an empty container. We need to fill this container with the latest recommendations on well-being in higher education but also with content that our students decide is important to them. In other words, this is a bottom-up, collaborative approach to students’ well-being, where students are given the agency to co-create their vision of thriving on campus. Our overarching goal is not only to prioritize well-being in the classroom, but also to model what compassion looks like in planning education with the hopes that students pass on this model in their future practice. A WISER planning student will hopefully one day be a wise planner, leading to a compassionate turn in planning practice.

CULTIVATING COMPASSION NOW

We do not need to wait for the next generation of planning students to cultivate compassion in the profession; we can act now to prioritize a compassionate turn in planning. Lyles et al. have practical suggestions we can implement immediately.⁷ For example, they suggest planning organizations could treat the cultivation of compassion as a form of professional development and encourage employees to participate in training programs. OPPI, for example, could partner with organizations who have developed compassion-training modules and work to adapt it to the planning context through continuous education credits.

“...a bottom-up, collaborative approach to students’ well-being...”

Strong leadership necessarily plays a critical role in cultivating compassion. A leader, whether in planning education or planning practice, who does not act compassionately in their day-to-day management practices can hardly expect employees to act compassionately in their work. We have the way; we just need the will. 

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2 Lyles et al., 2018: 247.

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4 Rajaonson, Juste. (2023). “Why bricks and mortar alone won’t solve the housing crisis”. *Policy Options*, November 6. Online: <https://policyoptions.irpp.org/magazines/november-2023/we-need-to-redefine-the-social-value-of-housing/>

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6 World Bank (2024). Poverty: Overview. Online: <https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/poverty/overview>

7 Lyles et al., 2018.



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ACADEMIC

Welcoming campus, inclusive community: Building housing infrastructure for international students

BY ZHIXI CECILIA ZHUANG, RPP

Setting the context: Are international students responsible for the current housing crisis in Canada?

On January 22, 2024, the federal government announced a two-year cap on international student permits. This action aims to target certain “bad actors” among institutions, who have been exploiting international students through high tuition fees, fake educational degrees, and poor operations.¹ However, another major concern this measure aims to address is the impact of a surge of international students on the housing market, which has triggered heightened public concerns and policy debates, while drawing considerable attention in international media.² The rationale is that the housing shortage across Canada was exacerbated by the unprecedented record-high admission of over one million international students in 2023, which drove up housing costs and worsened the already limited housing supply.³

“The rationale is that the housing shortage across Canada was exacerbated by the unprecedented record-high admission of over one million international students in 2023...”

However, there are no simple solutions to the “misalignment between population growth and housing supply”; rather, how we frame the problem – whether “as a matter of too much immigration or too little housing, or some combination of the two” – matters a lot.⁴ Instead of unfairly scapegoating international students for the current housing crisis, we should examine why Canada relies on them and their contribution to the country’s economy and higher education.

International students are culturally and economically important to Canadian society, contributing to the country’s economic prosperity, knowledge networks, and global competitiveness. In 2019, Canada ranked third globally in attracting international students, with 642,000 students contributing \$22 billion annually to the country’s economy and supporting over 170,000 jobs.⁵ 

Keep reading this article on the Planning Exchange blog and learn more about why international students are a benefit to Canada and why it is imperative to build equitable and inclusive housing infrastructure for international students. ontarioplanners.ca/blog/planning-exchange.

- 1 Wherry, A. (2024a). Federal government announces 2-year cap on student permits. *CBC News*, January 22, 2024. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/miller-cap-international-students-1.7090779>
- 2 Monga, V. (2023). Canada, in Policy Shift, Weighs Capping Student Visas; Boom in international students worsens housing crunch, say government ministers. *Wall Street Journal*, September 12, 2023. <https://www.wsj.com/world/americas/canada-in-policy-shift-weighs-capping-student-visas-9c960b8e>
- 3 Woolf, M. (2024). Number of international students now exceeds one million, official figures show. *The Globe and Mail*, January 19, 2024. <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/politics/article-number-of-international-students-now-exceeds-one-million-official/>
- 4 Wherry, A. (2024b). There are no simple answers to the immigration and housing question. *CBC News*, January 13, 2024. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/housing-immigration-trudeau-poilievre-1.7082624>
- 5 El-Assal, Kareem (2020). “642,000 international students: Canada now ranks 3rd globally in foreign student attraction”, *CIC News*, February 20, 2020. <https://www.cicnews.com/2020/02/642000-international-students-canada-now-ranks-3rd-globally-in-foreign-student-attraction-0213763.html#gs.8dgm0b>

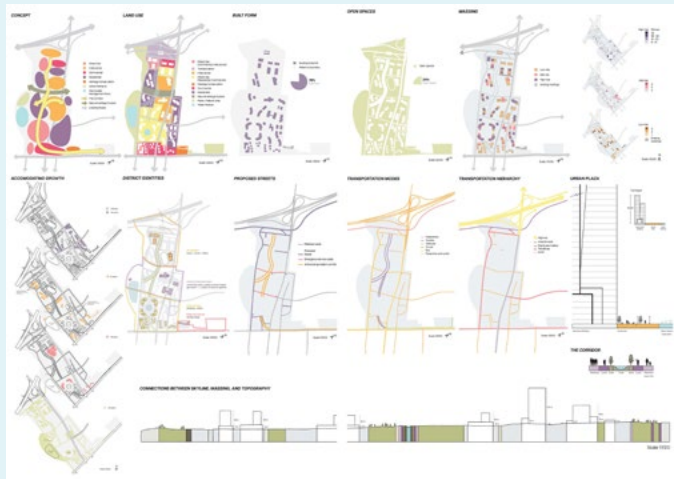


Zhixi Zhuang, PhD, MCIP, RPP, is a Member of OPPI, Associate Professor at the School of Urban and Regional Planning, Toronto Metropolitan University, Academic Director of the Toronto Metropolitan Centre for Immigration and Settlement, and Founder and Director of DiverCityLab (www.divercitylab.com). She is a member of the Global Planning Education Committee at the Association of Collegiate Schools of Planning, Associate Editor of the *Journal of Planning Education and Research*, and Director on the Board of the International Association of China Planning.

ACADEMIC

Planning student projects

Students at Ontario's six accredited planning schools are the future of the profession and the Registered Professional Planners of tomorrow. Here is a look at some of the exciting and progressive projects from future RPPs.



SCHOOL OF PLANNING, UNIVERSITY OF WATERLOO

A sustainable future for Palermo North, the Town of Oakville

How can the Town of Oakville manage affordable and sustainable future growth? In this Community Design Studio, the students conducted a rigorous research and analysis of the existing conditions in the Palermo North district that they articulated through a series of structural diagrams. A charrette and a dialectic process with the Town of Oakville planners generated design options that envisioned the future of Palermo North.

Instructor: Luna Khirfan, PhD, MA, MA, BSc

Course: PLAN 313 Community Design Studio

Client: The Town of Oakville

Students pictured: (pictured L-R): Kristen Chau, Lina Pharaon, Adie Mason, Muzhi Li, Lee-Anne Mcleod



MES PLANNING PROGRAM, YORK UNIVERSITY

Design manifesto: Our relationships with novel urban ecosystems

For the fall 2023 term's popular Urban Environmental Design course, MES Planning students Megan Tay (a professional florist) and Ever Palma (eco program instructor) prepared a design manifesto that explored our relationships with novel urban ecosystems and evolving expectations of ecological health. They explored urban ecology and sustainable design through a series of collaborative walks in Toronto, which led to them communicating their design manifesto through a floral arrangement and booklet created from locally sourced materials.

Instructor: Jennifer Foster, PhD, Associate Professor, Urban Ecologies

Course: MES Urban Environmental Design

Students: Megan Tay and Ever Palma



**SCHOOL OF URBAN & REGIONAL PLANNING,
TORONTO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**

Welcoming campus, welcoming community: Building inclusive housing infrastructure for international students

What are the lived housing experiences of international students in the Greater Toronto Area? How can governments, higher education institutions, and community stakeholders work together to build an inclusive housing infrastructure for the retention and integration of international students? In partnership with City Building TMU and the Centre for Immigration and Settlement, the undergraduate studio group tackled these imperative issues through semi-structured interviews, case studies, and policy reviews to offer short-term and longer-term recommendations, including increased community and institutional support, intergenerational shared housing, legal and planning policy changes, and incentivizing student housing developments.

Supervisor: Zhixi Cecilia Zhuang, PhD, MCIP, RPP

Client: City Building TMU

Students (in alphabetical order): Nolan Atterbury, Sonelle Crawford, Joshua Cugini, Zikang Fan, Jack Krywulak, Bashir Maidama, Nun Nil, Chris Petrou, Angelina Richards, Asha Selvakumar, Bumika Srikanthalingam



**SCHOOL OF URBAN & REGIONAL PLANNING,
TORONTO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**

University Bird-Safe City: Bird-safe design guidelines for the biophilic city

The Bird-Safe City project sought to address the decline in bird populations resulting from collisions within the

built environment, contributing to a global biodiversity crisis. By providing recommendations to update the existing City of Toronto's Bird-Friendly Development Guidelines, this project aims to incorporate bird-safe design practices into urban planning policies to minimize the impact of urbanization on biodiversity loss. This project's primary objectives include comprehensive research on bird-safe planning and design, a policy scan, and an examination of emerging standards.

Client: City of Toronto, Strategic Initiatives, Policy & Analysis

Students: Mona Khan, Maaha Nomani, Susan Deer, Christina Chiefari, Rachael Nash, Guillaume Perreault



**SCHOOL OF URBAN & REGIONAL PLANNING,
TORONTO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**

Bonding with the Future: 38 Dundas and Bond Street's Next Chapter

Facilities Management and Development at Toronto Metropolitan University (TMU), in partnership with the Toronto Downtown Business Improvement Area (BIA), is collaborating with the TMU School of Urban and Regional Planning to develop strategies for urban spaces. The focus is on enhancing public areas and introducing innovations at two TMU-designated sites, Bond Street and 38 Dundas Street East, both serving as gateways to the campus. These ideas will be based on on-site analysis, strategic planning, and design-based research methods. The goal is to improve the campus master plan and promote placemaking.

Advisor: Victor Perez-Amado, assistant professor

Client: Facilities Management and Development, TMU and Toronto Downtown BIA

Students: Alia Amin, Asma'a Tahir, Garrett Sun Cheong, Hussna Jan, Maya Ramirez, Natalia Joffre, Nicole Vasylyv, Nikita Mirshahi, Omar Hirji, Rand Hassein, Sara Ukaj, Shayan Khan



**SCHOOL OF URBAN & REGIONAL PLANNING,
TORONTO METROPOLITAN UNIVERSITY**

Keeping Sidewalks Safe in Winter: 2023 Update

This studio group with their client Walk Toronto asked: How might snow clearing operations in the City of Toronto put accessibility, mobility, and equity at the forefront in a changing climate? Recommendations focus on enhanced service standards, long-term infrastructure alignment for winter mobility, and social resilience. The group highlights 13 specific actions for local government and civil society groups, providing realistic context for how change can be made going forward.

Supervisor: Pamela Robinson, MCIP, RPP, professor

Client: Walk Toronto

Students: Catherine Caetano-Macdonell, Sara Cullen, Alex Hanes, Kiera McMaster, Frani O'Toole, Ramya Ragavan, Aneil Sihota



Over her almost 20-year planning career, Uzo Rossouw, RPP, acquired a remarkably diverse background in positions that span planning and development, land economics and property assessment, private and public sector. Her experience includes time spent as an analyst at an economics consulting firm, an in-house planner at a law firm, and a planner at a planning consulting firm and government agency, where she built the organization’s first planning department from the ground up.

Registered Professional Planner

PROFILE

NAME:

Uzo Rossouw, RPP

LOCATION:

Markham, Ontario

POSITION:

Director of Land Development for Ballantry Homes

Currently, Rossouw is the Director of Development for Ballantry Homes, a development and building firm, where she manages all aspects of the development process from acquisition through to approvals and construction. This variety of leadership experience has given her unique insight into planning and community building. She also serves as a Director on OPPI Council.

What led to your decision to choose planning as a career?

As a kid, I was always fascinated by maps. When my parents told us we were moving back to Canada, I spent days looking at maps and advising them on where I thought we should live. In high school, I took some drafting classes, which led to a co-op term at an architecture firm. I quickly realized architecture wasn’t for me, but I was still interested in cities and form, so I started researching related fields of study, including planning.

When I applied to the University of Waterloo, I still didn’t really know what planning was and had pretty much decided I would do civil engineering instead. Then, I ran into a friend from my drafting classes who was taking planning at Waterloo. He couldn’t say enough good things about the

program and swore I would love it. It wasn’t until I attended the university’s open house that I made my final decision. I was amazed there was a program that somehow covered all my interests! Needless to say, it was a decision I have never regretted.

Tell us about your volunteer roles with OPPI.

I am currently in my second term on OPPI Council, and I am the Chair of the Governance and Nominations Committee and a member of the Student Outreach Committee. Prior to joining OPPI Council, I spent a number of years in the Professional Regulation Working Group. We started the initiative to have OPPI work towards becoming a publicly legislated organization.

The housing crisis, while not a new issue, is intensifying. What makes this housing crisis different from past housing crises?

One of the biggest difficulties with the housing crisis lies in its complexities. In some ways, it’s more like a series of crises that have converged to create the situation we are in now. There are so many issues at play: interest rates, financing, government policy, planning legislation, nimbyism, demographic profiles, immigration, labour shortages, supply chain management, to name a few. This means, unfortunately, that the solution must also be multifaceted –

there is no one item that created our current situation so there is no silver bullet to get us out of it.

From your perspective, where do RPPs have the most influence with the housing crisis?

RPPs are uniquely suited to assist with solving many of the issues. As planners, we play a fundamental role in the creation and maintenance of healthy, resilient communities of all sizes, for all people. Unfortunately, this role is not widely understood.

“As planners, we play a fundamental role in the creation and maintenance of healthy, resilient communities of all sizes, for all people.”

RPPs lead the placemaking process by navigating a complicated web of regulations, policies, and guidelines, managing large teams and stakeholder groups, and finding elegant solutions to seemingly impossible multidisciplinary problems. It is always the planner who is charged with bringing it all together, and accordingly, we have a better understanding of the many aspects of the project than anyone else on the file.

As a profession, our work deals with crises such as climate change, affordable housing, transportation and traffic congestion, and public health – sometimes all at once. OPPI’s membership includes a vast array of skilled professionals from across the private and public sector and academia. Together, we are well positioned to provide solutions-based leadership on a wide range of social, economic, and environmental issues. We just need to be better at harnessing our collective expertise.

What are some of the barriers developers are facing in building homes?

I find it strange that in Ontario, we have created a system whereby we rely almost 100 per cent on the private sector to deliver housing, which is a fundamental human right. The private sector is very simple to understand in a lot of ways, but the reality is that they cannot operate at a loss. Meaning they cannot deliver housing for cheaper than it costs to build. This is often characterized as “corporate greed,” but it is actually just basic economics. The banks do not finance projects that will not turn a profit.

“In Ontario, we have created a system whereby we rely almost 100 per cent on the private sector to deliver housing, which is a fundamental human right.”

In Ontario right now, it is incredibly difficult to actually build anything, and the reasons are multifaceted. It starts with the cost of land, which, if you can find a suitable piece, is exorbitant – and that is a big if. There are a lot of properties out there that seem developable but are seriously constrained, whether by physical, environmental, or servicing issues. The increases in interest rates over the last few years have further exacerbated the issue, making

it increasingly difficult to find financially viable projects.

If/when you do find a piece of developable land, then you have to go through the planning and approvals process, which is constantly changing and very complex. There are so many layers to the process and so many competing interests that it takes a long time to navigate, and it is almost impossible to satisfy everyone. We regularly find ourselves mediating between the interests of multiple government departments or agencies. This process, which should take months, regularly takes years, which can add significantly to the timeline and cost of the final project.

From the approvals process, you roll straight into the building permit process, which can be almost as complicated. Under the legislation, it is supposed to take 10 days or so, but in reality, it can take up to six months. Once you have all your permits, you still need to find people to actually build, which is not easy either. I don’t think many people understand exactly how big of a shortage we have in skilled trades. It is very difficult to find people who can do the work, and the cost of obtaining labour has increased accordingly. While some of the supply chain issues have eased somewhat since COVID, the cost of some materials has remained high.

“I don’t think many people understand exactly how big of a shortage we have in skilled trades.”

Currently, we have an additional issue, which is that once you do get the units approved, there is no one to purchase them, which is crazy to think about, because we all know there is a shortage of housing. Generally, the banks will not release the funds to construct a project until a certain number of units has been sold. The interest rate hikes have frozen the market, which means it is difficult to obtain the number of pre-sales required for build-out. This is jeopardizing the delivery of new housing projects desperately needed to ease the crisis.

You mentioned infrastructure being one of the problems. Can you expand on that?

Part of the problem in Ontario is the historic lack of investment in infrastructure (water, wastewater, roads, transit, etc.). Infrastructure is a critical component of housing delivery and shouldn’t be political. Without continuous investment, communities cannot grow or even maintain the current levels of necessary servicing. As we all know, infrastructure has a life cycle, and it requires constant maintenance and sometimes outright replacement.

The problem is that infrastructure projects are horrifically expensive. They’re not sexy. And the term for an infrastructure project is almost always longer than the term of a municipal council, and so it is hard to get support for the spending required.

Take transit, for example. Years ago, when I was in Hong Kong, I discovered that anywhere you want to go in the city, there’s a subway, there’s a bus, there’s often a ferry if you’re crossing the river. They also have these little mini buses. The mini buses have

kind of a loose quadrant, and the driver zigzags around and can take you anywhere within that quad. If you're going from point A to B, you have about six different options for how to get there, or you could drive. Same with London (U.K.): you can get an underground train, or a bus, or an overland train.

“If you have a city that’s continuously growing, you have to continuously be investing in maintenance and construction of infrastructure of all types.”

In those two places, they have never stopped investing in new transit systems and lines. They're constantly building. And if you have a city that's continuously growing, you have to be investing continuously in maintenance and construction of infrastructure of all types.

Here, we tend to believe, or maybe hope, that it will be one and done. Part of it is because of the fiscal constraints of Ontario municipalities. Over the years, they have been required to take on increasing responsibilities without being provided the money or revenue-generating tools to fund them. The only real funding tool municipalities have is taxes and, given the current discourse occurring at the City of Toronto, it is clear why councils are hesitant to resort to tax increase. We are left with a situation whereby municipalities are required to provide infrastructure, but they can't because they have no money, so they rely on the private sector to front-end these projects.

What about planning policy, especially with respect to housing equity and intensification?

I don't think our current planning policy climate is setting anyone up for success. It is so complicated and difficult to navigate, and it takes tremendous public resources. I also think there are some fundamental misconceptions that are further complicating the matter.

For instance, there are so many competing principles out there, some of which are completely contradictory. We all accept that there is a housing shortage and so growth has to happen, but the reality is that we either have to grow up or out. If we accept that sprawl is bad, then we need to be committed to density, whether that be high or gentle. While the public might accept this in theory, when density is proposed in their neighbourhoods, it is often a completely different story.

Another example would be urban design versus affordability. While the two are not mutually exclusive, very often, the little touches that make communities unique and special also add cost. As planners, we all want to create great communities, but we have to understand there may be a trade-off. At some point, a decision has to be made as to what is most important for that community – namely in the “public” interest – with an understanding that it might change with every project.

When people ask why a home isn't affordable, how do you answer?

To understand the affordability issue, you need to look at all of the components of a project. You start with a piece of land. In Ontario, we have a limited supply of land. It's simple supply and demand. If there's less developable land, the price of that land automatically goes up. That's the beginning of the affordability problem.

Every time you do a study, it can cost you \$10,000 or a \$100,000. Given the fact that the submission requirements for any application can include 10 to 30 different studies, the cost to submit an application can be quite steep. In cases where investments or front-ending is required for infrastructure, the “start-up fee” can be exponentially more. Then you have the government fees, development charges, and interest rates on the mortgage – and you add on and add on. All of these “soft costs” are required just to obtain permission to develop and don't include the cost to build.

Then you have the construction materials and trades. The availability of both skilled labour and materials is limited, so costs have been very volatile over the last few years. In most cases, developers are trying to recoup the cost to build plus the 10 per cent the bank requires as profit or they won't provide the funding. The private sector cannot deliver housing at a loss, so all of the costs that go into delivery of a unit get passed on to the end user.

If you want to make units more affordable, you've got to get rid of some of those costs. What can municipalities do? They can't fix the trade problem. They can't fix construction materials. They can give careful consideration to their fees. They can develop land they own for free so it is mortgage and interest free. Also, time is money. They can endeavour to find efficiencies in the application process so that if you're investing half a million dollars today, it's not taking 10 years to get it back out.

Do you have a message for other RPPs about the housing crisis?

With respect to the housing crisis, I think RPPs, as a whole, would benefit from a greater understanding of economics and pro forma analyses. It is not enough for us to “plan” (wish) things into existence. If we want to exact meaningful change, we need to make sure it can actually happen. That is, we can add all sorts of housing requirements throughout all of our official plans, but if the project's pro forma doesn't work, the projects will not proceed and we will be no further ahead than we are now. To paraphrase urbanist Alain Bertaud, the economy is like gravity; we can manipulate it, but we need to understand it first. ☹



Guided excursions introduced 2023 conference attendees to areas and projects of interest in Ottawa.

RECAP: 2023 ADAPTATION TRANSFORMATION CONFERENCE

Last year’s OPPI conference, Adaptation Transformation, held from September 20 to 22, 2023, at Shaw Centre in Ottawa, was a resounding success! The conference agenda was packed with informative panels and seminars, inspiring keynotes, guided excursions, fun events, and plenty of time to network and connect with colleagues, friends, and RPPs from across Ontario.

Highlights included the welcome dance by dancers from Indigenous Experiences; the first-ever PlanON Awards ceremony and PlanON Awards Soirée; a marketplace featuring seven vendors selling hand-made, locally produced products; a student networking lunch, where more than 80 attendees, including OPPI Council and DLT members, got to know students; and so much more.

Thank you to everyone who attended in person and online! We look forward to seeing you in Hamilton for OPPI’s 2024 conference.



More than 80 attendees, including OPPI Council and DLT members, gathered for the Student Networking Lunch at the 2023 conference.



OPPI PLANON AWARDS

The PlanON Awards are the highest honours OPPI can bestow. In 2023, OPPI received a record number of award submissions. While the abundance of submissions made the selection process very difficult for the jurors, it is a testament to the exceptional achievements of OPPI members who demonstrated professional excellence and a commitment to advancing the planning profession in Ontario.

Eleven PlanON Awards were presented at OPPI's Adaptation Transformation conference in Ottawa in September 2023. The celebration was a conference highlight and proud moment for OPPI that has inspired even more enthusiasm for the PlanON Awards program.

Submissions for 2024 PlanON Awards are now open and will be closed June 30, 2024. Six categories are open to submissions.

- The PlanON Public Education Award honours RPPs who have made meaningful contributions to advance public education within or outside the planning profession in Ontario.
- The PlanON Innovative Research Award recognizes innovative academic researchers within the planning profession who, through scholarly activities, including academic papers, research, or publications, have the ability to positively impact the future of the planning profession in Ontario.

The PlanON Vision Award celebrates Registered Professional Planners (RPPs) and their teams who have demonstrated excellence in advancing the public interest by addressing key challenges facing the planning profession in Ontario, such as climate change, innovations in planning, affordable housing, transit, technology, and/or inclusivity.

- Categories of excellence might include but are not limited to:
- Master plans
- Indigenous insights

- Community improvement plans
- Urban design concepts
- Recognizing innovative approaches to project management
- Policy development
- Public engagement
- Data management throughout the planning process

Through the evaluation of the submissions in this category, the jury will select winning submissions for the categories Award of Excellence, Award of Merit to deserving projects and, for the very first time, Project of the Year.

- The PlanON Emerging Leadership Award spotlights future leaders within the planning profession by recognizing RPPs in the first seven years of their careers who exemplify the qualities of leadership, collaboration, professionalism, and empowerment of others.
- The PlanON RPP Leadership Award celebrates the trailblazers within the planning profession by recognizing RPPs who exemplify the qualities of leadership, collaboration, professionalism, and empowerment of others.
- The PlanON Volunteer Service Award recognizes the extraordinary service and significant contribution of OPPI volunteers who have raised awareness of the profession, mentored students or nurtured relationships, taken part in a special project or program, and more.

The call for submissions is open until June 30, 2024.

The awards will be a highlight at the OPPI conference in Hamilton, September 25 to 27, 2024. Note: only OPPI members are eligible for PlanON Awards.

Find detailed information on categories, eligibility, and submissions at www.ontarioplanners.ca/PlanON.



CONGRATULATIONS TO THE 11 PLANON AWARD WINNERS FOR 2023

- The PlanON Public Education Award (two winners):
Bylaws for Biodiversity – Nina-Marie E. Lister, MCIP, RPP, Hon. ASLA, and Aylise Cooke, Student Member
The Meadoway Visualization Toolkit – Eunice Wong, MCIP, RPP, LEED ND
- The PlanON Innovative Research Award (two winners):
OMAFRA Project – Emily Sousa, MSc, Candidate Member; Pam Duesling, PhD, MCIP, RPP, ECD; and Wayne Caldwell, PhD, FCIP, RPP
Planning Dementia: Inclusive Communities – Samantha Biglieri, PhD, MCIP, RPP, and Jennifer Dean, PhD, Candidate Member
- The PlanON Vision Award for Planning Documentation (two winners):
Building LeBreton: Master Concept Plan – Hieu Nguyen, MCIP, RPP; Mark Conway, MCIP, RPP, PLE; Chris Hardwicke, MRAIC, MCIP, RPP; and Matthew Bennett, MCIP, RPP, PLE
Town of Kingsville Temporary Farm Worker Housing Study – Will Lamond, Candidate Member, and Gregory Bender, MCIP, RPP
- The PlanON Vision Award for Planning Process (two winners):
Nishnawbe Aski Development Fund (NADF) Project Implementation Toolkit: Building Bimadizowin – Janet Kivett Knight, NADF, RPP, MCRP
Saugeen First Nation Creator’s Gardens & Amphitheatre Master Plan – Danny Roy, MCIP, RPP; Calvin Brook, MCIP, RPP; and Jenna Davidson, MCIP, RPP
- The PlanON Emerging Leadership Award – Keisha St. Louis-McBurnie, Candidate Member
- The PlanON RPP Leadership Award – Wayne Caldwell, PhD, RPP, FCIP
- The PlanON Volunteer Service Award – Ron Shishido, RPP, FCIP

Learn more about all the 2023 PlanON Award recipients at <https://ontarioplanners.ca/inspiring-knowledge/awards-recognition/planon-awards/planon-award-winner-profiles>.

- 1) PlanON RPP Leadership Award recipient Wayne Caldwell, PhD, FCIP, RPP, with OPPI Council Past-President Paul Lowes, MES, MCIP, RPP
- 2) PlanON Emerging Leadership Award recipient Keisha St. Louis-McBurnie, Candidate Member, with OPPI Council Past-President Paul Lowes, MES, MCIP, RPP
- 3) PlanON Innovative Research Award recipient Samantha Biglieri, PhD, MCIP, RPP, for the project Planning Dementia: Inclusive Communities, with OPPI Council Past-President Paul Lowes, MES, MCIP, RPP
- 4) PlanON Innovative Research Award recipients (L to R) Emily Sousa, MSc, Candidate Member; Wayne Caldwell, PhD, FCIP, RPP; and Pam Duesling, PhD, MCIP, RPP, ECD, for the OMAFRA Project, with OPPI Council Past-President Paul Lowes, MES, MCIP, RPP

SAVE THE DATES: OPPI'S 2024 CONFERENCE

From September 25 to 27, OPPI is hosting its 2024 conference at the Hamilton Convention Centre. The 2024 conference will explore how RPPs navigate the profession’s rapidly changing landscape to emerge as qualified leaders who bring communities together in the public interest.

Adaptation Transformation 2024 will highlight relevant topics impacting the profession, including housing affordability and supply, changing demographics, representation of equity-deserving groups, advancements in technology, and more. Professionals and industry experts from across Ontario will gather, face to face, for two and a half days of insightful keynote speakers, thoughtful panel discussions, and meaningful breakout sessions. Programming for the conference will also be available online for those who wish to attend virtually.

Find more information as it becomes available, including registration, session details, and partnership opportunities, at <https://ontarioplanners.ca/conference-2024>.

STUDENT SCHOLARSHIPS

Today's planning students are the RPPs of tomorrow. To encourage and support future planners, OPPI provides student members with scholarship opportunities that award excellence and community contributions.

The Ronald M. Keeble Undergraduate Scholarship (up to \$3,500) assists in furthering planning education and recognizing undergraduate student members who are making contributions to their communities.

The Gerald Carrothers Graduate Scholarship (up to \$3,500) assists in furthering planning education and recognizing graduate student members who are making contributions to their communities.

Paul Lowes President's Scholarship (\$3,500) recognizes an OPPI Student Member who has demonstrated leadership in innovative policy approaches to solving housing shortages, particularly housing shortages as they affect young professionals.

The OPPI Opportunity Scholarship (up to \$5,000) acknowledges the financial barriers to education that disproportionately affect Black, Indigenous, and other racialized people. This one-time scholarship may be awarded to an Indigenous, Black, or other racially marginalized person currently enrolled in an accredited undergraduate or graduate planning program in Ontario.

The applications period for scholarships is March 1 until May 1, 2024. Recipients will be announced in August 2024 and an award ceremony will be held at the OPPI conference in September.

Find more information, including application forms and eligibility requirements, at www.ontarioplanners.ca/scholarships.



Guidelines to Support Age-Friendly Communities

Urban Strategies recently led the development of Markham's Age-Friendly Design Guidelines, which aim for a built environment that responds to the needs of all residents, from age 0-99. Similar to the Growing Up: Planning for Children in New Vertical Communities guidelines prepared by Urban Strategies for the City of Toronto in 2020, the highly graphic, accessible guidelines draw on extensive community engagement, and address three scales of development: the neighbourhood, the building, and the unit.

URBAN STRATEGIES INC

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**Informing Choices.
Inspiring Communities.**



In Memory



*Ian MacNaughton obituary courtesy of MHBC.
Peter Walker obituary courtesy of WND.*

IAN MACNAUGHTON, FCIP, RPP

With a heavy heart, MHBC is sad to announce the passing of its founder, Ian MacNaughton. Ian passed away peacefully on October 7, 2023, surrounded by the love of his family. He was 79 years of age.

Ian was one of the first to graduate from the University of Waterloo's urban and regional planning program in 1968. He then went on to obtain his MA in regional planning and resource development in 1971. Just two years later, Ian founded MHBC based on the encouragement of his wife and greatest confidant, Sandie.

Over 50 years, MHBC has grown to be one of the largest and most successful planning firms in Ontario. Throughout his career, Ian was a well-respected planner, which earned him the distinguished honour of Fellow by the Canadian Institute of Planners, the highest recognition a land use planner can achieve.

Ian was passionate about the betterment of Ontario through his vision, leadership, and big-picture thinking. Throughout his life, he demonstrated qualities that set him apart as a leader, mentor, and innovator, and he had a unique ability to inspire and motivate those around him. Based on his knowledge and expertise, he was appointed a member of numerous provincial, regional, and local task forces, including the Provincial Smart Growth Central Ontario Strategy Sub-Panel, Greenbelt Task Force, and Province of Ontario Advisory Group on Energy and Economic Development. Ian was also selected as a special advisor to the Ontario Stone, Sand and Gravel Association and assisted numerous municipalities with restructuring, governance, waste management, and housing strategies.

Ian was a friend and mentor to many in the industry and will be deeply missed and never forgotten. Read his obituary at <https://erbgood.com/tribute/details/16751/Ian-MacNaughton/obituary.html> and his tribute story at <https://uwaterloo.ca/news/environment/ian-macnaughtons-planning-footprint-spans-ontario>.

PETER ROBERT WALKER, FCIP, RPP

WND is sad to announce the passing of its founder, Peter Robert Walker. Peter passed away peacefully on December 24, 2023, at 79 years of age. He is survived by his wife, three sons, and five grandchildren.

Peter was a pioneer and leader in the field of urban planning consulting. He was a founding partner of Walker Wright Young Associates Limited in 1973, which became Walker Nott Dragicevic Associates Limited (WND) in 1992. Peter loved his work and enjoyed a prestigious 54-year career, contributing to the development of the urban landscape through his work at WND. His career led to the creation of tens of thousands of homes, hundreds of thousands of square metres of commercial space and employment uses, and countless other achievements in the planning field.

Peter was very active in the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) and Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI). His roles with OPPI included Director of the Central Ontario Chapter and Chairman of the Membership Committee, and he was instrumental in establishing the Code of Conduct and disciplinary process. In 1999, Peter received the highest honour CIP can bestow upon a member and was inducted as a Fellow. He also had memberships with the Ontario Expropriation Association, Lambda Alpha International, and President's Joint Council on Urban and Regional Planning at the University of Toronto.

Peter retired in 2014, leaving WND in the capable hands of Wendy Nott, Robert A. Dragicevic, and later Andrew Ferancik.

"Peter was a significant presence in the land use planning field and was extremely well respected in the planning and legal fraternity," says Robert Dragicevic. "He was always finding new ways and avenues to apply his skill set and brought along many of the planners who worked with him, many of whom have gone onto successful careers in both the private and public sectors."

Wendy Nott says Peter was a dedicated professional focused on providing planning and strategic advice to his clients. "I joined the firm in July 1977 and stayed for 44 years," she says. "This speaks to the acknowledged respect for and success of the firm to which Peter contributed."

WND is committed to honouring his legacy by continuing the work Peter started, never ceasing to pursue the achievement of good planning. Read Peter's obituary at <https://www.thomasfuneralhome.ca/obituaries/Peter-Walker?obId=30192272>.

**CHRIS LAM AND CHRISTIE LAI,
OPPI'S MEMBERSHIP TEAM**

Membership renewals, status changes, certification, insurance, transfers, volunteering, and so much more – the Membership Team is the go-to for almost anything an OPPI member might need to know or do or change related to their membership. It's a busy two-person team dedicated to supporting OPPI members, fostering meaningful connections, and providing valuable resources.

Chris Lam joined OPPI in May 2023 and is Membership Administrator. With a background spanning more than 15 years in member associations and professional bodies, her expertise lies in member services and professional development. Her work experience is supported by an MA in intercultural studies.

"The MA program not only deepened my understanding of intercultural dynamics but also equipped me with valuable insights and skills that continue to shape my professional endeavours," she says.

Lam takes care of all aspects of OPPI membership, from application to certification. She is also actively involved in various projects and member engagement initiatives. For her, forging connections with members is what she enjoys most about her role.

"There's a profound sense of satisfaction for me when I can provide assistance and offer well-received recommendations or alternatives that cater to the unique requirements of our members," she says.

Christie Lai is Membership Coordinator. She also joined OPPI in May 2023, armed with BA in journalism and communication, a diploma in early childhood education, and work experience with non-profits and high schools.

"I am passionate about administrative support," she says. "I aim to support OPPI's mission by ensuring its operations run smoothly, efficiently, and effectively."

Lai handles daily inquiries about membership-related issues and status updates, as well as questions about certification eligibility and process. Student members ask her about volunteer opportunities, how to reach out to mentors, and their career paths as planners. She also facilitates the Student Liaison Committee and takes on other tasks, such as assisting with OPPI conferences.



"Working with OPPI is an opportunity to know more about the planning industry and the different stakeholders in the community," says Lai. "In my daily work, I have the opportunity to communicate with members with different backgrounds."

Each year, there are two peak periods. The first is April through May, when the Continuing Professional Learning (CPL) audit takes place. CPL is a requirement for all practicing Full and Candidate Members.

"CPL compliance is extremely important to members as this is the profession's commitment to ensure OPPI members maintain competency on a continuous basis, as well as the public's assurance that planners remain current with contemporary theory, methods, and practice within their profession," say Lam. "A common challenge we face at this time is that some Candidate Members are not aware of this requirement and assume it is only applicable to the Full Members and thus miss their submission deadline."

The second peak period is year-end, when it is all about the annual membership renewal. Starting late October, the Membership Team works closely with the StratComm Team to ensure communication to members is delivered on various channels and that the process runs smoothly.

"In the meantime, we receive numerous inquiries related to membership, such as bulk renewal requests, changes to member status, membership transfers to OPPI from other provinces or vice versa, retirements, insurance coverage, etc.," says Lai. "We strongly encourage members to contact OPPI to change their membership status if they are going on leave or not practicing for gain. This change brings a number of benefits to the members as they can renew their membership at a lower fee and get the CPL requirement exemption."

Questions about payment status and methods are common.

"Cheque payments might take a little longer to process over the peak renewal season," says Lai. "Credit card is the most efficient way to get your membership renewed."

Ultimately, the Membership Team aims to build a vibrant and connected community.

"Our team plays a crucial role in ensuring each individual feels supported and valued within the OPPI community," says Lai. "Explore the benefits of OPPI membership and connect with OPPI's dynamic community. We are dedicated to enhancing the professional experience for all."

VOLUNTEER SPOTLIGHT: KRISHON WALKER, RPP

Krishon Walker, RPP, is a planner on the economic development team at the City of Ottawa. He first worked with City of Ottawa in 2018 as a co-op student, then was hired on full-time when he finished grad school. Since 2021, he has been working as a planner on high economic-impact projects aimed at creating jobs and helping the City of Ottawa reach its economic development priorities.

Many different factors led to Walker's decision to pursue a career in planning.

"As an undergrad, I took several anthropology and sociology courses which got me interested in how people interact with and respond to the built environment," he says.

In particular, Walker was interested in looking at planning with a risk-and-resilience lens.

"That is, how planning and the built environment could provide cities and communities with tools to effectively prepare for, cope with, and anticipate rapid change within the spatial, social, and economic vulnerabilities it produces," he says. "Simply put, I wanted to understand how cities evaluate their risks of being impacted by natural disasters, social inequity, ecological uncertainty, and public health emergencies and how equipped the built environment was to respond to these challenges."

Because he has a background in business and finance, he was also interested in understanding how cities could embed economic development into their planning framework to consider the challenges of a growing economy and capitalize on opportunities to support economic prosperity across the economic development ecosystem.

Walker is also a volunteer with OPPI, starting with the Planning Knowledge Exchange (PKE), a position he took on in fall 2022 after the OPPI/OALA conference in London.

"As a member of the team, my role was to assist in curating the 2023 conference content, reviewing speakers' submission packages, building the conference program, organizing guided excursions, and making local introductions where necessary," he says. "I found it rewarding to see the work that goes into preparing for a conference such as this. I think we all go to conferences from time to time but



don't truly appreciate all the lead up to the event and the behind the scenes on the event days – it's a lot, and OPPI staff does a great job at making it all run so smoothly."

In addition to organizing guided excursions, Walker led one himself.

"It was a wonderful experience," he says. "It was so great to see the level of engagement from the participants on the excursion and to hear about the experience of those who attended other ones."

A 2023 conference highlight for attendees was closing keynote Dr. Vera Etches, Medical Officer of Health for Ottawa Public Health, who discussed Planning for People: Building Health and Resiliency into our Communities.

"It was great working with my colleagues at Ottawa Public Health to get Dr. Vera Etches to give the closing keynote," says Walker. "It's always important to think about the link between planning and public health when building healthy and inclusive communities. Her address served as reminder to us all that we should strive to advance human health through decision-making in the built environment and continue to promote health through sustainability."

Walker also worked on OPPI's Anti-Black Racism in Planning Task Force.

"It was nice to connect and work with other folks across the province to have a candid discussion that would help to advance this important work," he says. "It was encouraging to see that OPPI hired a Director of Reconciliation and Social Justice to work on the recommendations of the both the Indigenous Planning Perspectives and Anti-Black Racism in Planning Task Forces."

For Walker, volunteering is an important part of being an RPP.

"We have a responsibility to advance the profession and showcase the important work we do in building healthy and thriving communities – whether it be volunteering with OPPI or other organizations," he says, listing OPPI's board, districts committees, the PKE, conference planning committee, speaking at conferences, or Forum Friday series as opportunities. "It's important for students and newer members to the profession to see that and learn from our experiences. It's also a good way for us to build connections with others in the profession and exchange knowledge."

Contributors

The housing crisis is a highly complex issue with many layers. Planners have an important role in guiding decision makers and influencing policy related to housing. Here is what three contributors to this issue of *Y Magazine* have to say about their focus as it relates to the housing crisis and where they would like to see change.



Page07

Rosa Bustamante, MCIP, RPP
DIRECTOR OF PLANNING,
CITY OF KITCHENER.

I am focused on building partnerships across multiple sectors and orders of government to collaboratively address the housing issue. The implementation of the federal Housing Accelerator Fund will provide municipalities with opportunities to achieve affordable and attainable housing goals through actions such as leveraging public lands and strengthening relationships with not-for-profit housing providers and the development industry to advance new housing projects in communities.

I would like to see more contributions (financial, in-kind, volunteer time, and others) from all of the organizations and individuals who work in housing-related industries so we can overcome the housing challenges collectively.



Page09

Olusola A. Olufemi, PHD, MCIP, RPP, MSAPI
ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR OF URBAN AND
REGIONAL PLANNING

My focus is on homelessness (street homelessness, precarious housing, slums, internally displaced, informal settlements, and shack dwellings) at the international level. I engage with marginalized groups and their liveability as it relates to environment, food security, health, water, sanitation, and hygiene, and climate change risk and burden.

The ecosystem of homelessness transcends plucking (from the streets) and plugging (into a house, building, or shelter). Homelessness is a web of complex, multilayered variables that includes education, housing, health, economy, and politics. Rather than criminalizing homelessness, policies, programs, and projects should emphasize inclusive, equitable, and permanent supportive housing, critical to transitioning out of or exiting homelessness. This should be embedded in ethics of care, dignifying the undignified, and harm reduction especially in cases of mental health and substance addiction.



Page09

Zahra Jaffer, MES, BSC, CANDIDATE MEMBER
PLANNER AND ASSOCIATE WITH DILLON
CONSULTING LIMITED

Housing justice sits at the nexus of a range of issues, including transportation justice, climate change resiliency and sustainability, disability politics, and anti-racism. Consideration of potential unintended consequences such as gentrification and displacement and meaningfully engaging people with lived experience in planning and decision making is therefore vital.

For me, this means working with colleagues, clients, and communities to diversify the voices we are hearing around matters of housing, connecting the dots across policy issues, and taking a systems approach to thinking about how housing policy intersects with economic and financial realities on the ground in order to work towards long-term, sustainable affordability.

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





ADAPTATION TRANSFORMATION



**Pressure to progress:
the transformation of planning
to adapt to a changing world**

The Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) is hosting our annual conference in Hamilton, Ontario, this fall. From September 25 to 27, the OPPI conference will explore how Registered Professional Planners (RPPs) navigate the profession's rapidly changing landscape to emerge as qualified leaders who bring communities together in the public interest.

Hamilton | September 25-27

ontarioplanners.ca/conference-2024

Informing Choices. Inspiring Communities.



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