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Mobility Under Attack

Are Older Canadians Ready
to Live Without Their Cars? *Page 3*

Quality of life may never be the same



OPPI 2006 Planning Symposium *Preview, page 14*

The Shape of Things to Come:
Improving Health through Community Planning
September 28–29, 2006, Nottawasaga Inn, Alliston

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Skateboard Parks" by Adriana Gomez. Our apologies—Ed.

Mobility Under Attack— Are Older Canadians Ready to Live Without Their Cars?

Quality of Life May Never Be the Same

By Glenn Miller, Gordon Harris and Ian Ferguson

First of two articles

Canada is aging. But although concerns about the impact of impending demographic change in this country are beginning to make headlines, the tenor of reportage is still tending towards the exclamation mark rather than in-depth investigation. **THE FIRST BOOMERS TURN 60!**

A more sobering consideration is that within 20 years, the number of Canadians aged 65 and over will have increased from 4.2 million to more than 7.5 million—more people than currently live in the Greater Toronto Area. And more than 900,000 seniors will be 85 and older. Imagine a city the size of Ottawa populated entirely by octogenarians. The rapid rate of increase in the proportion of citizens of retirement age and older has even attracted the attention of the OECD, which singled out Canada as one of the OECD countries facing the toughest challenges in the decades ahead in terms of recalibrating fiscal policy, adjusting service delivery and managing other societal impacts resulting from an aging society.

The remarkable thing is that we continue to react in surprise when a problem we have known about for decades finally arrives on our doorstep. But timing is everything: nearly 20 years ago, Ontario's Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing published an excellent research paper that foretold some of the challenges facing an aging society. But seniors represented less than 10 per-

cent of our population back then, so there was little interest in the subject. Not so today.

Although government is currently focused on concerns about projected increased demands on the healthcare system, labour shortages and pension shortfalls, a much more basic challenge awaits us, one that will likely affect society in every way. For more than 60 years, starting with the postwar boom that launched the auto-dependent suburb, planners have been trying to keep up with demands of commuters. This preoccupation with providing transportation solutions for the work trip has inadvertently shifted the focus away from the more fundamental issues of community design and its impact on overall mobility: the fundamentals of how we get around our cities to carry out the daily chores, responsibilities and activities that determine how we rate our quality of life.

As more and more older drivers find they are unable to drive—or have their licences revoked—a significant proportion of the population will find itself disadvantaged because so many residential neighbourhoods built since the Second World War provide no access to basic amenities and retail services such as shops, medical services, libraries and entertainment.

Seniors in Training have Great Expectations for Mobility
Much has been made of the sense of entitlement exhibited by

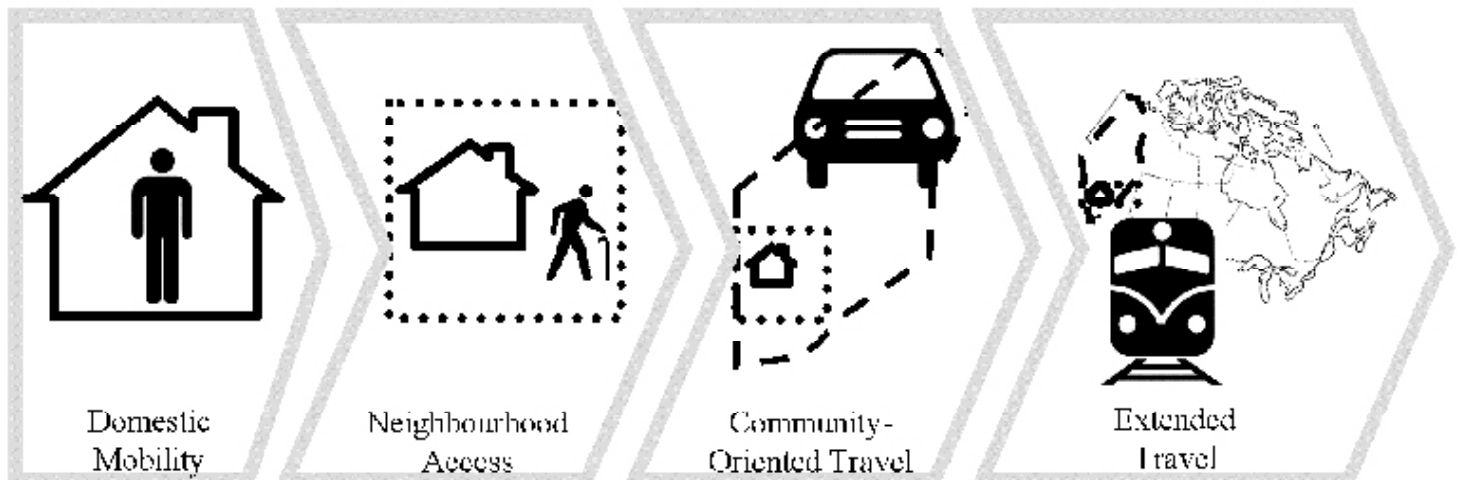


Fig. 1: The mobility continuum

the baby boom generation. This generation is healthier, wealthier and more self-absorbed than any segment of society before it. The age group 55-64—what we describe as “seniors in training”—has great expectations when it comes to mobility. Boomers have grown up accustomed to enjoying universal access to automobiles. Unlike older Canadians currently in their eighties and nineties, who were raised at a time when car salesmen sometimes had to teach their customers to drive in order to complete a sale, the prospect of losing their driving license as their faculties decline is likely to have a dramatic and potentially unpleasant impact on the boomer psyche.

With so much attention focused on boomers, the current generation of seniors could be forgiven for feeling overlooked or even underappreciated. One problem that needs to be acknowledged in this regard is that “seniors” is not a very useful term because it implies a homogeneous grouping. Nothing could be further from the truth. Health care professionals, in fact, identify three distinct segments within the “senior” population: 65-74 are the “young old,” whose health and activity levels are likely to remain quite high in post-retirement; 75-84 citizens are considered “old,” with higher incidences of chronic health problems and a general decline in activity levels; while those aged 85 and over—the “old old”—are more likely to require more intensive supports from relatives and society in general in all respects.

According to Statistics Canada, more than two-thirds of all the single-family dwellings in this country have been built since the Second World War. Since we know that there are some 1.34 million senior households currently living in single-family dwellings, and that more than three-quarters of seniors live in some kind of urban setting, it is safe to say that a significant proportion of older Canadians are living in ultra-low-density suburban enclaves built in the modern era, where the nearest convenience store is beyond easy reach. Surveys carried out by Statscan also suggest that the assumption of “aging in place” has some validity. Most seniors delay moving from their single-family dwellings until the age of 80 unless forced to move earlier for reasons of ill health or increasing frailty. Many of those in this age category are women living alone.

An additional clue that Canadians have built their lives around access to the car is that fully 66 percent of those 65-90 maintain driving licences. Not surprisingly, some 87 percent of “seniors in training”—the generation 55-64 who grew up with a steering wheel close at hand—have valid driving licences. Two decades from now, this group can be expected to hold on to those licences with the tenacity and aggressiveness that made

them so popular with marketers while they were in their peak earning years.

A sliver of concern about the large proportion of “old” and “old old” Canadians still driving today and in the future is that a significant proportion of this population is likely to be suffering from some level of dementia. Worryingly, it is estimated that people with dementia continue to drive for several years before the disease is diagnosed. Since even those with mild dementia have a crash rate eight times higher than dementia-free seniors in the same age bracket, government regulators and insurers are no doubt looking at these issues with more than a passing interest.

Getting Old Is No Fun When the Body Won't Obey the Brain

One way that older drivers cope with declining faculties is to “self regulate” their driving activities. A common choice is to avoid night driving, or to select routes that bypass difficult stretches of highway. Others drive less in winter when icy roads

make driving more treacherous. Medical researchers studying these issues describe three distinct mental processes that affect driving ability. The most basic skill set is “operational,” the largely automatic functions that allow drivers to interpret rules and skills learned over a lifetime of driving. When seniors “self regulate,” some physicians caution, this may be an implicit acknowledgement that operational faculties are starting to fail.

The second category is “tactical decision-making,” the thousands of virtually instantaneous choices made by drivers that determine how and when to change lanes or merge with other traffic. This is where many older drivers get into trouble, because they are no longer able to cope with having to perform several tasks at once. The ability to judge the closing speed of other vehicles, react to and comprehend signage, while continuing to safely direct one’s own vehicle simply becomes too difficult to manage. It is this inability to multi-task that can lead to accidents.

The third category identified by researchers is the ability to keep an eye on and cope with the big picture, or what researchers call “strategic” skills. These include matters such as route selection, and driving in an appropriate manner relative to road conditions.

Because humans are “hard wired” to react to language and visual cues, when physical faculties start to decline, many older drivers fall back on what they have learned about the rules of



Photo: B. Cihomaz

Seniors often find transit a challenge

the road. This is characterized by a loss of ability to carry competing and potentially conflicting messages in one's brain at any one time. Concentrating on the "rules" to the exclusion of making essential tactical decisions is what leads to older drivers' having accidents in intersections and similar high-stress situations.

At present in Ontario, the responsibility for making judgments on whether older drivers are safe to drive rests largely with physicians. Although there are specific minimum conditions set out in the licence renewal process for drivers aged 80 and older, the standard assessments are geared to identifying only the most obvious lapses in critical judgment and mental abilities. This probably explains why so many families with elderly parents whose driving habits give them nightmares are frequently at a loss about how to deal with a difficult situation. The tenacity with which seniors hang on to their "right" to drive is an indication of how critically important maintaining a valid driving licence is in the lives of older Canadians. And living a comfortable life in low-density suburbs, far from essential services, surely reinforces this view that driving is a right.

It is physicians like Ian Ferguson (a psychogeriatrician, and one of the authors of this article) who bear the brunt of the anger, angst and misery embodied in the process of recommending licence removal. Families report resorting to hiding car keys, disabling their parent's car in various ways, and many other strategies, all necessary because there are no clear guidelines or procedures that can be followed which allow families to transfer the responsibility to an anonymous "higher authority." Families typically find that presenting logical arguments such as "taking taxis

twice a week is less costly than car insurance" rarely work. It is hard to underestimate the symbolic and psychic impact of forcing someone to give up driving.


But concerns about preserving the safety of older citizens isn't confined to driving. Older pedestrians suffer as well. A U.S. study found that the rate of pedestrian fatalities for pedestrians over the age of 65 was soaring dramatically at a time when overall casualties were declining. Reports from the U.K. suggest that 28 percent of seniors over the age of 75 cannot walk more than 200 metres or climb 12 steps without needing to rest. So much of our built environment created in the past few decades fails to take such factors into account. The same difficulty that older Canadians experience with assessing the speed of approaching vehicles also contributes to pedestrian fatalities. As people age, their walking speed decreases. This increases their exposure time when crossing busy roads, and the accident rates climb in direct proportion. And not everyone is tolerant of the extra time it takes seniors to cross the road. In the U.S. recently, an 82-year old woman received a ticket for \$114 for the "crime" of delaying impatient motorists because she took too long to cross a busy street.

Defining Mobility: What is a Reasonable Standard?

How should we define mobility? A Quebec-based researcher, L. Ling Suen, suggests that "the freedom to move is life itself." Listening to people who feel that their elderly parents—and even the community at large—are at risk, underscores this view.

At some point in the lifecycle, even though the current generation of seniors is living longer and staying more active than pre-

ANNOUNCEMENT



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vious generations, many will inevitably have to give up driving, either voluntarily or because they are forced to do so by their physicians. Ling Suen defines mobility around four key criteria:

- The ability to travel where and when we want.
- Having enough information about our travel options.
- Knowing how to use those options.
- Having the means to pay for those options.

To determine the potential impact of these criteria, we constructed this continuum to highlight some of the issues (see Fig. 1).

Domestic mobility: Moving around the house, the ability to get up and down stairs and through the front door: this is the most fundamental test of mobility. Curiously, according to Statscan surveys, people in their late fifties and early sixties typically choose traditional single-family dwellings when they relocate, seemingly oblivious to future challenges inherent in steep drive-ways, four or five steps to the front door, and similar barriers to access.

Neighbourhood Access: People put little store in their ability to access daily necessities such as bread, milk and other groceries when they are young and healthy; this holds true for people well beyond retirement age. But when, for one reason or another, people no longer have the freedom to jump in the car to run their errands, the neighbourhood that was so appealing when the kids needed to be schlepped to soccer practice or hockey games starts to feel like a millstone. Welcome to Un-Pleasantville!

Community-oriented Travel: As people lose their ability to

easily get around town, their horizons inevitably get narrower. The decision to go downtown to a concert becomes ever harder. The range of offerings that makes cities so inviting gets slimmer. To make the trip by transit or arrange to get driven by a friend represents just another hurdle to be overcome. The freedom offered by cars is often unappreciated until it is no longer available. For most older citizens, the ability to drive is their central lifeline.

General Mobility: The final stop on the continuum is the world around us: lifestyle magazines portray retirement as a world of smiling, travel-savvy seniors with good teeth and trim figures. Reality kicks in the first time a 65 year old flies to a distant airport, only to be denied access to a rental car on the basis of age. Americans are already discovering this nasty wrinkle, courtesy of risk-averse insurance companies.

One of Ling's criteria is "having the means to pay" for mobility. This includes the ability to pay for housing in prime locations. As seniors begin to place a higher value on the accessibility of amenities, it is not inconceivable that the criteria that currently determine what is prime in real estate circles may change over time. These decisions will also be influenced by the retail marketplace.

At present, the market is sending mixed signals in terms of the provision of shopping and other essential services. Car-oriented big box stores in self-described power centres and so-called lifestyle centres are flourishing while traditional "village high street" locations such as Point Grey Village in Vancouver and downtown Oakville's main street are only slowly re-gaining popularity.

- In the case of banking, for example, branches are being closed at a steady rate, leaving some communities without a single physical banking presence. At the same time, dependence on Internet and telephone banking is increasing. But how will older customers who can no longer remember passwords deal with this over the longer term?
- Some pharmacy chains are building larger format stores in stand-alone and shopping mall locations, but others are experimenting with smaller formats that suit the high street. The same is true with grocery stores. Supermarkets are getting bigger, but Sobeys and Urban Fare are having success with "urban" stores that squeeze into smaller floorplates in downtown locations.
- Places of worship are also getting bigger, responding to a need to serve larger congregations in locations with lots of parking. Like the banks, traditional churches are consolidating by merging congregations, reducing the number of churches in older urban centres.
- Entertainment uses such as cinemas are also going big box, offering multiple screens, putting pressure on the few remaining "local" cinemas, while traditional community functions such as libraries are holding their own in most communities, although smaller branches are typically locating only in high traffic locations such as shopping malls.
- The post office, another stalwart of community life, has become an add-on service wedged into Kinko storefronts and similar uses. But there has to be a retail outlet of some kind to make that work.

Although there are no definitive trends in the provision of retail and other amenities, the upshot is that the



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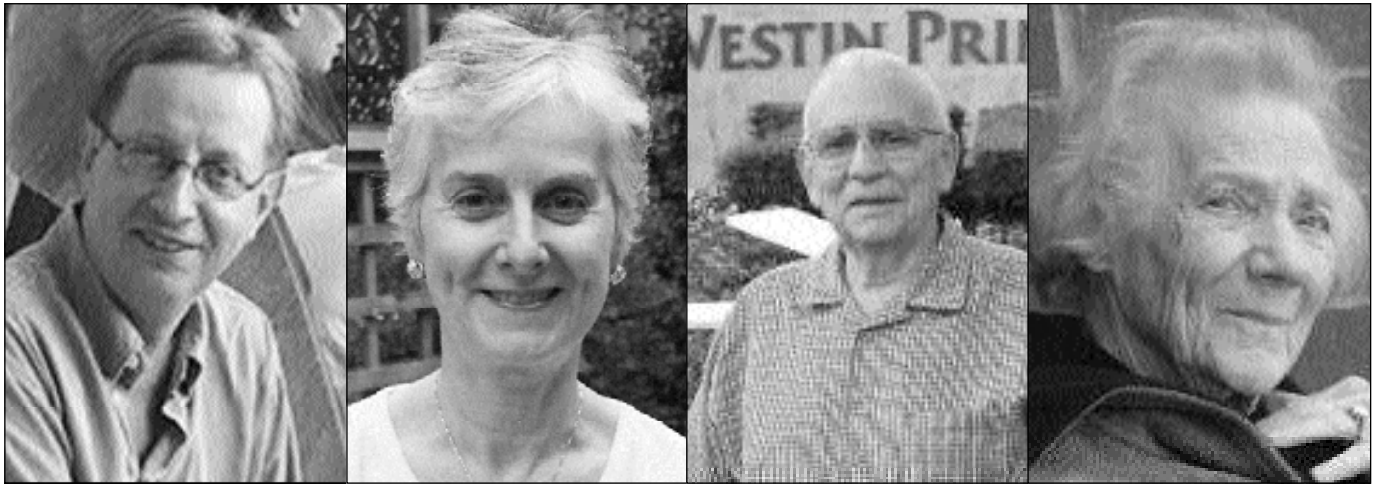
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55–64 “Seniors in training”

65–74 “Young old”

75–84 “Old”

85+ “Old old”

Neighbourhood Access segment of our mobility continuum is left wanting in terms of easy access to quality services in all too many communities.

Planners are often guilty of overestimating the power of public transit to solve all ills. This is definitely true in the case of senior citizens. Surveys suggest that for most seniors, transit is not the obvious alternative when they give up their cars. In the U.S., the rate of transfer from driving to taking the bus is a paltry 2 percent. In the U.K., which is further advanced in the aging process as a country and therefore more attuned to the needs of seniors, the rate is transfer is still only eight percent.

A current debate in transit circles is whether to upgrade and improve transit service for everyone or to meet the demand by providing special services to seniors by adapting services already in place for paratransit. The Transportation Research Board in the U.S. estimates that within 25 years the annual cost of providing just eight rides a week (that’s four return trips) to the rapidly growing population of seniors could cost a trillion dollars! The first successful court challenge requiring a municipality to extend services for the disabled to seniors simply too frail to drive has already sent shock waves through the U.S. administration because they understand the financial implications of such a ruling. Similar challenges are said to be brewing here in Ontario, suggesting that a human rights challenge claiming that mobility is a basic right may not be far away.

The challenges in making a transit system senior-friendly are not insignificant, but nor are they insurmountable. Older transit

riders need to be able to understand bus schedules, know where to get the information they need and to be able to cope with many physical challenges such as having to stand on a crowded bus while carrying parcels, and be able to understand the directions and announcements made. Canada’s climate can also impose challenges; waiting for buses in an unheated shelter in the middle of winter is likely to deter all but the keenest travellers.

Glenn Miller, FCIP, RPP, director of education and research with the Canadian Urban Institute in Toronto; Gordon Harris, MCIP, principal of Harris Consulting in Vancouver and a Senior Associate with the CUI; and Ian Ferguson, MD, FRCPC, an old-age psychiatrist practicing in Toronto, are “seniors in training” engaged in research aimed at developing core principles and solutions for retrofitting and designing new communities that position Canada as world leader in senior-friendly living.

In addition to outlining some of these principles, the second article will also present some of the innovative measures being taken in countries such as Britain, Australia and Japan—places where the pace of aging is further advanced than Canada’s.

Both articles are based on a presentation made to the World Planners Congress in Vancouver in June.

The full presentation can be seen at www.canurb.com, follow the links to presentations. The authors are currently planning a book on this subject.



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The Changing Demography of Canadian Communities: New Answers Needed

Energy, Health and Aging Population a Powerful Trinity

By Dena Warman, Dan Leeming and Diane Riley



Planners need to reinterpret future plans

This is the third and concluding article in a series about issues of pressing concern to planners: the first was “Energy: The End of Cheap Oil” (Vol. 20 No.6), the second “Public Health and Welfare: An Urban Planning Perspective” (Vol. 21 No 1). Each article addresses issues to do with the convergence of key areas of change: the end of cheap, easily accessible energy; serious problems in health and welfare related to the built environment; and the changing face of Canada’s population. This article examines the issues raised by the changing demographic profile and aging society of Canada. It concludes with a summary review of the implications raised by all three articles in this series.

Canada’s Aging Population

The world’s population structure is changing. The population of developing countries continues to rise rapidly, while developed countries population rate continues to slow as health care improves and women choose to have smaller fami-

lies.¹ The results of a changing population structure will be multi-fold, including effects on immigration policy, health spending and economic competitiveness.

- Canada’s population pyramid is becoming inverted, as shown on page 11.
- People aged 65 and over represent about 13 percent of the total but by 2031 this will have increased to 25 percent: that means that one in every four people will be a “senior citizen.”²
- By 2056 Canada’s median age could be as high as 50.²
- The working-to-aged (over 65) ratio is currently 100:44; by 2031 this ratio could be 100:61.²
- According to Toronto’s Medical Officer of Health, Dr Scott, “there are more babies born to women over 40 years of age than to those under 20 in the GTA; we are an aging society.” (CBC Radio One interview, February 2006).
- The workforce is aging across the developed world and industries are beginning to face not only a shortage of employees but a tremendous loss of expertise as experienced workers retire.³

- Compounding labour shortages and increasing health care requirements is the fact that health care workers and educators are themselves aging, with insufficient numbers of younger people being trained to take their places.

As the Canadian population ages and fewer babies are born, the supporting cohort will be burdened by the dependent cohorts, consisting of children, the aged and the infirm. The effects on cities and regions will be an intense concentration of people with greater need for services and assistance.

Changing Households and Location Preferences

Demographics in Canada are undergoing a dramatic shift away from the settlement profiles that planners have understood and have been accustomed to over the past 50 years. The make-up of the young nation of Canada has been subject to change throughout its 400 years of growth since Western settlement. This has been due largely to each successive wave of immigration, cultural characteristics of new arrivals, economic prosperity, and settlement patterns. It is important now to stand back and assess what current realities and future projections have to tell us as planners. Taken together, these issues collectively demand that planners reinterpret how the future is planned; the wide ripples of change will affect many other areas essential to the well-being of individuals and of society.

- 80 percent of new immigrants to Canada (up to 250,000 a year) choose to live in urban areas; with 60 percent choosing Toronto.
- According to a recent Region of York study on GTA growth rates, 128,000 people per year move to the Greater Golden Horseshoe (equivalent to the entire Province of Prince Edward Island). This makes the GTA the third-fastest growing region in North America after Atlanta and Dallas/Fort Worth

(little wonder then that the U.S.-based Urban Land Institute (ULI) has opened a chapter in Toronto).

- The Province of Ontario's "Places to Grow" study estimates that as much as 70,000 ha remains for development within the ecologically defined boundaries of the GTA. The Urban Development Institute estimates that the amount is much smaller, at 53,000 ha. The build-out of remaining lands could occur within the next 25 years or sooner, depending on densities used. The laws of supply and demand will likely force land values higher, and pressure will continue on second tier lands beyond the "Green Belt."
- The number of household units is growing even faster than the population (even smaller units/greater demand for diversity).^{2&5}
- Multi-unit housing developments accounted for 47 percent of housing starts in 2005 compared with 37 percent in 1998. This trend is expected to continue, with estimates as high as 50 percent by next year.⁵
- Changing lifestyle preferences to later marriage, fewer children, shorter commutes, proximity to downtown/amenities — attract young professional and empty nesters to mid and high-rise living.⁵

Canada's major population growth is through immigration. In the future, immigration will become a competition to attract the best workforce from other countries. This will continue to perpetuate cultural change, especially in urban centres. The changing lifestyle and household patterns, along with diminishing land supplies and more restrictive building requirements, demands a new approach to urban development.

Towards New Answers

The prognosis for demographic change in Ontario can be characterized by increased population growth driven by immigration, with an aging population living in denser housing forms concentrated in urban centres such as the GTA. The implications of this demographic pattern for planners are very significant. There is clearly a growing need for change but even though for many the potential solutions will seem all too familiar in principle, these are seldom put into practice. Below we present physical, economic and social ideas that will help Canada and its cities work with its demographic forecast.

Physical Considerations

- Life-cycle housing, the means to continue

to live in the same community throughout the various cycles of your life, is now more important than ever. To be able to "age in place" means that you can stay in touch with family and friends, cultural ties, medical services and familiar and favourite places such as parks, shops and walks. In order to respond to an aging society, communities need to incorporate far more of the following: granny flats and garden suites, separate interior apartment units, bungalows, condominium and assisted living apartments, and long-term care facilities. All of these options need to be fully integrated throughout a community, closest to primary needs and not segregated as separate uses.

- With household formation growing faster than population growth, the need for more diverse, smaller, affordable homes will continue. The 60sq m. (600sq ft) condo-apartments may seem (to some) much too small, but they are in fact popular first-time homes and a foot in the homeownership market for many. These multiple units need to be integrated throughout communities and provide strong reciprocal support to transit, cultural, and retail services.
- Multigenerational housing is needed by many families. Aging parents still play a significant role within the homes of their children and grandchildren. Expanded families sharing one house satisfy many objectives of compact form, economics of scale in reducing energy demands, socialization, and assistance of seniors.

Economic Considerations

- Federal and provincial budgets need to start adjusting priorities to meet the changing social needs of Canada's population. With fewer school-aged children and more seniors, funding dollars will need to shift from education to health.
- Employment policies need to be revisited. New ideas include phased-in retirement, raising the age of retirement or revamping flexible working regulations.
- The changing workplace from physical labour to desk jobs can increase the age of retirement. As well new technologies often make jobs less physically demanding. Mental and physical dexterity can be continuously improved with the commitment to life-long learning and a willingness to continually train at every age.
- As people live longer, healthier lives, many want to continue working in some capacity beyond 65. This trend is held back by current retirement policies and practical considerations such as the loss of

retirement income. Current policies act as a disincentive to stay on in a part-time or on-call capacity.

- Flexible workplace policies will support the live/work options provided by the land use desegregation trend. Retirees may work without being subjected to commuting or traditional working hours, which can encourage integrated communities that are active at all times of day. As urban areas become denser, live/work spaces provide transitions between density and use.
- Current workplace policies do not encourage flexible working situations, for example part-time workers have diminished security and fewer benefits. Retirees are faced with a choice to not work or to work in a non-ideal setting. The loss of skills and experience can be devastating to a single department or entire corporation, changing the views on working age and capacity will not only help companies stay economically viable, it will keep seniors in a healthy net of social interactions.

Social Considerations

- Greater social integration will continue to be needed and this should be based on age, culture and gender. While some



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urban centres have adapted to the growing pains of rapid culture change, many other centres are just beginning to deal with this phenomenon.

- Supporting “age-in-place” development includes allowing different housing styles and sizes in neighbourhoods encouraging walkable environments that integrate work/live/play situations which encourage passive physical activity and the building of community bonds.
- The integration of “in-house” health care such as dental, medical and psychiatric services within larger seniors-oriented buildings in urban settings is essential. As noted by John Bentley Mays in a recent *Globe and Mail* column on architecture and seniors’ housing: “The incidence of depression and substance abuse unfortunately increase with age . . . along with professional aids to emotional and mental well being, seniors also need something of the vibrancy and pulse of urban life, engaged with the excitement of living.”⁶

Conclusions

The world is changing rapidly; planning is the profession that is supposed to be poised to anticipate and prepare for these changes.

Oil has dominated Canada’s development—the decline of cheap oil will have serious and continuous impact. Better health has been a defining feature of the developed world’s success, but chronic lifestyle-related disease (such as obesity, asthma and heart disease) and their overwhelming costs will shape the future. Canada’s suburban nation of two-children and two-car families has shaped the current built environment model—as the population is living longer, becoming more culturally diverse and choosing different housing options, the urban and suburban forms will evolve. These are the realities of the present; how well will professional planners respond?

Land uses need to continue to become more compact, diverse, and transit- and pedestrian-supportive, while encouraging greater mobility for all ages. Physical activity is still one of the best means of preventing obesity and cardiovascular, respiratory and mental health problems. These benefits are particularly important to the youngest and oldest members of society.

The opportunity exists to design new communities in a much more holistic manner to ensure greater sustainability of the environment and reduced energy costs.

These communities would be based on comfortable, compact and diverse built form inline with the emerging LEED-ND design evaluation for communities.

The urban boundary has been defined within the green belt by ecological boundaries (the escarpment and the Oak Ridges Moraine) but the demand for developable land continues to go up. Based on the rules of supply and demand, this means two things: increased land costs, and a greater need for diversity in housing forms and land-uses to meet affordability and personal needs. How these new communities are designed to ensure integration, diversity, transit support, linked and accessible high quality public places, employment opportunities and sustainable environmental and energy initiatives is up to us all (and possibly an increased appreciation of the potential inherent in brownfield reurbanization situations).

There is a significant overlap in the recommendations set out in the two previous articles in this series. The suggested actions to deal with demographic change become even more significant when overlaid with the need for solutions to our energy and public health problems. Our current system

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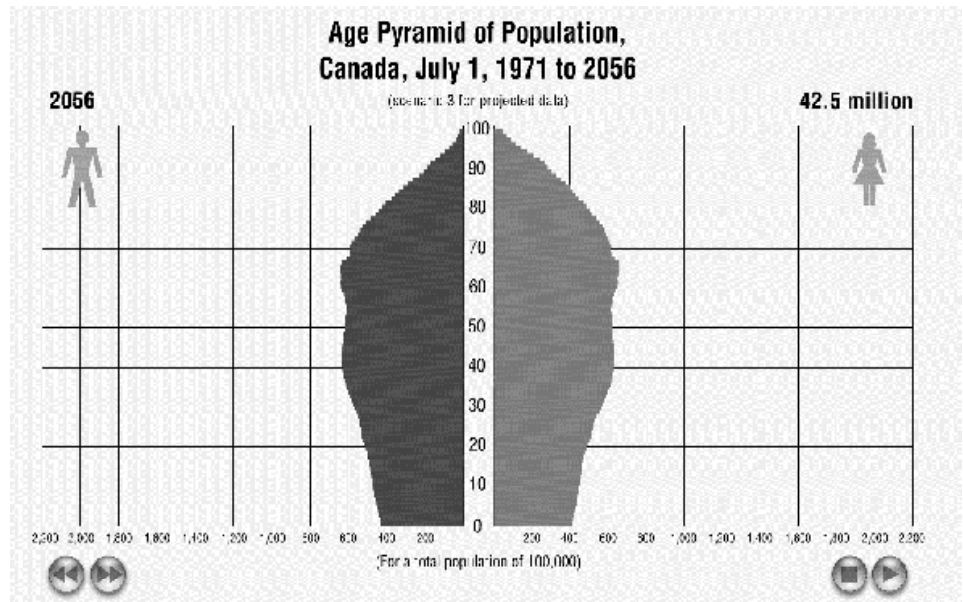
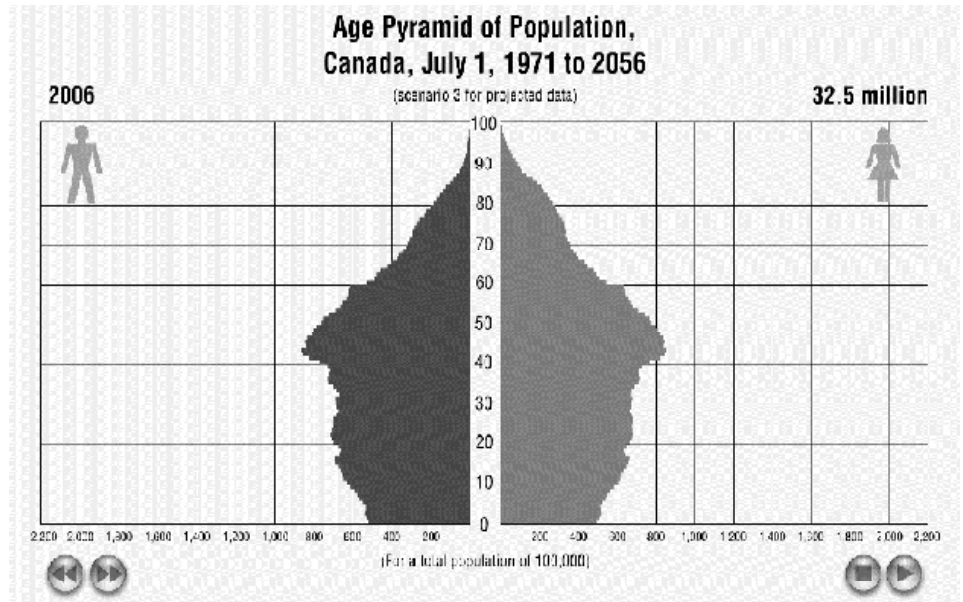
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is very fragile, as witnessed by the increasing number of power blackouts in large urban areas such as Toronto. Climate change, epidemics, pollution and other manifestations of our current model of urbanization will increasingly tax this already overly taxed system. The convergence of the end of cheap oil, the looming crisis in health care, and the changing demographics must be a call to adjust the set. Planners must adjust their set of underlying principle: they must not only adapt to change but anticipate and plan for it. These will be the realities of Canada cities; many of the solutions to these imminent problems are, in principle, familiar to planners; the implementation of these solutions must start right now.

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Source: Statistics Canada website
(<http://www.statcan.ca/english/ads/91-520-XPB/ageflash.htm>) June 22, 2006

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A Recipe for Success: Downtown Redevelopment Plans

Care Needed to Guide Financial Incentives

By Damian Szybalski

Vibrant downtowns are the place to live, work and play. Realizing the benefits of healthy downtowns, many Ontario communities have established various forms of downtown redevelopment programs, including financial assistance packages. While provincial infrastructure investment is destined for urban growth centres identified by the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, downtowns elsewhere will have to rely more on municipal financial incentives. These self-help incentives can help create vibrant downtowns in ways that are different from the financing of infrastructure. To be successful, financial incentive programs need five ingredients:

1. Downtown Vision

A clear, concise downtown vision is crucial. By defining how a downtown is to develop (for example, building massing, height, character, use mix), a municipality can foster a more predictable environment, where the development community understands and can accommodate the public interest. A consistent, positive downtown vision can communicate confidence in a municipality's downtown and attract investment. It must also establish priorities to guide the allocation of scarce public funds.

A downtown vision demonstrates long-term commitment to downtown rejuvenation and legitimizes the use of public funds. Communities like the City of Burlington and Kitchener have shown this commitment by making public investments in their downtowns.

In Burlington, a large investment has been made in a new downtown parking structure. In Kitchener, through its \$110 million Economic Development Investment Fund, the council has committed over \$59 million in funding for various downtown projects, including \$30 million for a downtown University of Waterloo School of Pharmacy; \$6.5 million for the Wilfrid Laurier School of Social Work; \$3.3 million for streetscape improvements; \$1.7 million for a community centre; and \$1 million for



Downtown revitalization needs more than a magic touch

residential intensification. Kitchener's \$36.5 million investment in the two downtown university schools alone is expected to leverage \$31.5 million in annual economic activity. It is hoped and expected that where municipal investments are made, development will follow.

2. Upfront and Ongoing Consultation

Upfront consultation is required to ensure that financial incentives are meaningful, address developers' needs, and are properly administered. Ongoing consultation can measure program success and identify deficiencies. Incentives must be high enough to make projects viable, while recognizing limited municipal financial resources. Incentives that (i) offset up-front costs; (ii) provide a long payback time; (iii) apply to a wide variety of project types and sizes; and (iv) are flexible enough to address unforeseen delays are preferred. Financial incentives can be complemented by non-financial incentives, including less restrictive planning regulations (such as parking exemptions).

Compared to greenfield development, downtown projects are inherently more risky. Redevelopment of downtown properties typically involves the remodelling of older structures, requiring costly upgrades to current building code standards. In older neighbourhoods, fears over contamination and liability make banks wary of providing financing. In the eyes of a developer, green-

field development is predictable and repeatable while downtown development is a prototype and less predictable.

In Ontario, loans have traditionally been favoured over grants because loan repayments support a revolving fund. Nonetheless, the development community prefers grants which offset up-front costs and which do not require repayment.

Municipal planning and development fees can significantly increase the up-front costs of downtown development. The waiver of planning fees can therefore allow otherwise economically borderline

projects to proceed. In Kitchener, a developer of a 14-storey residential tower benefited from approximately \$200,000 in rebated planning and building fees. The same project also benefited from the waiving of over \$450,000 in municipal and regional development charges. Combined, the developer received a financial package totalling roughly \$700,000—or \$4,100 per unit.

In many cases, attracting downtown development necessitates either the elimination or reduction of development charges. Generally, development charges are seen as an impediment to private-sector investment. In one Ontario municipality, a development charge exemption of \$8,000 per apartment unit proved crucial to making the development happen. In another, a downtown office development benefited from approximately \$1 million in development charge savings. The conversion of a vacant 150,000 sq.ft. building into 120 residential units in downtown Oshawa benefited from a residential development charge grant program. In Ottawa, at one time, the development charge waiver on downtown residential development was so successful that City Council voted to confine the incentive to a smaller geographic area.

3. Incentive Layering

Financial incentive programs should allow for different incentives to be layered. Incentives should not be mutually exclusive. Combining incentives can make them more

meaningful and make otherwise marginal projects viable. Municipal ability to do this is limited by the *Planning Act*, which prohibits financial assistance from exceeding rehabilitation costs (this formula may change with the passing of Bill 51, which would allow cleanup costs and similar expenses to be included within the scope of community improvement plans).

4. Do Away With Silo Management

The key factor in the success of downtown financial incentive programs is cooperation among municipal planning, economic development, legal and finance departments. Local Business Improvement Associations, Boards of Management and local community groups should also be consulted. Silo management occurs when municipal departments function independently, without coordination and dedicated staff to assist investors with the planning approvals process. This approach creates bottlenecks in the approvals process, increasing costs and making downtown development less financially attractive.

An alternative is cross-departmental cooperation, complemented by a dedicated

downtown management team with a clear mandate to promote downtown redevelopment and a single point of contact. Similar to the framework adopted by the City of Hamilton, this person should be responsible for providing developers with guidance as to incentive applications, relevant planning information and expediting the approvals process.

5. Marketing

The development industry has an interest in helping municipalities realize their downtown visions. However, if developers are unaware of available municipal financial incentives, their uptake will be low. In turn, downtown redevelopment will stall.

A marketing plan is crucial to the success of every downtown redevelopment plan. It must clearly communicate eligibility criteria, approval requirements and benefits of financial incentives. It should also educate all stakeholders on the benefits of downtown redevelopment.

Financial returns on private sector investment can be many times higher than the initial value of an incentive. In Kitchener, just one incentive leveraged over \$1.7 mil-

lion in commercial property improvements based on over \$360,000 in public-sector loans. This translates into \$5 in private façade/interior improvements for each \$1 in public funds. Other municipalities have realized similar returns through various financial incentive programs, ranging from approximately \$3 to \$52 in private investment leveraged for each \$1 in public funding.

Less quantifiable social and environmental benefits can also be realized. These include the removal of stigma surrounding derelict lands, redirecting development from the urban fringe to urban cores, and the elimination of contaminants—a public health threat.

Without strategic and comprehensive financial downtown revival plans, the fabric of many downtowns will continue to experience fatigue.

A policy planner with the Town of Halton Hills, Damian Szybalski, M.Sc.Pl is a Provisional Member of OPPI/CIP. Damian can be contacted at damians@haltonhills.ca. Opinions expressed are solely those of the author.

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The Shape of Things to Come

Philippa Campsie

Do you consider yourself healthy? If so, to what do you attribute your health? Chances are it's not the medical system, despite the amazing advances in medical science of the last century. That system is there to help when something goes wrong, but the real contributions to making things go right have been made elsewhere.

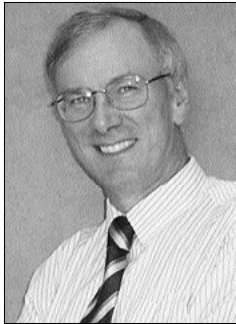
Sanitation.
Nutrition.
Education.
Economic development.
Environmental improvements.
And, of course, planning.

Planning emerged as a discipline and profession when the world was a less healthy place.

Industrial cities were much more polluted than cities are today. Contaminated water led to epidemics that killed thousands of people. The average diet was poorer, and access to fresh foods was limited in winter. The streets were often unsafe. Planners were among those who helped to conquer these problems and make our cities healthier and safer than they had been in the 19th century.

And yet, and yet . . . we are more concerned about our health than ever. Surveys have found that people consider themselves less healthy than they did a few decades ago. We're all popping more pills than people did a generation ago – even young children are routinely medicated for a variety of problems. We submit to more medical tests. We talk about “epidemics” of obesity, stress, or hyperactivity. Newspapers, magazines, television, radio and websites provide a steady stream of information and often conflicting advice on emerging and chronic health problems.

Once again, medical science alone will not help people deal with the health problems that worry them most. Planners, engineers, urban designers and others who help shape our communities have an equally important role to play. To misquote Winston Churchill, “We shape our [communities] and thereafter they shape us.” Health is partly a matter of lifestyle, and communities can enhance or limit healthy lifestyle options.



Andrew Pipe

And that brings us to this year's symposium, “The Shape of Things to Come: Improving Health through Community Planning,” September 28–29, 2006 at the Nottawasaga Inn in Alliston. The event is designed to explore the many connections between health and planning.

Rethinking our professional responsibilities

This is not just about thumbtacking some extra bits to planning practice (“from now on, our reports will have a little section on how this proposal contributes to health”). Planners have a responsibility to consider everything they do in the light of whether it promotes health or detracts from it. After all, fairly or unfairly, planners have been assigned some of the responsibility (blame) for the sedentary, stressful lifestyles that people now lead – from long-distance commuting to environmental stress to dependence on the automobile for all daily activities.

The challenge for planners is to associate planning with promoting health in the eyes of the public. The issue is bigger than simply sprawl and too much time spent in cars. What about food security, green buildings, protecting groundwater, or planning for an aging population? Nearly everything that planners do, at some point, in some way, affects human health.

Two days that might shake the profession

The symposium lasts two days. The first day will be devoted to the topic of health and planning. Participants will hear from five featured speakers, and have a chance to express their own ideas in facilitated workshops.

The keynote speaker for the day will be Dr. Andrew Pipe of the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, an expert on planning for active living, especially physically active commuting to work. Recognized as one of Canada's leading experts in cardiovascular



Riina Bray

disease prevention, physical activity, and smoking cessation, Dr. Pipe has addressed audiences in over 20 nations. He is a member of the Canadian Olympic Hall of Fame, served as chair of the Canadian Centre for Ethics in Sport from its inception until 2003, and is on the advisory board of Smart Growth Canada.

Following the keynote speech, there will be a panel discussion at which Dr. Riina Bray, Dr. Meric Gertler and Michael R. Moldenhauer will speak. Dr. Bray is co-author of the 2005 report on public health and urban sprawl in



Meric Gertler

Ontario, published by the Ontario College of Family Physicians, which made a direct connection between modern community planning and obesity. She has won the 2002 John G. MacLennan award of the Canadian Society for Environmental Medicine for her efforts to educate health care professionals and the public on the health effects of environmental degradation.

Dr. Meric Gertler, MCIP, RPP, is the first Goldring Chair in Canadian Studies at the University of Toronto and a professor of geography and planning. In June 2003 he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. With Richard Florida, he co-wrote *Competing on Creativity* and has conducted extensive research on economic factors and cultural influences and their relationship to sustainable communities.

Michael R. Moldenhauer is incoming president of the Greater Toronto Homebuilders' Association, and President & CEO of

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Moldenhauer Developments. He believes that home builders should be involved in moving towards a healthier built environment. He has a reputation for creative approaches to high-quality infill development in many small municipalities in the Golden Horseshoe. He readily acknowledges that the built form over the last 30 years has been shaped by private developers and house builders who develop and finance projects and he promotes innovative thinking in home building.

The afternoon speaker is Michael R. LeGault, award-winning author of *Think! Why Crucial Decisions Can't Be Made in the Blink of an Eye*. The book is the flip side of Malcolm Gladwell's bestseller, *Blink*, which suggested that decision-making is best done on impulse, without factual knowledge or critical analysis. LeGault argues that sharp, incisive reasoning has become a lost art, and that the lack of



Michael Moldenhauer

critical thinking can waste time, money, jobs, and even lives, leading to less fulfillment and growing dysfunction in our work and home lives.

In the afternoon, participants will be able to choose among four concurrent workshops:

- Urban Form that Works: Active Environments and Sustainable Building, which will focus on creating healthy communities
- Getting to Green: Future Trends and Fresh Ideas, about environmental health;
- Planning Active Transportation Communities, on practical approaches to healthier transportation choices;
- Collaborative Partnerships, Models and Tools for Change, which will look at forming alliances with members of other professional to work for healthier communities.

The first day concludes with the annual awards ceremony. The second day consists of intensive workshops, including a design charrette, hands-on GIS training, sessions on professional standards and ethics, and updates on changes in Ontario's planning system. A fundraising golf tournament is also planned for the second day, on a course voted best family golf resort in Ontario.

It all takes place at the Nottawasaga Inn resort – an appropriate choice, since the resort offers a range of fitness and recreational facilities set in 575 acres of rolling countryside with nature trails.

For a complete program and online registration, go to the OPPI website, <http://www.ontarioplanners.on.ca>, and click on the yellow square on the home page.

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Timmins Youth Help Shape Future of Downtown Areas

Mark Jensen

The City of Timmins is undertaking a Community Improvement Plan Project for its downtown core areas. Traditional downtown areas represent the heart and soul of a community and provide a central place for residents, businesses and tourists to meet and interact. The "big-box" commercial developments along the City's highway corridor have had some impact on these downtown core areas and the City is taking a strong, proactive approach to help these areas remain strong and sustainable over the long term.

An important component of this project is to encourage meaningful public consultation and engagement. To this end, the City recently challenged local high schools to complete their version of a Community Improvement Plan for Timmins. Three schools accepted the challenge. Teams were asked to prepare plans that would be evaluated based on 3 key components—policies, incentives, and mapping. The students were also required to present their submissions to the judging panel. The presentations were conducted on May 2, 2006, in the City of Timmins Council Chambers.

A bilingual judging team was struck, comprising a professional planner (Glenn Tunnock), a local architect, a local economic developer and the chair of the local Business Improvement Area. The submission and presentations completed by the student teams were very impressive. A wide range of innovative policies, programs and incentives were brought forward, of which many will undoubtedly be included in the City's Community Improvement Plan.

This competition was made possible by a strategic

partnership between the City of Timmins, the Ontario Professional Planners Institute, and the Timmins Economic Development Corporation, which all provided financial support in awarding bursaries to the participating high schools. In the end, Ecole Secondaire Catholique Theriault won the first prize bursary of \$3,000, the \$2,000 second prize bursary went to O'Gorman High School and the final \$1,000 bursary was awarded to Ecole Publique Secondaire Renaissance. The awards were distributed to the high school teams by Mayor Vic Power at the beginning of the City of Timmins Council meeting on May 8, 2006.

The bursaries are to be distributed to those high school students who are pursuing postsecondary education in a planning related field.

This project is the first time that the youth of the City has been directly consulted and engaged in a meaningful way concerning an important community project. This input represents considerable value to the City of Timmins in terms of applying ideas from our youth in shaping the Community Improvement Plan while at the same time raising the profile of planning within the school system. Who knows, it may even lead to an

increase in the supply of planners in Northern Ontario. And of course the student teams benefit from promoting teamwork and school spirit, learning about the type of work that planners do, and by offering valuable input into shaping the future of their community.

Mark Jensen, BA, MPL, MCIP, RPP, is Director of Community Development, City of Timmins and is the Northern District Representative.



Mark Jensen



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William S. Hollo, MCIP, RPP

No Trespassing! Passage Interdit!

By Carla Guerrero

This article is the second in a series about the four individual standards of practice adopted by OPPI Council and posted on the OPPI's website.

Have you ever wondered about professional planners' rights to enter land for investigatory purposes? Quiz yourself on OPPI's Standard of Practice related to trespass!

1. When a by-law is passed to allow construction access from adjacent lands, do planners have statutory rights to enter those lands?

Yes _ No _

2. What is the name of the provincial regulation that planners should be familiar with regarding restrictions on access to property?
3. A fine of up to \$10,000 may be levied on anyone who, without statutory authority, enters a premises without the express permission of the landowner.

True _ False _

4. Property owners can provide consent to the municipality to enter premises through an amendment to the development application form. This will protect public-sector

planners who need to enter the site against trespass violations.

True _ False _

5. In addition to the possibility of a complaint or legal action against oneself, what else must OPPI members be mindful of if the act of trespass is committed?
6. For planners working in the private sector, what specific actions should be taken to gain permission to enter a site in question over the term on a project?

See page 34 for the correct responses and find out how much of a planning buff you are when it comes to trespass! Standards of Practice are intended to promote

higher professional standards and better understanding of OPPI's Code of Conduct.

For more information on the Standard of Practice related to trespass, visit www.ontarioplanners.on.ca/members/content/tools/practicdirections.asp

Carla Guerrero is a member of OPPI's Professional Practice and Development Committee, and a senior research consultant with CMHC in Ottawa. She is the Ontario Planning Journal's contributing editor for Sustainability. Carla can be contacted at cguerr@cmhc.



Membership

The following Full Members resigned in good standing from OPPI for the 2006 membership year:

John Armstrong
Steve Ganesh
Allan O'Neill
Patrick Sweet

The following Full Members have been removed from the roster for non-payment of membership fees for 2006:

Lance Alexander
Keith Birch
Ron Burnett
Nancy Charlton-Callas
Harold Elston

Patrick Murray
Elizabeth Ottaway
Wendy Ren
Larry Sherman
Debra Shiells
Christopher Straka

The By-laws of OPPI requires that this notice be published in the Ontario Planning Journal. The notice is accurate at the time of going to press.

For questions regarding membership, please contact Denis Duquet, Membership Coordinator, at 416-483-1873 Ext. 222, 1-800-668-1448, Ext. 222, or membership@ontarioplanners.on.ca

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Eastern

Brockville Workshop a Hit

By Colleen Sauriol and Natalie Hughes

In Late May, the OPPI Eastern District Executive hosted a workshop on Town and Rural Planning on in Brockville. Some 78 delegates attended the workshop, which began with the keynote speaker, Larry Spencer of Spencer and Company, discussing what's ahead for town and rural planning in Eastern Ontario. Three workshops followed the keynote address. The first topic, Improving Village Design: The Chatham-Kent Study, was presented by Kim Storey of Brown and Storey Architects. The second presentation was by Duncan Jewell, Past President of the Huron Tourism Association. Mr. Duncan focused on community development through tourism and spoke on the Huron County experience. The final topic of the day saw a panel of experts dealing with Community Improvement Plans and their attempt to reverse the decline of main streets. The panel of speakers consisted of Maureen Pascoe Merkley, Director of Planning for Brockville, Joe Gallivan of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, David Sherwood, Planning Consultant and Ken Bedford, Senior Planner for the City of Cornwall. Each speaker spoke of his or her experiences with Community Improvement Plans.

The workshop was an opportunity to network with other town and rural planners and experts in the field; to learn from the experience of other Ontario towns and communities and to participate in dialogue on the issues facing rural development. Buoyed by the success of this workshop, the OPPI Eastern District Executive is hoping to host another workshop next year.

*Colleen Sauriol, MCIP, RPP,
and Natalie Hughes*

Northern

Goldfields—Dreams to Reality

By Mark Jensen

Planners are by their very nature visionaries and dreamers. A good example of this is found in the various types of “field” development that we have added to our list of planning jargon. We have the popular brownfield

development, greenfield development, grey-field development, and, most recently, blue-field development. In these cases, planners “dream” of how derelict, contaminated and other underutilized “fields” can be reclaimed and returned to a more productive use (or to realize a higher and better use). I am doing my part as a planner to dream and to suggest a new addition to this family of planning jargon. I call it “goldfield” development.

Goldfield development relates specifically to mining hazards. In many cases, mine hazards do not quite fit the mould for brownfield development. However, there appears to be some recent movement on the part of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) to consider some forms of mine hazards as brownfield development (that is, contaminated sites). The reference to “gold” can be linked to the prevalence of gold mining operations in Northern Ontario that resulted in founding many communities, including Timmins. These hazards represent a range of features that are reminders of past mining operations and have significant implications on land use planning and community development. These hazards may include tailing dams, sediment ponds, shafts, raises, stopes, open pits, waste rock dump sites, and subsidence occurrences (more commonly referred to as “sink holes”). In many cases, these features have not been properly addressed, as some mining companies declared bankruptcy and subsequently walked away from their operations. Unfortunately, in

the earlier years, there were no effective mechanisms in place to ensure that mining operations were appropriately decommissioned following mine closure. Today's *Mining Act*, which is administered by the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines (MNDM), mandates the completion of a detailed mine closure plan before any mining activity takes place on a particular property. An important component of this mine closure plan is the requirement to maintain adequate financial security to cover the costs of ensuring that, following the closure of a mine, the property is put back into a state that safeguards public health and safety.

So how are we to deal with the legacy of mining areas that have not been properly decommissioned and where hazards continue to exist? Municipalities have been asked to address these hazards under the Provincial Policy Statement and to ensure that their official plans are consistent with provincial policy. In the case of Timmins, many of these historic mine hazards are close to the main downtown core area and along a major commercial arterial roadway. The figure below depicts a series of mine subsidence occurrences close to this downtown core area of the City along Highway 101 (the main gateway route into the City).

Mark Jensen, BA, MPL, MCIP, RPP, is Director of Community Development, City of Timmins and is the Northern District Representative.



Former gold mines have development potential

World Planners Congress Highlights Numerous Ontario Contributions

At a spectacular venue nestled between Stanley Park and downtown Vancouver, more than 1,200 planners representing Canada, Britain, the U.S., many countries from Africa, Europe and Australasia gathered for the first World Planners Congress in June. CIP took the opportunity to induct four new fellows to the College of Fellows: Stephen Jewczyk, David Palubeski and two Ontario planners, Hok-Lin Leung and Philip Weinstein.



Hok-Lin Leung

Hok-Ling, educated in the U.S. and U.K., was recognized for his contribution to education and research over 25 years as an acclaimed author and professor of planning at Queen's University. His role in establishing the Ambassador's Program and CIP's linkages with China were just some of the accomplishments acknowledged by the College.




Philip Weinstein

His fellow inductee, Philip Weinstein, a partner with Toronto-based Planning Partnership, can also claim British roots, having gained his early training in England with the London County Council. After returning to Canada at the behest of CMHC, he started his own multidisciplinary firm, specializing in master planning and urban design, which led to many high profile assignments. These include Centre Island, the Metro Zoo, and more recently, the campus for the University of Durham. Just over 10 years ago, he became a found-

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ing partner of the Planning Partnership. Recent projects have taken him to Russia and China. Look for an article based on these travels in the near future.

The CIP Awards of Excellence acknowledged no fewer than four Ontario-based initiatives. York Region, represented by **Bryan Tuckey**, received the nod in the Environment category with its second “state of the environment” report. **Wayne Caldwell**, a frequent contributor to the Ontario Planning Journal and member of OPPI Council, was the principal author of an assessment of conflict between rural uses on behalf of the University of Guelph, where he teaches part-time. **Du Toit Allsop Hillier** won in the Housing Category for its work related to development in Toronto’s railway lands. The **Canadian Urban Institute**, with Vancouver-based **Harris Consulting Ltd.**, won in the Economic Development category with an in-depth analysis of the impact of tax differentials between Toronto and the surrounding 905 region.

Queen’s University’s School of Urban and Regional Planning was well represented at the awards gala, with **Keith Matthew Batstone** receiving the Dillon Consulting



Brent Gilmour, Gordon Harris, Glenn Miller and CIP President Chris Leach

scholarship; **Markus Moos**, also a Queen’s student, won the past-president’s scholarship in the name of Thomas Adams; York University’s **Sonja Zupanec** gained a similar honour named for Humphrey Carver.

Marsha Paley, a senior policy planner with the Town of Caledon, who has previously received international accolades for

her work in environmental protection, was presented with the Soil and Water Conservation Society’s President’s Award for her role in leading the management team for the “Adaptation to Climate Change Impacts on Erosion and Water Quality in the Great Lakes Basin.” She was also recognized for having developed the Ontario Chapter Symposium, “Planning for Extremes—Adapting to Impacts on Soil and Water from Higher Intensity Rains with Climate Change.” The presentation was made at the 2006 Annual SWCS conference in Keystone, Colorado, on July 25, 2006.

Peter Nikolakakos, contributing editor for the Journal’s Ontario Municipal Board section has joined SmartCentres (formerly First Pro Shopping Centres) as a Land Development Manager. He previously worked at Wood Bull LLP as a Land Use Planner.

Judi Cohen has been appointed Vice President of UMA Engineering. Judi is transportation consultant with broad experience, including an extensive stint with the TTC.



Judi Cohen

Damian Szybalski, who has contributed numerous articles to the Ontario Planning Journal in recent years, has moved from the City of Mississauga to the Town of Halton Hills. His feature article on downtowns appears in this issue.



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Editorial

The Quest for a Low Carbon Future—No Time To Waste

Glenn Miller

The imminent passage of Bill 51, the recent adoption of the Growth Plan, and a host of other recent legislative moves promise to make the path ahead for Ontario planning that much clearer. At the same time, our society faces challenges on a scale that couldn't even be imagined 50 years ago.

Articles in this issue draw attention to several major but interconnected concerns. First, we are facing big problems related to the aging of our population that in part stem from having developed a dependence on cars to move around our cities. When a large percentage of the population is too old to drive, the urban form that supported an enviable way of life will be a millstone around our collective necks.

Second, Ontario's cities are struggling with a mounting infrastructure deficit caused in part by the way municipalities are funded. Because infrastructure investment has such a major influence on urban structure, the lack of progress in this area represents a significant threat to the collective ability of planners to influence meaningful change.

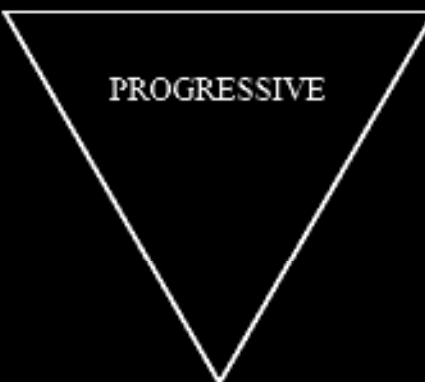
A third crisis – possibly the most fundamental of them all – is summarized opposite in a brief excerpt from the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy's recently released report on a "low carbon future" for Canada. Take the time to read the entire report (available on the NRTEE website); you won't be disappointed. It is well written and pulls no punches.

It is worth noting that the NRTEE report pays more attention to the potential of compact urban form as a key building block for achieving reduced greenhouse gas emissions than the Growth Plan. It also makes direct links to the emissions impact of urban congestion, citing not only the importance of minimizing auto-based commuting, but also the key role played by truck-based urban freight movements in generating GHGs. Ironically, *Plan Canada* just devoted a special issue to sustainable transportation that ignored freight altogether.


The topic of strategic infrastructure investment is also debated in a new study from the Conference Board, which suggests that investing in things like infrastructure in "hub cities" improves the competitiveness of all cities, not just the hubs. In the same week, Statistics Canada reported a significant increase in commuting times. The significant increased travel times for transit users undercut reports from the Canadian Urban Transit Association that transit ridership is up over the past year, emphasizing the gap between the sunny tone of government press releases that predict a transit-based, compact future and reality.

Clearly, there is no time to waste in making the right decisions. As Paul Bedford exhorts us to do in his article this issue: let's get on with it.

Glenn R. Miller, FCIP, RPP, is editor of the *Ontario Planning Journal* and Director, Education and Research, with the *Canadian Urban Institute* in Toronto. He can be reached at editor@ontarioplanning.com.



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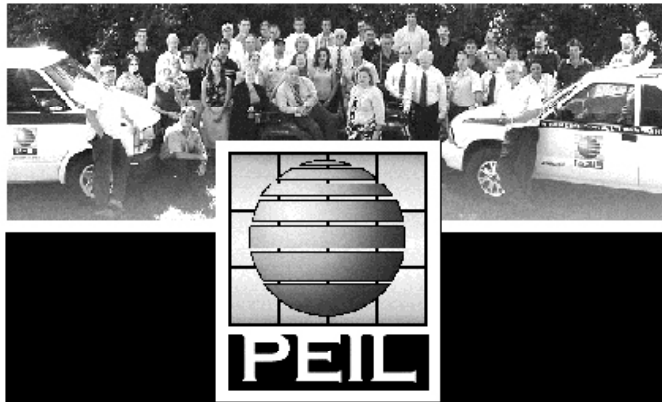


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Advice on a Long-term Strategy on Energy and Climate Change from the NRTEE

By Glen Murray

This study is a first. While other studies have raised general issues about how climate change will affect Canada's economy and environment, this study is the first to focus on what a low carbon future might look like for Canada over the next 45 years. In this analysis, NRTEE members focused on two questions. How can Canada protect and enhance its national interest with regard to energy and climate change issues between now and the mid-21st century? And what do we need to do right now to achieve this?



Glen Murray

The report, which can be found on the NRTEE website (www.nrtee-trnee.ca) addresses opportunities and challenges facing Canada in relation to its long-term energy and climate change future. Specifically, it deals with how to, by 2050:

- meet the energy needs of a growing economy;
- achieve substantial reductions in carbon emissions;
- improve the quality of Canada's air.

The following key findings (approved by all NRTEE members) are derived from an exami-

nation of a 2050 scenario developed by energy consultants ICF International.

These findings suggest a possible scenario for how Canada can meet its future energy needs and address the pressing environmental challenges of climate change and clean air.

1. Increasing energy efficiency is key

There can be a domestic solution to making significant greenhouse gas (GHG) reductions by mid-century, but significant reductions can be achieved only if energy is used more efficiently and if energy is produced while emitting less carbon. Energy and climate change policy in the 21st century means addressing both energy use and energy production.

Energy use

By increasing energy efficiency we could achieve approximately 40 percent of our goal of a 60 percent reduction in GHG emissions. The question is not *which* technologies to deploy, but *how* to deploy all of the potential GHG reduction technologies. How to effectively deploy many different technologies in several sectors is an important policy issue.

Energy production

i) Oil and gas sector: Canada's growing role as a major energy exporter is compatible with deep GHG emissions, but only if carbon capture and sequestration (CCS) is perfected. Resource extraction in the 21st century needs to take into account GHG reduction and adaptation to a carbon-constrained world

economy—this benefits Canada both environmentally and competitively as a leading provider of world energy.

ii) Electricity generation: To reduce GHG emissions by 60 percent, the electricity sector will need to be transformed between now and 2050. As with the oil and gas sector, clean coal technology involving CCS plays an important role—this study assumes that all coal-fired generation in Alberta, and Saskatchewan will use CCS by 2050. After CCS, the largest reductions pertaining to electricity generation are from co-generation and renewables (particularly wind).

2. Urgent need for a long-term signal

The chief difficulty in significantly reducing GHG emissions is not the lack of relevant technologies—rather it is the lack of a long-term signal. Such a signal is needed to help the private sector make shorter-term investment decisions that take GHG reductions into consideration. These decisions, affecting Canada's energy use and production infrastructure, are taken now, every day. It is important to send the appropriate signal as soon as possible. The longer we wait, the more difficult it will be.

3. Significant co-benefits

Air pollution reductions and other co-benefits in key areas will occur along with the reduction of GHG emission reduction. For instance, significant economic co-benefits through the marketing of clean energy technologies will occur. However, domestic platforms, especially for areas such as carbon capture and sequestration, need to be made a national priority.

Former Winnipeg mayor Glen Murray is Chair of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NRTEE), an Ottawa-based organization is dedicated to exploring new opportunities to integrate environmental conservation and economic development, in order to sustain Canada's prosperity and secure its future.

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Don't send us PDFs. Don't embed graphics with text.

Chance of a Lifetime for the Greater Toronto Region

Paul Bedford



Photo: Michael S. Manett Photography 2006

Toronto is a hub: action needed now

What will future generations say about the buildings we construct, the waterfront we develop, and the transit decisions we make? Will we be praised for having the foresight to confront our problems and build a sustainable city region or be condemned for our stupidity and lack of a long-term perspective? The bottom line is that we are now at a tipping point where we either start making the right decisions that will produce a sustainable region or continue to just talk about it.

There are many reasons why we are not doing as well as we could, but they boil down to a lack of political will and a lack of money. The lack of political will may have its origin in the abysmally low 30-35 percent participation rate of voters in municipal elections. The ward councillors who get elected generally only hear from people who share their interests. As a result, Toronto and its GTA neighbours seem too willing to accept mediocrity, are still car-addicted, afraid of density and generally self-absorbed in their own local affairs. We still seem to be preoccupied with our private worlds instead of investing in our public world. We need to foster a sense of co-ownership among the

people in our city and region because we are all in this together. Perhaps serious governance reform at both the local level coupled with a creative new model of regional reform would raise voter interest. If people could see that their vote counted for major region-wide decisions as well as their local community, they might be more willing to get involved in the democratic process.

The lack of money can be traced to the provincial downloading of transit, affordable housing and social services in the mid 1990s. This left amalgamation with the impossible task of funding major new services from municipal property taxes. Simply put, there is not enough revenue generated to cover the costs of maintaining, let alone expanding, these services. After almost ten years it should be evident that we can't just wait for things to get better. We need a hard-nosed assessment to discover why cities like Toronto behave the way they do. Brutal honesty and a willingness to take steps to correct what is wrong are essential ingredients before we can move forward. This must also include a full-scale examination of how the civic bureaucracy is organized, who does what and why. The bureaucracy should be

put under a "sustainability lens," leading to a clear new sense of purpose. I think a new institutional capacity must be developed at city hall that embraces experimentation, risk-taking and the development of cross-cutting staff teams for neighbourhood and public realm investment that are empowered to get things done.

The recent governance changes adopted by Toronto Council under the new *City of Toronto Act* are a start but there are much left to do. Toronto is both too big and too small at the same time. It has proven too large for communities to feel connected to their local government and is too small to address its regional infrastructure priorities. This problem represents unfinished business. The need to develop a new model of local civic engagement that produces an ongoing dialogue between communities and city hall is essential. A new model for regional problem-solving is equally critical. A strong community planning presence would be a good start that would re-establish the importance and relevance of planning in the life of the city. We desperately need to develop a model that produces conversations rather than arguments at the local, city and regional levels.

A huge opportunity now exists with climate change. This recently was ranked as the number one worry for Canadians in a major national poll with 72 percent of respondents indicating it was at the top of their list. This is because people are starting to connect how the big picture of climate change relates to their personal lives and are becoming motivated to act. This is clearly an area where people expect much of their politicians and appear to be ready to embrace strong leadership.

Making Choices and Accepting Consequences

Each choice made by society comes with consequences. Many of these are not beneficial but we must be prepared to live with them or fix them. The key to our future lies in the health of our city-region and in developing the revenue sources required to pay for the shared vision desired by the peo-

ple. The late Jane Jacobs once said, "if Canada did not have strong and prosperous city regions it would be a third world country." Over the next 30 years, 80 percent of Canada's population and economic growth will be in the six city-regions of Toronto, Montreal, Vancouver, Ottawa, Calgary and Edmonton. These places must be successful for Canada to succeed. This has been strongly supported by a recent Conference Board of Canada report titled "Canada's Hub Cities: A Driving Force of the National Economy."

Toronto's Poet Laureate, Pier Giorgio Di Cicco, says that "the true measure of a city is its soul...the restless energy that doesn't wait for political leadership." There is a lot of restless energy out there looking for a home right now. Toronto and the region are building a new layer of city and developing a new style that is all about discovering our self-confidence. We are a great city that is full of potential and ambition looking to rise to the next level. But we are still unsure how to get there and are struggling with an inferiority complex about our place in the world.

The choice for our political leaders is simple. We can wait for others to solve our problems or spell out a clear plan of revenue generation, partnership development and urban reform together. We have all the ingredients to assume control of our own future if we are willing to think, act and plan differently. Toronto has been a leader in city building, transit development and successful urban experimentation and we can do it again in both the city and the region. Self-reliance will promote innovation and give the Toronto city-region new freedom to get on with the job of building the infrastructure.

Leadership: Where are the political leaders who are prepared to aggressively champion the development of a dense network of subways, streetcar lines and bus lines to serve the needs of a 10 million+ region and to figure out how to pay for it? People will follow and support leaders who have the ability to get the job done. As a society, we are capable of doing this if we think and act like a region.

Revenue: First, we need to confront the hard truths of revenue generation. Toronto's physical and social infrastructure is deteriorating and the City is chronically short of revenue. Either transit, social services and social housing are jointly funded by senior governments through a permanent share of income and/or sales tax revenue or the Toronto city-region collectively has to pay for them. These issues cannot be ignored.

The downloading of these big-ticket items to local property taxes has crippled the fiscal capacity of Toronto to meet its basic needs, let alone build new public infrastructure. We cannot continue to exist in a culture of poverty and use it as an excuse for not being able to do anything. While I believe both strategies must be aggressively pursued, a good case can be made to start solving our own problems. It won't be easy, but we must have the discussion, because the present arrangement is unsustainable.

A revenue menu that would make a difference should start with modest road tolls on the entire 400-series of highways including the Don Valley Parkway and the Gardiner Expressway in addition to vehicle registration and licence fees. All the revenue should be dedicated to transit development with an immediate and substantial increase in the frequency of transit service. People must be able to experience a dramatic improvement overnight to see their money at work. Funds should be borrowed against the massive revenue stream generated from the tolls and fees to acquire new transit vehicles so a huge visible increase in transit service occurs on the first day of electronic toll collection. The proposed Greater Toronto Transit Authority should have a strong mandate to build new transit lines within set time frames. The GTTA Board should primarily comprise non-elected professionals along with elected representatives who will look at the big picture and not be constrained by the local agenda. The Board should be the primary vehicle for implementation of the recently adopted provincial growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe "Places to Grow." To facilitate rapid transit development, a special environmental assessment process must also be put in place that actually builds transit lines instead of building more bookshelves for endless reports.

Other regional revenue-generating mechanisms that should be explored include either a sales or an income tax. While such a tool would of course be controversial, there is now room to actually bring in a half of one percent regional sales or income tax with the reduction of GST to six percent. A new regional tax would generate ongoing revenue that grows with the economy and would still mean that GTA residents would be paying less. This argument becomes even more attractive if the GST is further reduced in future. While no one likes to pay taxes, they buy us essential public services and facilities that make urban life possible. These new revenue tools would need to be applied to the entire Greater Toronto and

Hamilton Region, not just to the City of Toronto. Together, these revenue-generating mechanisms could produce billions of dollars for the development of essential regional transit and infrastructure.

Partnership Development and Regional Reform

The successful transformation of the city and suburbs over the next 30 years into a sustainable urban region will require much stronger relationships with both private and non-profit sector leaders and senior governments. The current division between the city of Toronto and the suburbs of 905 and beyond is not healthy. The Toronto City Region functions as one economic unit and should be viewed as an integrated place where everything is connected to everything. We need a regional body that has the clout and revenue base to coordinate and build the systems that will hold the region together. The GTTA could form the basis of such a body. It could evolve over time with a mix of political representatives from the municipal, provincial and federal levels in addition to non-elected appointees with professional expertise. Given the benefits of a prosperous Toronto city-region to the provincial and federal governments, perhaps special financial incentives should be examined by senior governments to encourage regional collaboration in key areas of physical, economic, social and environmental infrastructure.

The reality is that governments can't do it all and need to advance the development of innovative partnerships that target particular problems. One most recent example is a report entitled "Time for a Fair Deal" which dealt with the need to modernize income security for working-age adults. It was a joint product of many leading private-sector corporations, public and non-profit partners who have a stake in our society.

Toronto has gone through three experiments in urban reform. The first lasted from 1953 through 1997. It involved the creation of the Metro government by the province in 1953, which was followed by successive provincial governments that took a pro-active role in the life of the city and region in addition to the election of a reform city council and mayor in 1972. This lengthy but progressive experiment unleashed a flood of positive city-building initiatives and investment in the public realm investment that we are still living off today.

The second experiment started with the amalgamation of Toronto with five other

local governments and Metro into the new City of Toronto in 1998. For the past eight years there has been political, bureaucratic and community confusion. Despite the enormous efforts of thousands of good people and positive examples of achievement, the experiment has produced mixed results. Generally, most people feel that it needs a re-think and a substantial shake to make it work better. Time will tell if the recent governance changes advocated by Toronto Council will improve the situation or not. I suspect a lot more will be needed.

The third experiment is the one we are all now just starting. It is marked by a new *City of Toronto Act*, changes to the *Planning Act* and the Ontario Municipal Board along with provincial leadership in regional planning, greenbelt protection and the formation of a new Greater Toronto Transit Authority. Perhaps most important, it is marked by an unprecedented desire for getting things done. This attitude is positive and should give our political leaders at all levels the courage to step up to the plate by spelling out an aggressive urban reform agenda. All politicians running for office should be asked to outline their key ambitions for their city and region. With a new four-year term of office beginning after the November election, politicians should be held accountable for how well they delivered over this extended period of time. The next four years should be a time of unbridled optimism about our future. This is the chance of a lifetime!

Paul Bedford, FCIP, RPP, is contributing editor for Planning Futures. He is an urban mentor, providing advice on planning issues. Paul is a frequent speaker, and teaches at the University of Toronto and York University. He also serves on the National Capital Commission Planning Advisory Committee. This article is abstracted from a longer piece published by the Toronto Star on Sunday, July 23.



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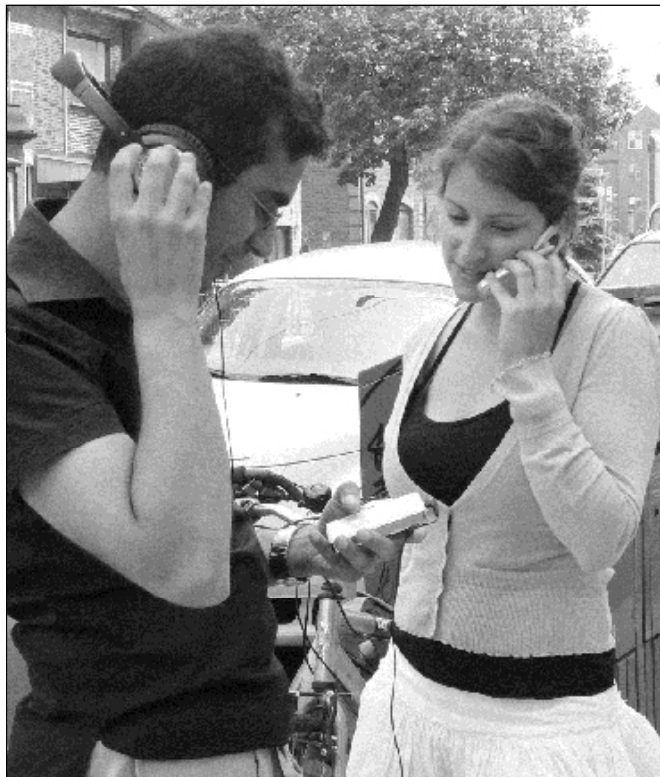
By Philippa Campsie

In April, a *Globe and Mail* reader wrote to the authors of a column called “What Car?” to ask for advice on a car for commuting. The reader complained that after 10 years of not owning a car and taking the GO train to work, he was “prepared to abandon transit and get behind the wheel again.” The reason? Cellphone users on the train. They were driving him to distraction, he said.

This is not good news for transit operators. I hope that someone at GO gets the message and decides to offer cellphone-free railway cars for those who value peace and quiet. When I was on vacation in France, I noticed “No cellphone” signs on some restaurant windows. It’s still okay to smoke in most French restaurants, or to bring your dog, but some places now ban cellphones. No doubt they interfere with the appreciation of a good meal.

My point is not so much to complain about obnoxious cellphone use in public, as to note that while communications technology makes location less important, it is taking our minds off where we are. I’ve

seen I-Pod users jogging along lakeshore paths, listening to music instead of the



Cellphones and I-Pods are ubiquitous

waves. I’ve watched business people in meetings and students in classrooms check

e-mail on their BlackBerrys, oblivious to their surroundings. A friend lives in Brazil, but reads a Canadian newspaper and listens to Canadian radio on-line. What does this mean for people who care about “the experience of place” and civic awareness? How do you design a city for people who are not fully present in spirit?

But it’s not just that people are unaware of where they are and what is happening around them. Half the time they aren’t even focused on the work at hand. Researchers at the University of California at Irvine found that, on average, office workers are interrupted every 11 minutes and that it takes an average of 25 minutes for them to get back to whatever it was they were doing before they were interrupted. The researchers concluded, correctly, that there is an oversupply of information and an undersupply of attention to deal with that information.

When your computer, which has at least four windows open at the same time, is pinging to indicate incoming e-mails, your desk phone and your cellphone are ringing simultaneously, your Blackberry is vibrating like a cricket, and the worker in the next cubicle is saying she needs that report *now*, for the meeting you all have to attend in five minutes . . . you may think 11 minutes of uninterrupted work sounds positively serene.

And you probably have an intuitive sense that all this interruption is not good for productivity. According to a January 2006 article in *Maclean’s* magazine, “Glenn Wilson, a psychiatrist at King’s College, London

University, monitored office workers and found that as they juggled email interruptions with the rest of their work, their IQ fell by a ‘shocking’ 10 points—the equivalent damage of losing a night’s sleep, or more than double the four-point mean drop found in pot smokers. The onslaught of messages left them more befuddled and slow. ‘We have found that this obsession with looking at messages, if unchecked, will damage a worker’s performance by reducing their mental sharpness,’ Wilson reports.”

What is this strange obsession? Linda Stone, a former executive at Microsoft, suggests that people crave the feeling of being connected, and are terrified that they will miss something crucial if they fail to



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check every incoming message. Even when they seem to be focusing on a task, they are scanning the periphery in case something more important pops up. She calls this state “continuous partial attention.” Steven Levy in *Newsweek* likens it to cocktail parties in which everyone is looking over the shoulders of their conversation partners to see if someone more interesting is nearby.

Stone points out the contradiction at the heart of all this so-called connectedness: “constantly being accessible makes you inaccessible.” In other words, the more attuned we are to what is on the periphery, the less focused we are on what is at the centre. We are so anxious not to miss that potentially important message that we fail to notice what is right in front of us—a colleague in need of support, a family member who is having difficulties, or even a nagging problem of our own that we cannot take the time to solve.

One of the worst cases is described in a book called *No Time* by Heather Menzies. She interviews Rob, a workaholic who is so connected to his work that he can’t listen to his young son: “For me to sit and listen to him talk about his day kills me. It kills

me because it’s not coming at me fast enough. And it’s not intellectually challenging enough . . . I’m there and I’m not there . . . I’ll check e-mail. Pick stuff up . . . I’m very rarely engaged, looking [at him].” I sincerely hope I never meet this man.

Not surprisingly, a backlash is starting to form. Some companies are setting limits on e-mails. Pfizer, a pharmaceutical company, introduced Freedom Six to Six—no e-mails before 6 a.m. or after 6 p.m. or on week-ends. Nestle Rowntree in the U.K. has e-mail-free Fridays. At some companies, the use of the “c.c.” option is strictly rationed, to avoid the glut of time-wasting cover-your-ass e-mails. These companies have recognized that productivity is not measured in the number of e-mails sent or received.

Cellphone use can be regulated, too. At ADI, a major engineering firm based in Fredericton, anyone whose cellphone rings during a meeting is fined. When one of the principals set his cellphone on vibrate mode, and it distracted him during a meeting, he had to pay a double fine “for having fun during a meeting.”

If your workplace doesn’t set limits, introduce your own. You can find advice at

the website 43folders.com, created by Merlin Mann, who calls himself a “life hacker.” Mann firmly believes in limits. As he puts it, “Unless you’re working in a Korean missile silo, you don’t need to check e-mail every two minutes.” Mann embarked on something of a 12-step program to reduce his use of communications technology. He even gave up his PDA in favour of a small stack of 3-by-5-inch index cards held together with a clip, on which he jots notes. He finds it works just as well.

As for the man who bought a car to get away from cellphone users on the GO train, I think the remedy is a bit extreme. I would have bought earplugs.

Philippa Campsie is deputy editor of the Ontario Planning Journal and principal of her own communications firm. She does not own a BlackBerry, her cellphone number is known only by immediate family members, and she seldom checks e-mail more than three times a day. She can be reached at pcampsie@istar.ca or 416-686-6173.

Smart Growth

Optimizing TOD Housing Mix and Density

By Martin Laplante

Reducing the total number of vehicle kilometres travelled (vkt, sometimes abbreviated VkmT) in a city is a new objective of land use planning that addresses not only the cost of transportation infrastructure, but also the emission of greenhouse gases.

According to researchers at the University of Colorado, there is a small but statistically significant effect of urban form on transit use. What urban form around a transit station will minimize vehicle use? There is widespread agreement that residential density around transit stations should be higher than in surrounding areas, but what housing mix is best? Some Canadian cities, like Edmonton, Calgary, Ottawa, and the cities of the Golden Horseshoe, plan for high density housing to support transit, while the Congress for the New Urbanism calls for a range of housing types.

Effect of Housing Mix



On average, increasing the dwelling density

of a neighbourhood tends to decrease both the number and length of automobile trips per household in that neighbourhood, as does locating higher-density housing closer to a transit station (U.S.-based Travel Model Improvement Program). However, Robert Cervero has shown that increasing residential density, especially around transit sta-

tions, may not decrease the total vkt for the city as a whole, because of some self-selection effects that may actually increase vehicle use elsewhere in the city.

There is such a thing as too low a density for Transit-Oriented Development (TOD). For any given mode of public transit, there is a minimum transit-supporting density, a residential density below which the transit system does not get enough customers to justify frequent service. However, there is also a density beyond which the decreased vkt of people near the transit station may be offset by increased vkt of people further from the station.

In general, when the residential density is

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higher, people drive less. But we also know that when comparing neighbourhoods of different densities, low-density neighbourhoods tend to be dominated by single-family houses, while higher-density neighbourhoods tend to be dominated by apartment buildings. How much of the decrease in driving that we see in higher-density neighbourhoods is attributable to a difference in housing mix? In other words, do people who live in higher-density areas actually drive less, or does higher density simply concentrate in one place more people who tend to drive less, without reducing anyone's driving? This effect, where local changes in transportation behaviour are influenced by where people choose to live (according to a comparison between New Urbanist and traditional developments), is known as "residential self-selection." The demographic profile attracted by higher-density TOD is quite different from the general population (Lincoln Land Institute of Land Policy).

To help elucidate whether density actually reduces driving, we can graph the total amount of driving done per person against the local housing density, separating detached houses plus townhouses in one



Photo: Diamante Developments Ltd.

What is the best housing mix to reduce car use?

line, and apartments plus duplexes in the other. The result is surprising but very important.

Using data from the 2001 National Household Travel Survey (NHTS) carried

out in the U.S., on average, people tend to use their personal vehicles less as the density around them increases. Broken down by housing type, both on a per-household and on a per-person basis, people who live in



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single houses, townhouses and row houses drive significantly less when the local density around their house is higher. However, this general rule does not apply as much to apartment and duplex dwellers. They use their vehicles less on average, but the number of kilometres they drive does not seem to vary as much with density. At higher density, apartment dwellers drive as much as house dwellers, if not more. The data exclude rural areas and New York City, whose high density lowers the average a bit. Density is at the block-group level. When using census-tract level densities, the difference between the two groups is less pronounced.

This research points to an interesting conclusion. Whether apartments are located in high- or in low-density areas has a smaller than average effect on the vehicle use of apartment dwellers. The location of houses, on the other hand, does have a significant effect. A possible conclusion to be drawn from this is that reducing a city's total vehicle use through TOD is more effectively achieved by locating single houses and townhouses in higher-density areas near transit stations.

Consider briefly scenarios at the two extremes. One is to maximize density by putting apartments in the central area and near transit, and putting single houses and townhouses in lower density, further away. The second is to put houses in higher density areas, and apartments in lower density further away. Assuming that people's preference for one housing type over another is greater than their preference for a neighbourhood density, the difference between scenario 1 and scenario 2 is that house dwellers will drive 8,500 km less per person per year, while apartment dwellers (ignoring the rarer low-density urban apartments) will drive 2,700 km more, making scenario 2 better as long as apartment dwellers are less than 76 percent of the population.

Of course, scenario 2 is an unrealistic extreme for two reasons: Euclidean geometry and economics. There is less land near the centre and near transit than further away, and the value of that land makes apartments more profitable, all other things being equal. Also, the economics of individual transit stations is such that the raw numbers of people living near the station is what makes it financially viable, and those numbers are most easily achieved through apartment-dominated density and self-selection.

The scenario 1 strategy will show measurable effects in the immediate vicinity of transit stations, with nearby residents driving less, but will likely not reduce total driving city-wide. Unfortunately, house dwellers,

whose driving is most dependent on density, on average end up in lower density and further from transit when applying this strategy.

This may help explain why Portland, Oregon, for instance, with its 25 years of light rail investments and priority to attract multiple-unit buildings, has seen significant positive changes within individual compact neighbourhoods but no improvement in transit ridership overall. Researchers at Portland State University found that the improvements have been in the outer rail corridor, where single-family homes pay a premium for transit access. Australian researchers found similar trends hold true in other cities.

Conclusion

Apartment buildings should play a secondary role in TOD when the objective is to reduce total kilometres driven. They certainly help to generate good transportation statistics for the immediate vicinity of the transit station, by packing in more self-selected households than would fit otherwise, but apartments are not as effective as houses at reducing the total kilometres driven by the total population.

Of course TOD also has other objectives, including economic viability of the transit service and of new development, which may

translate into more apartments. According to the California Air Resources Board, other non-residential features of successful TOD also contribute to vkt reduction, and apartments may complement them well, for instance above retail.

Some TOD projects try to put in as many units as the market will allow. Instead, a good rule of thumb is to put in as many houses and townhouses as the market will allow, then adding apartments where appropriate. A detailed land use and transportation model would be more useful than rules of thumb, given the interaction with land prices and the household and business relocations that result.

To some degree this rule of thumb runs counter to conventional wisdom, which tends to place high-density apartment buildings near transit stations and particularly near downtown. But since apartment dwellers are not the major part of a region's total driving, they are also not a major part of the solution.

Martin Laplante, PhD, is Vice-President of RES Policy Research Inc. in Ottawa.

He can be reached at laplante@res.ca for a complete list of references used for this article.

Urban Design

Sense of the City: An Exhibition Based on Sensorial Explorations

By Norman Pressman

The Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montreal has organized an exhibition called "Sense of the City," running until September 10. It tackles for the first time a vast array of urban experiences and responses situated beyond the conventional interpretations of city form and urban life. In essence, it proposes an alternative approach with a focus on engaging all of our senses in an attempt to understand and revel in built environments, adopting an international perspective.

Traditionally, urban planners have interpreted the city largely through the lenses devised by social scientists—demographers, sociologists, economists, political scientists and geographers. Statisticians have influenced the way we view our urban fabric: for

example, how many hectares of open space exist per 1,000 inhabitants; distribution of employment comparing the central core with the suburban fringe; journey to work change with respective modal split variations; retail shopping patterns; new housing starts; parking inventories; shopping mall analyses; ethnic characteristics; and a host of related data, all of which is, of course, relevant to urban decision makers.

However, this data—by itself—does not truly permit tourists and urban dwellers to fundamentally "sense" or "feel" their environments in a palpable way. Sensorial phenomena have, in the past several decades, been conspicuously lacking in most urban studies and our perceptual faculties have been undervalued. But the Canadian Centre for Architecture, under its newly

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installed and highly capable curator, Mirko Zardini, has changed all that.

This new exhibition emphasizes approaches that emanate from a “sensorial revolution” occurring in many academic fields, in which, according to Zardini in his introductory essay (contained in the catalogue), “the ‘senses’ constitute not so much a new field of study as a fundamental shift in the mode and media we employ to observe and define our own fields of study.” What about the practice of multi-sensory design? How does one assess the character of the city or its constituent neighbourhoods? Isn’t a holistic view as significant as comprehending the parts (or micro-aspects) of the urban structure? This exhibition attempts—successfully—to rediscover phenomenology, direct experience, perceptions and sensorial involvement when dealing with the urban context. It is an invaluable benefit in assisting us to more fully understand the “genius loci” or “sense of place”—and to view the city as an organism where human interaction goes well beyond numerically accumulated information.

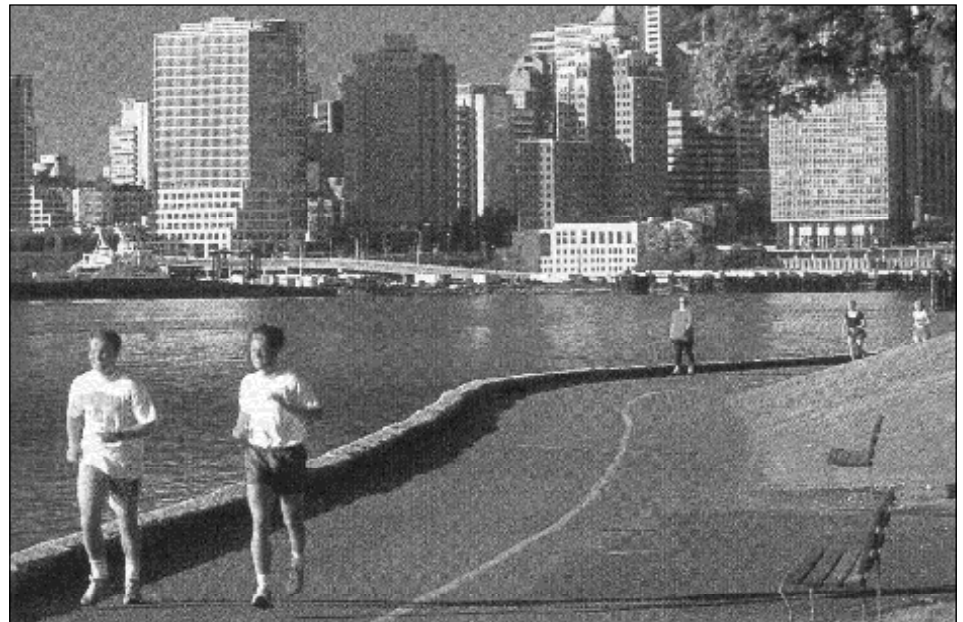
The show targets five key dimensions, each of which is dealt with in an in-depth “invited” essay published in the Centre’s book catalogue (available in French or English). The are Nocturnal City by Wolfgang Schivelbusch; Seasonal City, by myself; Sound of the City by Emily Thompson; Surface of the City by Mirko Zardini; and Air of the City by Constance Classen. There is also a final essay by anthropologist David Howes from Concordia University that deals with the

Architecture of the Senses. He concludes that sensory studies are vital in helping us to mediate our experience of what surrounds us and how it impacts us.

This unique presentation is replete with drawings, photographs, models, sounds and virtually all elements that engage not only the intellect but also all of the senses simultaneously. It is a highly important event, and I recommend it to all students of urban phenomena—anyone interested in a novel approach to understand built form from a non-traditional perspective. Luminosity and darkness, seasonal variation and climate, noxious cities—these are the nuclei of the show. They have been largely absent from urban discourse and bring a fresh point of view to urban studies and analysis. They help us to “feel” the inner and outer skin of the city while absorbing its pulse. Finally, they help us figure out how to “taste” from that complex menu we understand as the “city”—both from its form and content—that determine urban well-being to such a great degree.

The CCA must be complemented on this influential and strikingly significant exhibition. Visit the website at www.cca.qu.ca. The catalogue can be ordered from the bookstore.

Norman Pressman, MCIP, RPP, is Professor Emeritus of Urban Planning at the University of Waterloo and the co-founder of the Winter Cities Association. He consults on northern urban design and lectures worldwide on “winter cities.” His book “Northern Cityscape” won an Award of Excellence from CIP.



CCA exhibit examines how people experience the city

Municipal By-laws and the Nutrient Management Act (Peacock v. Norfolk County)

By Bill Green

On June 28, 2006, the Court of Appeal for Ontario issued its ruling on an appeal by Norfolk County from a judgment of the Superior Court of Justice dated November 19, 2004, dismissing Norfolk's appeal. A dissenting opinion was rendered by one of the three justices.

The case centres on the ability of municipalities to pass by-laws that may directly or indirectly come into conflict with section 61(1) of the *Nutrient Management Act*. The Act provides: "A regulation supersedes a by-law of a municipality or a provision in that by-law if the by-law or provision addresses the same subject-matter as the regulation."

The application judge and the Court of Appeal have found that the Regulation—Ontario Regulation 267/03, amended to O. Reg 294/04, addressed the same subject-matter as the By-law—64-Z-2003 with the result that the Regulation renders the offending section of the By-law inoperative.

Norfolk County had undertaken a groundwater study that identified areas sensitive to contamination around municipal wells based on the hydrogeology and soils conditions. The By-law implemented well-head protection measures by establishing 'sensitivity areas' within which certain specific land uses and operations were prohibited; in this case section 3.31.4(c) specifically prohibits intensive livestock operations and facilities within Sensitivity Areas 1 and 2.

The owners of a large livestock operation wishing to expand had obtained approval of a Nutrient Management Strategy and Plan as required by the provincial statute. The conflict arises from the Regulation which prohibits the construction or expansion of a nutrient storage facility within 100 metres of a municipal well and the By-law that established a greater setback by virtue of the 'sensitivity zone' that their operation is located within.

The Court of Appeal notes that the

purpose of the *Nutrient Management Act* and the Regulation is to "provide a comprehensive scheme dealing with all aspects of the storage and spreading of nutrient materials . . . and primarily deals with nutrients and how they should be managed in an agricultural operation." The Court also noted that the purpose of the By-law is to "to protect the municipality's source of water supply and does so by prohibiting land uses within certain areas where those uses pose an unacceptable level of risk to groundwater quality."

It appears that the Court's analysis has distinguished that the purpose of the two are not in conflict, however the By-law includes a specific provision, as noted above, that does address "the same purpose of the Regulation, that is, the management of intensive livestock operations and their associated manure storage facilities," and was found to be the same subject-matter.

It is important to note that the decision renders section 3.31.4(c) inoperative. It does not affect the balance of the By-law.

Of considerable interest is the dissenting opinion of one of the justices who concluded that, "the dominant feature of the By-law and its provision in question compares to an incidental feature of the Regulation, but not to the same subject-matter of the Regulation, which is the overall management of nutrient materials." The justice goes on to state that: "The Municipality cannot institute a regime of regulating or managing the nutrient material aspects of farm operations. It does not follow, in my opinion, that the Municipality may not utilize its zoning powers under the *Planning Act* to prohibit an activity that may be incidentally touched upon in a provincial regulatory scheme—as long as the 'subject-matter' of the by-law and the regulation in question are not the same."

In my view this opinion confirms the original intent of the *Nutrient Management Act* to provide a comprehensive regulatory framework across the province in the face

of a wide and disparate set of municipal nutrient management or manure storage by-laws that preceded it.

There remain a number of municipal zoning by-laws, some under appeal by the Province, that have been referred to the Ontario Municipal Board as they include "intensive livestock facilities" as separately defined uses within agriculture or rural zones and/or regulations related to their intensity. This decision of the Court of Appeal does little to assist in resolving the disposition of those by-laws. Each one will be tested against specific regulations to determine whether they are "same subject-matter" and a specific determination made that only the offending section or regulation of the by-law is superseded.

Source: Court of Appeal for Ontario

Date: 20060628

Docket: C42944

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Sustainable Downtowns— The North Bay Case Study

By Ian Kilgour, John Fior and Jeff Celentano

The use of the term “sustainability” is growing in conversations on the future of communities across this province. Yet, as different communities face diverse challenges, sustainability can take on new meaning depending on where you are. Population projections for Northern Ontario indicate a population decline of 12 percent by 2031 (Creating Our Future, 2005). A declining population weakens demand for housing and commercial space. The unfortunate result is declining property values and reduced municipal assessment base. These are just some of the challenges confronting many northern communities in Ontario. Despite these challenges, North Bay, a mid-sized urban community located in Northern Ontario, has had considerable success with several initiatives to help its downtown achieve a sustainable future.

The Rail Legacy

Like many urban communities around the province, the downtown area of North Bay was the traditional commercial and social centre of the city. People came there to meet with their banker, shop for clothes, pick up their prescriptions or simply “go for a stroll.” North Bay’s downtown area was linear and relatively cut off from the Lake Nipissing waterfront by the switching yards

of the Canadian Pacific Railway.

From the early 1970s, the downtown area faced challenges from suburban shopping centre development and the general trend toward decentralization from the core. Through the 1980s, the City completed some landmark projects with a direct benefit to the downtown—Main St. Reconstruction in 1983, the completion of the Waterfront Park in 1985 and the conversion and re-opening of the Capitol Centre (a 1,000-seat performing arts facility in the heart of downtown) in 1987.

However, by 1999, two significant milestones were reached. First, the downtown business and investment community felt that the erosion of investment and interest in the core area had continued to slip and help was badly needed. They had developed an Action Plan for Downtown North Bay with many different ideas. The Downtown Improvement Area formed a Development and Investment Committee made up primarily of Downtown office and retail space property owners. They developed an Action Plan which contained short-, medium- and long-term goals with specific parties identified as responsible for implementing actions to achieve each goal. Actions specific to the City of North Bay were: 1) Revise downtown official plan policy to establish a

strong planned function; 2) Provide free two-hour parking throughout downtown, excluding Main Street meters and 3) Provide incentives by offering grants, no-interest loans, waiving building fees and development charges.

Second, the Council of the day completed a landmark purchase of waterfront railway lands from the CPR. Both of these events would have influences on the future of the downtown.

First Steps toward Sustainability

In response to the initiatives from the downtown business community, City Council authorized the preparation of a Community Improvement Plan under S.28 of the *Planning Act*. In preparing the CIP, Planning Services staff looked at successful models that were in place in other communities (including Hamilton, Cambridge, Kitchener and London) and attempted to incorporate the best features of each for North Bay. Council’s Downtown Community Improvement Plan (or DCIP), adopted in December 2002, was an effort to plan for the economic, social and physical sustainability of the core area of the community. The Plan contemplated a variety of stimulus programs including grants, loans, permit/fee rebates, Tax Increment Equivalent Grants and other longer-term programs. Council set aside \$540,000 for the first year of the program in 2003, and followed it with a supplemental \$600,000 in each of 2004 and 2005. With the cooperation of the Downtown Improvement Area (DIA), the details of the program were made known to businesses and property owners within the defined Business Improvement Area boundaries.



Two views of an emerging success story in North Bay

Initial Results

By the end of the first year of the program, the positive results became quickly apparent. Twenty-two different projects were activated under the program, leveraging an estimated \$1.1 million of private-sector reinvestment. This led to 88 construction-sector jobs and an estimated 56 permanent jobs generated through these projects in individual businesses. This continued in year two.

Perhaps more importantly, there is a renewed interest in the downtown as a place for business, living and leisure. As the photos on the previous page illustrate, DCIP funds were often used for items such as façade improvements and feasibility studies to attract new uses in existing buildings. This provided a particular incentive to new businesses wishing to locate in the downtown area.

Over the three years of the program, there has been a cumulative public investment of \$1.7 million that has contributed to estimated private investments of \$5 million and some 450 short-term and permanent jobs. During that same period, 22 new businesses have opened their doors in the downtown and 12 vacant buildings have been purchased.

At a broader level, there is a renewed pride in ownership of in this area and the restorations and improvements help to support a renewed sense of place. With positive signal sent to the larger community from this initiative, the redevelopment scheme for the former CP Rail Lands supports a future vision of a vibrant downtown area facing one of the community's truly remarkable natural assets—Lake Nipissing.

Things that Went Well

Several factors contributed to the early success of the program. First was Council support for this area of the business community. Second, the programs were relatively simple to activate and application processing was relatively quick. Fast acceptance by the business investment community was another contributing factor in early days, as was the ability of City staff to work with the owner/applicants to make things happen and get the funds advanced.

Things that We Learned

As the program matured, we also learned things that we needed to do differently. First, there are program costs (people, dollars, time) that need to be properly accounted for. In addition, with a greater

number of applicants, there needed to be a heightened level of application review in order to minimize marginal projects. The staff workload associated with program administration has increased each year the DCIP has operated. Third, these programs, on their own, do not eliminate downtown vacancy rates. This becomes part of a broader program of recruitment and retention that involves many players from across the whole community.

Conclusions

In established downtown areas, there is always a push and pull between spending tax dollars on improvements and visible results for the community. Sustainability as a concept further demands that we measure progress towards defined community objectives. The City's previous efforts at sustainability for the downtown were true public-sector investments in the built infrastructure. To a certain extent, this approach worked and created positive benefits for a time. Today, the context is different. Businesses in the downtown area need the "pump priming" of the business itself in order to remain sustainable and face the challenges of intense and

specialized competition. Today's approaches have as much to do with business retention and expansion as they do with commercial hierarchies, accessory housing units, parking options and development densities. At the level of a downtown or a community itself, this is a key to sustainability.

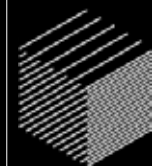
We shared our experiences with approximately 125 business owners, local economic development and planning officials from Northern and Eastern Ontario in March 2006. We think that they are getting the message, and hopefully our communities and downtowns will be the better for it in years to come.

Ian Kilgour, MCIP, RPP, is North Bay's Manager of Planning Services. John Fior, MCIP, RPP, was a Senior Planner, Policy in the City's Planning Services Department at the time of writing. Jeff Celentano, MCIP, RPP is a Policy, Research & Property Specialist in the City's Planning Services Department. He was also the original contributing editor for Northern District.



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Towns and Small Cities: The Evolving Policy Context

Some questions that need answers

Bernie Hermesen

Ontario's Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe took effect as of June 16, 2006. This "new approach to city building" establishes a growth plan to the year 2031 to accommodate an additional 3.7 million people within a vision of compact settlement, protecting resources, protecting the greenbelt in perpetuity, and creating an integrated transportation network with a priority on public transit.

This article focuses on the potential effect on the many towns and small cities contained within the broad geographic area of the Growth Plan.

The Evolution of the Places to Grow Plan

Over the past two years four evolving versions of the Places to Grow Plan have been issued:

- Summer 2004, "Discussion Paper-A Growth Plan"
- February 2005, "Draft Growth Plan"
- November 2005, "Proposed Growth Plan"
- June 16, 2006, the approved "Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe"

The initial 2004 Discussion Paper provided the greatest mapping detail, illustrating the numerous towns and villages as "Designated Settlement Areas." Neither the February 2005 Draft Growth Plan nor the November 2005 Proposed Growth Plan identified towns and villages on the concept map. Only the major cities were designated.

By comparison, the 2006 approved Growth Plan now designates a 27 towns and small cities as "Built Up Area" together with associated "Designated Greenfield Areas." These additional designated towns and cities include:

- Lindsay
- Port Hope
- Coburg
- Alcona
- Penatanguishine
- Midland
- Wasaga Beach
- Collingwood
- Stayner
- Orillia
- Alliston
- Tottenham
- Bradford
- Fergus
- Elora
- Elmira
- New Hamburg
- Paris
- Caledonia
- Dunnville

- Thorold
- Welland
- Port Colborne
- Niagara Falls
- Fort Erie
- Crystal Beach
- Fonthill

All of these places are located within the "Outer Ring" of the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Significance and Scale

The approach appears to have been to designate 27 of the larger towns and small cities, leaving another 25 smaller towns undesignated, as well as seven towns within the Greenbelt.

Together, these 59 communities will account for approximately half a million people or roughly one quarter of the population contained within the entire "Outer Ring."

- 27 towns (370,000 people) now designated on the Places to Grow concept
- 25 towns (90,000 people) which remain undesignated
- 7 towns (70,000 people) not identified on the Plan but included within the "Greenbelt Area" designation

Policy Implications

The *Places to Grow Act* requires municipal official plans to be brought into conformity with the Places to Grow Plan within three years. This considerable effort in amending numerous upper-tier and lower-tier plans will likely also be influenced by sub-area assessments at a regional scale as envisaged by the Plan as well as "implementation analysis undertaken by the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal."

The policy challenges affecting towns and small cities could include the following:

- Determining the allocation of population projections at the level of the upper tier.
- New settlement areas are specifically prohibited in the Places to Grow Plan (2.2.2.1.k). Thus, only expansions to existing settlements would be considered.
- The application of the new intensification density standards including 40 percent of new residential development to be

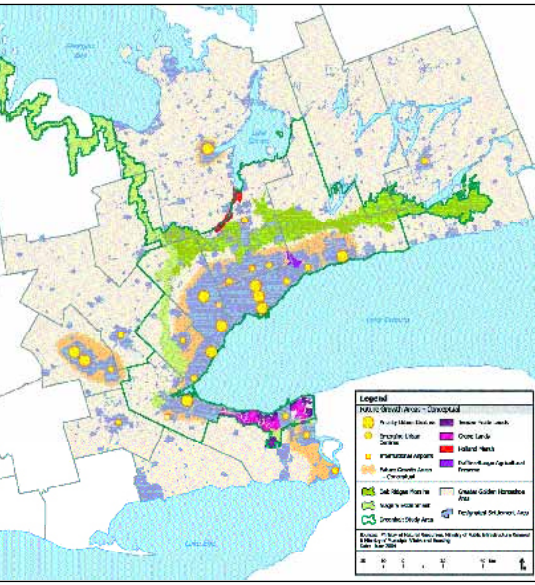
located within existing "Built Up Areas" and a density of 50 jobs or persons per hectare in designated "Greenfield Areas" (for the 27 towns and small cities now so designated). These minimum intensification standards are equivalent to those required in larger cities and are intended to support transit. It is noted the Minister may permit an alternative minimum intensification target within the outer ring, appropriate to the size, location and capacity of the built-up areas (2.2.3.4).

- Small cities and towns are defined as "Settlement Areas that do not include an Urban Growth Centre." This defines what towns are "not," rather than defining what a small city and town "might be."
- While the major cities in the Plan have "Urban Growth Centre" designations applying to their downtowns, the 27 additional towns now designated have little apparent policy in the Plan dealing with their downtowns. This may provide a desirable flexibility to deal with the unique characteristics and diversity of small town centres.
- 25 other towns (for example: communities such as Mount Forest, Ayr, Burford, Cayuga, Arthur, Rockwood) are not specifically identified or designated in the

Answers to Code of Conduct Quiz

(From page 17)

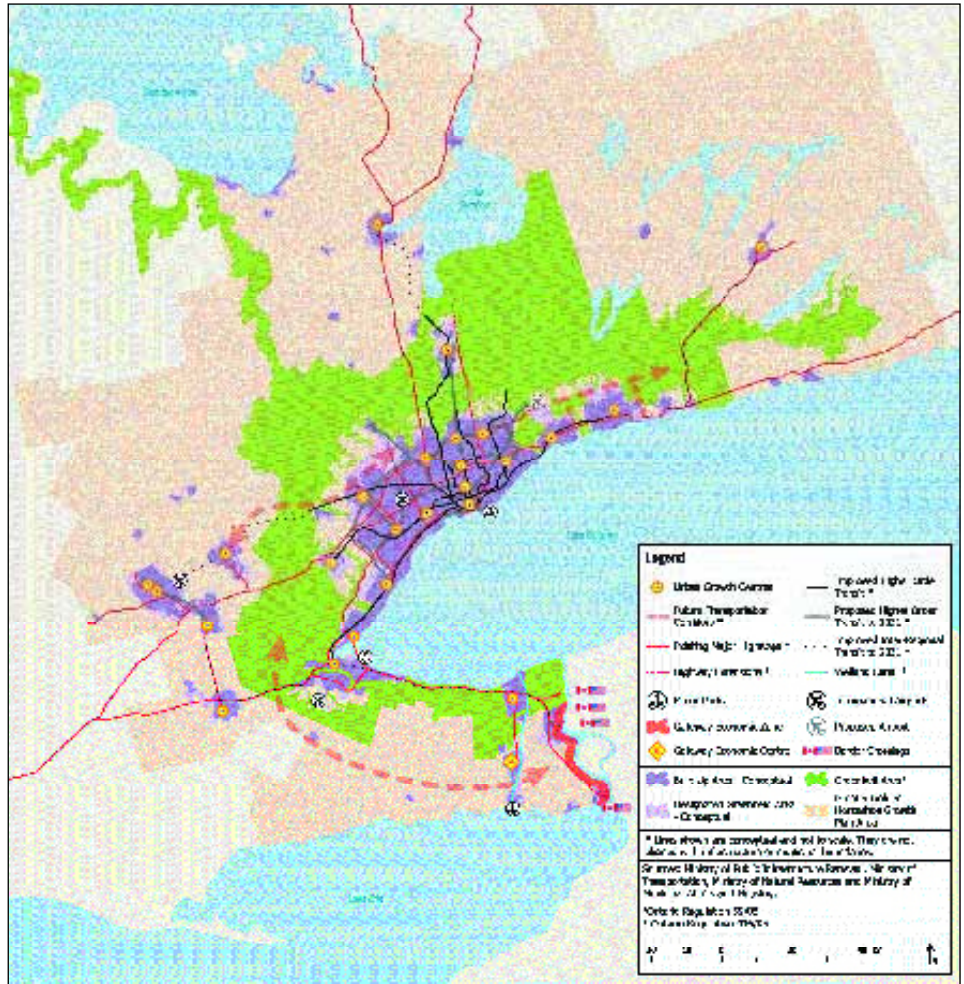
1. No. When a by-law is passed allowing construction access from neighbouring lands, planners do not have statutory rights to enter the site to conduct their work, but certain other professions such as surveyors have limited access rights.
2. Trespass to Property Act, R.S.O., 1990 Chapter T.21.
3. False. A fine of up to \$2000 may be levied on a person who, without statutory authority, enters a premises without the express permission of the landowner.
4. True
5. OPPI members must be mindful that their conduct is a reflection of the profession as a whole and must ensure that their behaviour is perceived to be ethical, in accordance with Rule 2.1 of OPPI's Code of Conduct which requires that: "(The member) shall assist in maintaining the integrity and competence of the planning profession."
6. Private sector planners are encouraged to include in retainer letters an acknowledgment of the right to enter the client's premises during the term of the project.



June 2004 Places to Grow Discussion Paper

approved Plan. This raises the question as to which policies apply. Are the intensification and density minimums intended to also apply to these communities? Perhaps planning at the upper tier will make this determination.

- One of the few specific policies applying to small cities and towns within the outer ring (2.2.8.2.1 Settlement Area Boundary Expansions) calls for maintaining or significantly moving towards a minimum of one full-time job per three residents within or in the immediate vicinity of the small city or town. This policy would promote a balance between employment and housing.
- Policy 2.2.2.h (Managing Growth) encourages cities and towns to develop as complete communities with a diverse mix of land uses, a range and mix of employment and housing types, high quality public open space and easy access to local stores and services.
- For those towns within the designated "Greenbelt Area," the Plan references the applicable policies in the Greenbelt, Niagara Escarpment and Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plans (2.2.9.4 Rural Areas). Examples of these communities include Orangeville, Erin, Grimsby, Lincoln. Under the settlement area policies of the Greenbelt Plan, the Plan envisages that these settlements will "evolve and grow in keeping with their rural and/or existing character." These settlement policies call for modest growth that is compatible with the long-term role of these settlements as part of the Protected Countryside and the capacity to provide locally based sewage and water services. The relationship between the



June 16, 2006 Approved Places to Grow Plan The approved plan adds 27 small cities and towns

Greenbelt Plan and Places to Grow Plan could be further clarified. For example, do the intensification and density targets of the Places to Grow Plan apply to these Greenbelt communities?

economic situations. Municipalities now face the challenge of aligning their forward visions with Places to Grow. Hopefully, this will occur with some flexibility and understanding of the diverse roles and character of small-town Ontario.

The Challenge Ahead

The wide net of the Growth Plan has drawn in a great number of smaller communities having a diverse range of settings, social and

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36 / IN PRINT

Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder

The Power of Green

Author: Richard Louv

Pages: 310

Year: 2006

Publisher: Algonquin Books of Chapel Hill

After a busy morning of meetings and tough planning-decision-making, my brain is just about to blow up and my concentration capacity is practically nonexistent. Stress and anxiety are taking over my brain, and, suddenly, I feel an uncontrollable need to go for a walk in the park. I sit on the grass, beside one of the few trees in my downtown office area, and close my eyes. Magically, a sense of calmness comes back to me, restoring my mind and spirit.

In his latest book, Richard Louv puts together a compilation of scientific research, interviews and personal experience that provide an important wake-up call: Direct contact with nature is essential for our mental and physical well-being, and, moreover, crucial for healthy child development; a fact that most of us intuitively believe but rarely acknowledge as a scientific fact. Modern life-style in poorly planned settings, restrictive environmental protection policy, fear of liability, and unfounded fears are driving people away from nature, especially the children. Louv makes it clear that this tendency is generat-

ing harmful consequences for both humans and the natural environment.

Nature Deficit Disorder, a term created by Louv, describes the costs of alienation from nature. Among these costs are diminished use of the senses, attention difficulties and higher rates of physical and emotional illness. He points out that "countless communities have virtually outlawed unstructured outdoor nature play, often because of the threat of lawsuits, but also because of a

growing obsession with order . . . But as the young spend less and less of their lives in natural surroundings, their senses narrow, physiologically and psychologically." Other stringent restrictions on access and play in natural areas come from our efforts to protect the environment from human pressures, but "if children do not attach to the land, they will not reap the psychological or spiritual benefits they can glean from nature, nor will they feel a long-term commitment to the environment." Louv makes a very relevant point:

the harm to nature that a child can make is greatly exceeded by the commitment to protecting the environment this person will have as an adult.

While most of Louv's arguments are true and well constructed, at times he presents facts that are contradictory. Whereas he

strongly criticizes organized play in manicured fields (instead of free natural play), some of the research that he uses to support his thesis is based on the benefits of all kinds of outdoor play with most of the data coming from organized sports.

Louv urges planners and public officials to act promptly on this critical matter. He provides a list of potential solutions based on successful international experiences. His proposed solutions include, among others: designing natural playgrounds with mud, long grasses and ponds, with all the creatures that come with them, developing rooftop gardens and sustainable neighbourhoods, and improving accessibility to natural areas.

Although most of the solutions this book recommends are appropriate, the author presents them in a superficial and sometimes unorganized manner. Louv's long list of proposed environment-friendly practices that do not relate directly to the main subject of the book, such as solar panels, takes attention away from the main topic.

The book is written in a romantic style; an emotional prose pleasant to the common reader but which, at times, takes strength away from the scientific facts. Nevertheless, Louv achieves his objective of convincing the reader with his argument. In the back of my mind I've always been a believer in the importance of being in touch with nature; after reading the book I also feel a strong commitment to do something about it. Lately, I've found myself quoting his thesis and advocating passionately the points he offers.

Adriana Gomez is a Parks Planner at the City of Toronto. She is a Professional Engineer and has a Masters in Environmental Studies from York University. She contributed an article on skateboarding parks in the most recent issue of the Ontario Planning Journal.

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