

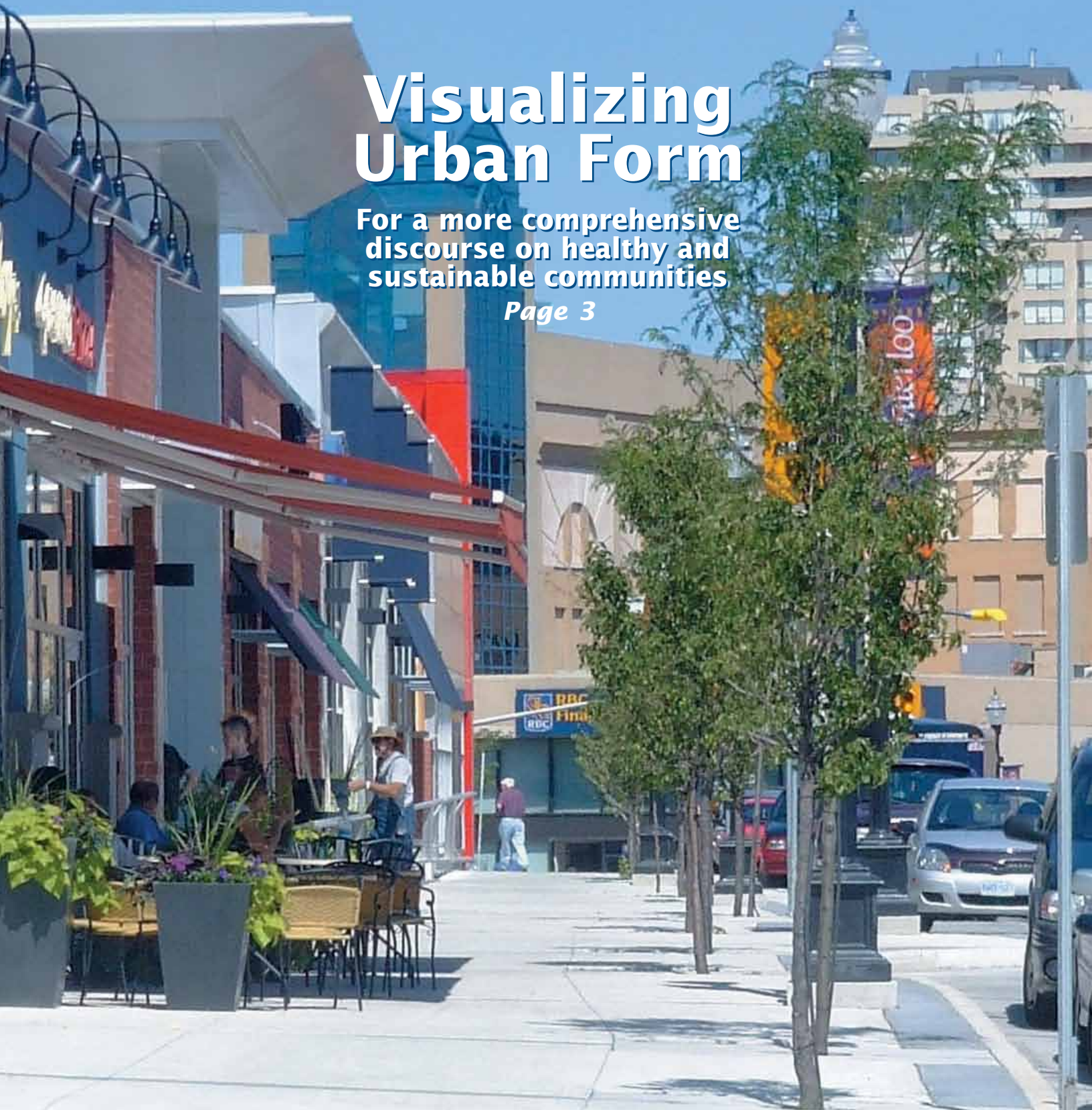
ONTARIO Planning

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER 2006, VOL. 21, NO. 6 JOURNAL

Visualizing Urban Form

For a more comprehensive
discourse on healthy and
sustainable communities

Page 3



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Visualizing Urban Form that Works: Moving Toward Healthy and Sustainable Communities

Kevin Eby and Hanna Domagala

Was it really our intent to let urban planning become more about planning for cars than planning for people? Thankfully, the winds of change are being felt in many communities across Canada. There is now a growing recognition that the shape and character of our urban surroundings need to be reconsidered on many levels. Planners, health professionals, sociologists, economists and engineers are all recognizing that the nature of our urban form and the amenities provided within it, affect not only where we live and how we travel, but also community health, prospects for economic development, financial well-being and environmental sustainability. Urban planning is once again becoming far more than providing for suburbs with two-car garages attached to every home, surface parking near every business and traffic capacity on every street.

For a large portion of Ontario's population, the growing realization that we need to move to more efficient, sustainable and livable communities has been reinforced through the province's *Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* which came into effect this past summer. The Growth Plan's focus on pedestrian-friendly design, transit-supportive densities and the creation of vibrant, complete communities emphasizes the need for functional linkages between planning and the many other disciplines that affect the shape of our urban form and quality of life within our communities.

One of those critical connections is the rediscovered relationship between urban form and public health. Although there are still those who question the relevance of the connection, the evidence is becoming overwhelming and we ignore it at our peril. Research from a wide variety of sources indicates that the growth patterns of the last few decades have contributed significantly to a decrease in levels of physical activity. This in turn has been linked to the increasing prevalence of chronic diseases such as asthma, type II diabetes, obesity and depression. While there are many factors involved in such a cause-and-effect relationship, it is the amount of time we spend in our cars and correspondingly, the reduction in time we spend walking, that appears to have the most impact.

While the province was preparing the Growth Plan, the Region of Waterloo was already in the early phases of implementing its Regional Growth Management Strategy (RGMS) which was adopted by Regional Council in June 2003. The RGMS employs a holistic approach to planning, while providing a direction for managing the Region's growth for the next 30 to 35 years. The RGMS focuses on enhancing the natural environment, building vibrant urban places, providing greater transportation choice, protecting our countryside, fostering a strong economy, and ensuring increased and effective



The Alpine study area: the perfect mix?

cooperation and coordination in the delivery of the full range of regional services within the context of a rapidly growing community. This strategy has resulted in a myriad of existing and new projects being linked to each other through enhanced relationships, not only between various regional departments, but also with the local municipalities, associated agencies and the community.

The RGMS and the Growth Plan have a lot in common. Well-designed, mixed-use communities

promote walking through interconnected street patterns, pedestrian-friendly rights-of-way and vibrant public realms. Improved opportunities to shop, work and play near one's residence encourage more walking and biking, while decreasing the amount of long-distance automobile travel. Increased residential and employment densities can bring more people within reach of neighbourhood nodes, support local economic vitality, facilitate the provision of public transportation and enhance social interaction. In simple terms, both the RGMS and the Growth Plan seek to provide the opportunity and the environment within which people can make the healthy choice the easy choice in their everyday lives . . . by leaving the car at home.

Building healthy and sustainable communities relies on a change in attitude in the public as well as by decision makers. As we work to craft new approaches to planning our communities, especially in a world of minimum density requirements, an analysis of what already exists and a visual depiction of the options the future holds can help decision makers and the public to understand the impacts of the changing planning environment.

Visualizing Densities

Earlier this year, the Region of Waterloo began a study to better understand the influence that the Growth Plan's density targets

will have on the shape of our communities. It is our intent to use this information as the starting point for a more comprehensive discourse with decision makers and the community on healthy and sustainable communities.

The “Visualizing Densities” project is a multi-phase initiative. The final products of this exercise will be a variety of visualization tools that will be used to help explain a number of the Growth Plan’s elements to the general public. Of particular interest is the relationship between built form, densities and their effects on quality of life.

Part 1 of the “Visualizing Densities” project was completed in August. This phase of the study evaluated 20 existing urban neighbourhoods representing a variety of urban core, core periphery, suburban and rural developments in the region. The selected study areas represented a wide range of neighbourhood design characteristics and eras of development. They were compared in terms of the Growth Plan’s selected density: people and jobs combined per gross hectare.

Perhaps the most important insight was the relationship between built form and density. This analysis documented the density yield of existing neighbourhoods, demonstrating that similar densities can be achieved in many different ways. It also identified that a number of factors contribute to the difference in the density of areas, even if the building typology is similar.

Visualizing Densities—Suburban Development

A comparison of the Alpine and Branchton Park study areas provides a good example of how similar densities can look very different. The Alpine study area, with a density of 43 people and jobs per gross hectare, is a mixed neighbourhood in the City of Kitchener. Developed in the 1960s and 1970s, a number of low-rise and mid-rise apartment structures are dispersed through a fabric of ground-oriented buildings such as townhouses and quad complexes, semi and single-detached homes. The Alpine study area also includes an employment area consisting of mostly commercial and retail uses. Branchton Park in Cambridge, also with a combined density of 43, is a recently developed residential subdivision at the city’s outskirts consisting exclusively of ground-oriented residences in the form of single and semi-detached homes. Both these study areas contain an institutional use in the form of an elementary school.

Although Alpine and Branchton Park have the same gross density, their character and intensification potential differ considerably. Branchton Park offers only homes with garages and private backyards, while its residents rely almost exclusively on automobile transportation. Branchton Park is also a community with virtually no intensification or adaptive reuse potential because of the exclusive use of ground-oriented units.

Alpine, on the other hand, offers a mix of housing types and provides its residents with a number of amenities and employment opportunities nearby. The variety of housing forms and their associated land parcels provide inherent opportunity for intensification through either utilization of the surface parking and landscaped areas on these higher-density parcels, or the intensification of low-rise multiples to medium- or high-rise densities. The clustering of higher-density multiple-residential on the edges of the community would also create the conditions necessary to support higher frequency transit service.

When measuring these two suburban communities against the more compact, pedestrian-oriented, transit-supportive objectives of the RGMS and the Growth Plan, it is clear that the future of suburban subdivisions will look more like examples from the past, than those being developed today.

Visualizing Densities—Core Area Development

A look at the core area densities in the cities of Cambridge, Kitchener and Waterloo was also very revealing. Over the past two years, many have viewed the proposed Urban Growth Centre densities (200 people and jobs per gross hectare in Downtown Kitchener and Uptown Waterloo, and 150 in Downtown Cambridge) as representing unreasonable and unattainable levels of intensification within the “outer ring” communities. At a recent conference examining the impacts of the Growth Plan, a planning consultant referred to Downtown Kitchener in the future as having to look like the area around “Yonge and Eglinton” in midtown Toronto.

As part of the Visualizing Densities study, a 20-block section of Downtown Kitchener (a major portion of the core area) was analyzed, revealing a density of 248 people and jobs per gross hectare, with the overall density in the core area being 185. As a result, it would be safe to say that in the future Downtown Kitchener will continue to look like . . . Downtown Kitchener.

That is not to say it will stay the same. The Downtown continues to evolve, but it is evolving as part of community-driven public- and private-sector initiatives, not simply as a result of provincial policies. The City of Kitchener should be commended for the broad range of financial incentive and urban design programs that have and will continue to generate new growth within an increasingly vibrant downtown core. When combined with the recently announced Regional Brownfield Incentive Program, the ongoing development of joint partnerships (such as the recent one that will result in a new school of medicine being developed within the core area), the future development of a rapid transit system connecting it to other core areas in the Region of Waterloo and anticipated provincial investment in institutional structures such as a new courthouse, Downtown Kitchener may very soon become the prototype of what the province is trying to generate through the Places to Grow initiative.

The success being experienced in Kitchener is also being replicated in the Waterloo and Cambridge. While not yet at the densities anticipated by the Growth Plan, the Uptown Waterloo and Galt City Centre (in Cambridge) study areas yielded densities of 190 and 124 respectively. Both these areas are easily within range of their required Urban Growth Centre targets and continue to undergo significant evolution through the active participation of both cities in the development of urban design guidelines, financial incentive programs and participation in partnership arrangements.

Visualizing Densities—Building Forms

A separate section in Part 1 of “Visualizing Densities” focuses on individual multi-residential buildings. This section helps to illustrate a number of factors that impact single property densities. The statistics provided allow the reader to analyze separate elements that make up a larger area’s overall density figure and relate individual buildings to their surroundings.

Two of the more recently developed apartment buildings analyzed within the study clearly show the juxtaposition of residential densities in similar structures. The Regency, an 18-storey slab tower in Kitchener, yields a density of 831 people and jobs combined per gross hectare. The 15-storey River’s Edge building in Cambridge yields a density of only 238. Similar in appearance, the two buildings handle parking differently, thereby consuming a varying amount of land. The Regency provides its residents with a four-storey above-grade parking structure directly under the residential units on a 0.25-ha parcel. River’s Edge offers a three-storey parking structure adjacent to the building on an approximately

0.80-ha site. While the impacts of these buildings on shadowing and contribution to neighbourhood character may be comparable, their relative impact on overall densities is very different.

The opposite can occur as well. In Kitchener, a nine-storey mid-

rise apartment tower highlighted in the study achieves a similar density (231 people and jobs per gross hectare) as a recently constructed stacked townhouse complex (estimated at 230). The apartment site includes underground and surface parking serving a range of condominium residential units. The stacked townhouse complex offers only surface parking located adjacent to 13 rows of one- and three-bedroom rental units, each provided with a private outdoor area and ground-level access for their residents. The mid-rise building consumes 0.40-ha of land, while the townhouses are situated on a 1.12-ha parcel. While very similar in density, these building types contribute very differently to the character of the neighbourhoods in which they are situated.

Visualizing Densities—Part II

Part II of “Visualizing Densities” is currently being completed. This part of the initiative will focus on the presentation (through a combination of plans, and 3D computer renderings) of a number of existing suburban communities and the three core areas. Within the suburban areas, the intent of Part II is to depict several examples of how the suburban densities now required through the Growth Plan could have been achieved through a hypothetical redesign of the existing communities. Within the core areas, the objective of Phase II will be to design and model the type of building form that could reasonably occur in smaller study areas within in the core areas (several blocks) to increase their role in meeting the urban form and density requirements of the Growth Plan. The study areas within the cores have been chosen based on their realistic potential to undergo significant regeneration within the next 20 years.

Part II will also present a number of residential building types not yet present or common in the Region and analyze their relative potential density contributions.

More Than Just Densities

The Region of Waterloo, through the direction provided in the RGMS, is studying a wide range of issues and implementing numerous programs to manage growth responsibly while supporting it through the provision of services in a sustainable manner. Successfully creating complete communities requires much more than mixing uses and incorporating higher densities. A myriad of complementary actions must also be undertaken if we are to achieve the desired impact on quality of life. Transportation demand management, enhanced public transit services, affordable housing strategies, moraine protection, cultural heritage land-



Branchton Park offers little scope for intensification

scape designation, regional road design guidelines, incentives to support reurbanization, and human services planning are only some of more than 70 projects the Region and its partners are currently undertaking. Together they contribute to an ongoing

revitalization of core areas, intensification of urban areas, enhancement of the built environment and increased transportation choice.

Where to From Here?

The creation of a community that meets these goals is an ambitious plan and we need to recognize that while change of this magnitude takes time, we need to start now. It is also important to recognize that no one jurisdiction or group can do this alone. There are thousands of decisions to be made by thousands of people over the next 20 years that will influence the degree to which we succeed in achieving our goals. Understanding that, we must start now to build the relationships, capabilities and capacities within the private and public sectors necessary to complete the task. It is also important to remember that to do this successfully, virtually all aspects of community building must be addressed to one degree or another at the same time. It is the properly developed linkages between these initiatives that often make the difference between acceptable and great. Ultimately, it does not matter which level of government, department, politician or stakeholder is responsible for what needs to be done, as there is lots of work, glory and blame to go around. Remember . . . it doesn't matter who does what, it matters what they do.

Making significant change is like turning a big ship. The momentum it has when you start the process will continue to carry it forward for what may seem like an unbearably long time. But once the bow begins to turn and the momentum is established in the new direction, it becomes as hard to move away from the new direction as it was to turn it in the first place. In the Region of Waterloo, we believe the bow has started to turn.

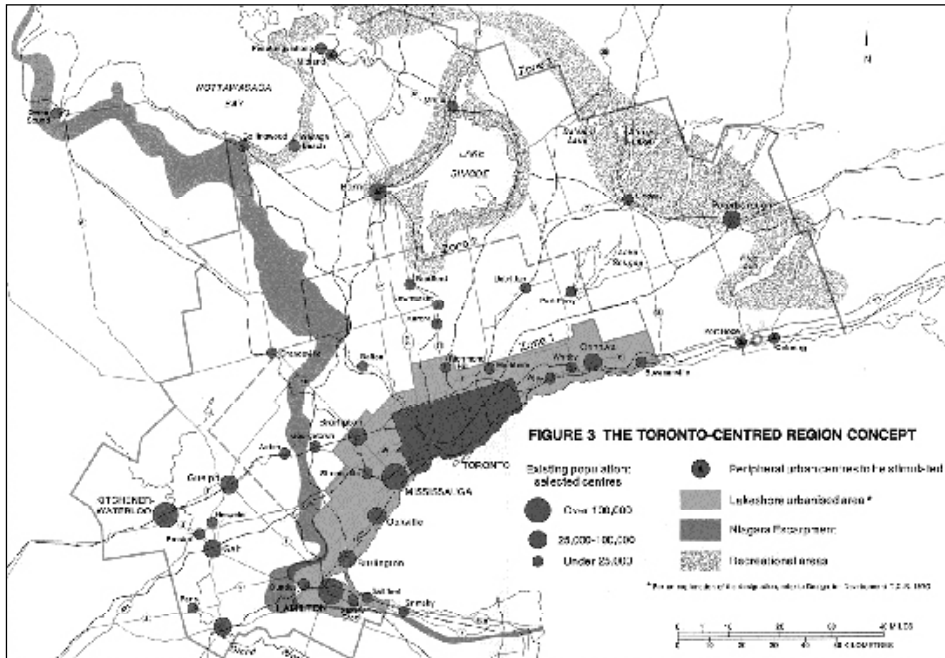
Kevin Eby, M.A., MCIP, RPP, and Hanna Domagala, M. Arch., B.E.S., work for the Region of Waterloo: Planning, Housing and Community Services Department. Kevin is the Director of Community Planning responsible for the implementation of the RGMS and for overseeing the development and environmental planning divisions. Hanna is a Principal Planner and Intern Architect focusing on urban design and leading the “Visualizing Densities” project. The Part I of the “Visualizing Densities” project can be found on the Region of Waterloo website at www.region.waterloo.on.ca—and click on Living Here / Growth Management / Reurbanization / Visualizing Densities.

Kevin presented some of these insights at the recent OPPI symposium.

The Toronto-Centred Region: A New Look at an Old Plan

Planning versus Social Agenda

Richard White



No sign of Oak Ridges Moraine in TCR

Everyone in the Toronto Region's planning world seems to have fond memories of the 1970 Toronto-centred Region (TCR) concept. The words "TCR" are nearly always spoken with reverence. This might seem surprising for a planning scheme that never got beyond the concept stage. Yet there is undoubtedly something impressive about the bold interventions it proposed, and this—notwithstanding that they were never implemented—is likely the basis for its enduring good reputation.

Yet, after spending several years researching the region's planning history, I believe that several key aspects of this legendary plan are insufficiently, or in some cases quite wrongly, understood. These misapprehensions are especially important now, when people compare the TCR and the Province's new Places to Grow plan. There are, to my mind, four important aspects of the scheme that should be better understood.

First is the matter of its roots. The central elements of the TCR scheme took shape several years before the TCR itself was formulated, as part of the Province's Metropolitan Toronto and Region

Transportation Study (MTARTS) begun in late 1962 by the provincial Department of Highways. Officials in that department watched with alarm as demand for transportation services in the Toronto region rose steeply through the late 1950s. They established MTARTS to gain a clearer picture of this growing demand and how it might be served. The study directors also knew that a transportation plan would make little sense without regional economic and population projections to base it on, so they called in the Community Planning Branch of Municipal Affairs. This Branch set up a subcommittee of four notable planners—Hans Blumenfeld, Humphrey Carver, Albert Rose, and Len Gertler—to do this background work.

Over the course of two years, this subcommittee created, in effect, a regional plan. They explored multiple choices for the region's future form, and called their 1967 report "Choices for a Growing Region," but they did make specific recommendations. Chief among them was to keep urban development along the lakeshore, mostly because of the efficiency of providing transportation

and piped infrastructure within a compact, contiguous area. (This notion had been put forward by the Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board 10 years earlier.) Some northward development would be permitted along the Yonge Street axis, but they opposed dispersed development and satellite cities, because of the infrastructure inefficiencies that would result. One novel detail, added by Humphrey Carver, was to divide the urban zone in two with a narrow corridor of land for a future "parkway"-style expressway, but this division did not interfere with the principle of urban contiguity.

Here, fully developed in 1967, are the main elements of the TCR concept, at least those applying to the principal urban area. It is worth noting the close connection in this early phase between transportation and land use planning—a connection that was lost as the plan evolved into the TCR concept. More important is to recognize the contents of this preliminary stage in order to understand what changed as it evolved into the TCR.

The second important, and apparently unrecognized, point about the TCR concept is that it came about as a result of a quite different government project—regional development—being grafted upon the MTARTS recommendations.

Regional development—government programs to assist economically disadvantaged areas—was becoming popular throughout Canada by the 1960s. In 1966, the provincial government of John Robarts introduced a province-wide program called "Design for Development." Robarts also created a new Regional Development Branch (RDB) within the Department of Economics and Development, which he staffed with highly trained social scientists. Those who were involved at the time remember that the RDB ruled the roost in the provincial civil service. It had the status, high-level support, and budget to get things done.

So perhaps it is not surprising that only a few months after MTARTS released "Choices for a Growing Region," Robarts asked the RDB to take on the implementation of that report's recommendations. Unsurprising, but confusing, because region-

Table 1

Zone in TCR	TCR Projections (in millions)	2001 Census (in millions)
One	5.7 (71%) Metro Toronto & northern fringe 3.1 (39%)	5.0 (75%) Metro Toronto & northern fringe 3.0 (43%)
Two	0.3 (4%)	0.3 (6%)
Three	2.0 (25%)	1.3 (19%)
Total	8.0	6.9

al development and regional planning, though related, are not the same thing. A government can shape a region's growth pattern through land use controls and infrastructure investment (regional planning) without necessarily promoting growth in disadvantaged areas (regional development). The regional planners with the Province knew the difference, and some expressed dismay at seeing the MTARTS regional plan put into the hands of another government branch with different goals and attitudes.

It was more than just a turf war, as a glance at the title of the resulting report—"Design for Development: The Toronto-centred Region" reveals. The plan had been shoehorned into "Design for Development." It was a regional development scheme now, as the use of the telling words "growth centres" reveals. Furthermore, the centres were in places such as Midland/Penetanguishene, Barrie, and Port Hope. The RDB had taken its own program of fostering growth in the underdeveloped parts of northern and eastern parts of central Ontario—promoting development in the Georgian Bay region had been a pet project of the Branch's director, Dick Thoman, even before he entered government—and attached it to the MTARTS regional planning recommendation. This fundamental transformation was never noted at the time, and rarely since, but recognizing the TCR concept as something of a two-headed beast helps in understanding its fate.

This brings us to the third point, something about which there is widespread misunderstanding, perhaps because of the plan's name, which suggests a concentrated, centralized region. The fact is, the "Toronto-centred Region" planning concept did not call for an especially Toronto-centred region. It called for dispersal. True, it accepted that the core of the region would remain fairly densely built up, so it was not as anti-urban as some of the classic regional plans of history. But it did not promote urban density as means of controlling urban expansion, and viewed the city's increasing "congestion" as a problem that needed to be solved. It was also quite accepting of low-density suburban growth around the perimeter of the existing

urban area, and allowed space within the designated inner urban zone for years of such growth. Most telling is that the biggest shift it called for in the region's growth pattern was to build up population in the outer parts of the region so that it would have 25% of the region's population, about 2 million people, by 2000. Today's planners, who largely favour intensification as a means of managing regional growth, should be careful in holding up the TCR scheme as a paragon of regional planning.

Within only a few months, higher-ups in the government had begun distancing themselves from the increasingly unpopular scheme. A few development decisions based on it were made, and the western half of the Parkway belt was established, but the basic principles were never put into formal policy. This is widely known. Interestingly enough, though, if one looks at current population distribution within the region, one finds numbers surprisingly close to the plan's projections. So although never formally adopted, some of its principles may in fact have been maintained—this being the fourth and final under-recognized point about the plan.

It seems clear that the plan's goal of decentralization has not been achieved (see Table 1). The population of Zone 3, at 19% of the region's population is well below the plan's 25% target. Most of the growth that did not occur in Zone 3 has gone into Zone 1. The region has, in other words, remained "Toronto-centred" after all (at least "Toronto-and-fringe-centred").

Admittedly, this 19% figure is still fairly high. But a closer look reveals that using this aggregate figure for Zone 3 masks the variance from the TCR's goals. The TCR concept called for growth in Zone 3 to occur in centres north and east of Toronto, where development was lagging. But much of Zone 3's growth has occurred in the western part, especially in the Grand River corridor. The municipalities of Kitchener, Waterloo and Cambridge have a total 2001 population of 387,000—some 30% of Zone 3's population. The TCR acknowledged this western growth, but commented little about it, assuming that constraints in water and sewer

services in the Kitchener-Waterloo area would severely limit growth (which has not turned out to be the case). So although decentralized growth has occurred, it has gone mostly where the market put it, not, with the exception of Barrie, where the TCR concept wanted it to go. The regional development goal of the plan, even more than the goal of decentralization, has clearly not been achieved.

The small difference (in absolute numbers) between the planned and observed population for Zone 2 is equally striking. Zone 2 has remained rural, as planned, for two reasons. First, Zone 1 included enough land for many years of suburban growth. Only now, more than 30 years later (and with overall population growth lower than projected) are the limits of Zone 1 being reached. Second, the principle of contiguous urban growth has been strictly maintained by the planning authorities in the Regional Municipalities. Very little satellite development has been permitted in the countryside of the 905 region. Paradoxically, although one often hears that the creation of Regional Municipalities, by fragmenting the region's planning jurisdictions, effectively killed the TCR concept, quite to the contrary, they seem to have been responsible for keeping one of the concept's key tenets alive. But even more intriguing is the fact that this urban contiguity principle actually pre-dated the TCR planning concept. It appears that the features that TCR added to "Choices for a Growing Region" are the very features of the provincial planning exercise that failed.

Richard White is a historian who is currently working on a history of regional planning. He carried out this research with the support of the Neptis Foundation. The data on population was compiled by Kristina LaFleur.

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Bracing for the Demographic Tsunami— Can Canada’s Seniors Escape Un-Pleasantville?

Oldies but Goodies

Glenn Miller, Gordon Harris and Ian Ferguson



Photo: Glenn Miller

Suburban life can be isolating

(This is the third in a series of three articles about aging and mobility.)

Sharon sat in her living room, feeling a bit bewildered. It was ten o'clock in the morning. By rights she should have been mingling with her bridge group, just as she had every Tuesday for as long as she could remember since her retirement. But here she was—marooned on her couch, trapped in her house. Or at least, that's how it appeared to her. Friends had offered to give her a lift, but Sharon declined—stubborn as always—claiming she was busy with other things. Next time, she said.

Sharon's face reddened with anger at the memory of the confrontation with her son, daughter in law and Doctor Jones. It was all the more galling because the doctor was the same age as her! When he had solemnly declared that he was going to have to recommend to the Ministry of Transportation that she give up her licence, Sharon had lost her temper. Pompous ass. Who did he think he was? The scrape on the fender was quite minor, after all. Even if the people standing at the bus stop when she accidentally mounted the curb had had a bit of a scare, she'd missed them, hadn't she? And so here she was, stuck and immobile in the house.

Even though her faithful Toyota was parked in the driveway, Sharon was no longer licensed to drive it. Mobility had been a problem since she fell and broke her hip. Grudgingly she could admit that she needed the walker. She also knew

she was taking a risk trying to lug the damned thing down the five front steps to the path. The basket was handy but couldn't hold enough groceries and she didn't have the stamina to manage what was otherwise only a ten-minute drive to the store. Everyone suggested she try public transportation. The bus stop was only a five-minute walk and the bus did kneel for people with walkers. Unfortunately, even if she could get to the bus stop, she had sworn never to ride the bus again after that last embarrassing experience when the driver took off before she had gained her balance. Sharon wasn't going to repeat her role as a human bowling bowl any time soon, thank you very much.

Ever since the fall, her children worried about her being safe at home. Suggestions had ranged from someone coming in to help her with housework to, god forbid, moving into a retirement home. Sharon knew that she wasn't quite as sharp as she had been prior to the surgery but didn't think she'd "lost it" quite yet. She was starting to feel quite old and wondered, how had it come to this? Pictures on her mantel of her skiing and playing tennis with her late husband seemed to depict complete strangers. Her job as a busy professional, travelling the country, advising clients on million-dollar decisions, already seemed like an experience from another lifetime.

She still lived in the same house she and Bob had moved into after their first of four children was born. Everything had worked so well for all

those years. But now the subdivision that had so much to offer when the kids were small was beginning to feel like a burden. The peace and quiet that had meant so much on the weekends when she and Bob were both working had turned into an eerie silence. Even her house seemed, at times, overwhelming. If only she had let Bob build that bathroom on the main floor when they built the addition.

The house was always silent and the neighbourhood empty and quiet during the day. Too much quiet. Welcome to Un-Pleasantville!

Can Sharon's story have a happy ending? Of course. Does the scenario described above have to play out this way? Maybe not. Unfortunately, there are already thousands of Sharons and Bobs living in car-dependent suburbs and isolated rural communities across Canada who are seeing their quality of life seriously compromised as they get older. And the situation is not about to improve. This country needs to begin bracing for the demographic tsunami that will, in the space of a generation, create the largest single lobby group this country has ever seen. By 2025, there will be 7.5 million Canadians over the age of 65, more people than currently live in the entire Greater Toronto Area—all motivated to demand changes to the status quo.

As they become less agile, start to lose some of their mental sharpness and have their driving licences removed, many older Canadians will inevitably find that the combination of reduced mobility and their choice of where to live will redefine how they live. In the words of L.S. Suen, "the freedom to move is life itself." If there are ripples of discontent today, the sheer size and speed of the coming transformation in the country's demographic make-up that threatens to swamp municipal and other government services is bound to influence how decision makers do their jobs.

What can be done to mitigate the situation? And, just as important, how can we avoid making the problem worse for future generations? By taking the principles of Universal Design and scaling them up to neighbourhood scale, to reflect the principles of New Urbanism, and giving a nod to

Smart Growth, we came up with ten criteria to guide the design of new development and influence the retrofit of existing conditions:

Equitable use: When designing public space, every effort should be made to avoid privatizing the public realm. In many Canadian cities, the divide between the rich and the poor is becoming more extreme.

Affordable housing options—for young and old—should be available in all neighbourhoods because the principle of equity also embraces affordability. Many of the suburban communities built since the Second World War were designed for young families at low densities on the cheapest possible land. As seniors begin to experience the other end of their life cycle, the economies of scale achieved by building vast acreages in single uses (this applies to employment uses as well as housing) are revealed as a root cause of lost mobility.

Flexible use: To the extent possible, development should be mixed use, and at the very least, promote flexibility of use. This would allow housing on major roads to be converted to retail uses, or transformation of a school site to community or other institutional uses as demands change. Just as many multi-storey industrial buildings have found a new lease of life as loft conversions, site design for all uses should anticipate densification, and not preclude future additions to the landscape.

Human scale: Buildings should be human scale (at ground level, at least, leaving lots of opportunity for tall buildings) to encourage walking. Design should pay as much attention to solar orientation as to the impact of wind. Some environments inadvertently make life tough for the very young and the very old by creating places where gusts of wind are strong enough to knock people over.

Transit-oriented: Wherever feasible, the development pattern should be transit-oriented, focusing density with a view to creating the potential for a critical mass of services; in retrofit situations, encouraging intensification along corridors provides opportunities for mid-rise apartment buildings—a housing form that appeals to all ages, especially seniors—while improving the odds that transit service can be successfully upgraded. For many “middle aged” communities that began life as single-use, residential suburbs, this approach can provide much-needed definition to a street as well as creating attractive places for older people to live, allowing them

to remain in their neighbourhood.

Walkable: The scale and distribution of development should encourage walking, allowing for easy access to services, amenities and destinations such as recreational uses, health care facilities or shopping. One of the challenges when retrofitting suburban areas is the need to pay attention to the size and quality of sidewalks, but improving sidewalks won't be very useful if there is no adjacent, active development. Extensive strips of sidewalk can also be intimidating to seniors whose stamina is beginning to flag. Many suburban communities are divided by six-lane cross-sections that present impassable



Photo: Glenn Miller

European trams typically offer low-floor option

barriers to pedestrians whose agility is compromised in any way. Careful thought has to be given to the siting of light rail or streetcar tracks, as well. Many older Torontonians, for example, are loath to board streetcars that require them to balance on strips of concrete less than two feet wide in the middle of a busy road.

Simple and Intuitive: Another related criterion linked to walkability is the way that built form “reads” to the pedestrian. Ideally, built form should be *simple and intuitive* for the resident as well as the visitor. In many suburbs, curvilinear street patterns that can be handled reasonably well by motorists at driving speeds become problematic for pedestrians. For people walking slowly, focused on maintaining their balance rather than the view, suburban curves can be disorienting,

particularly if the streets are lined with look-alike housing.

Perceptible information: Signage design and principles guiding the display of essential information are matters that are typically dealt with more successfully at the micro scale than at the larger, neighbourhood scale. Because layers of information are added at different times in the life of a community, the result can be puzzling at best. An example of this is a well-known, auto-oriented university campus in the Toronto area that was laid out in the best suburban tradition. Retrofitting signage to help people find their way was done first for people

arriving by car; another layer of pedestrian-oriented information was added as the campus began to acquire more buildings. The latest layer of information added to the campus, which has become the dominant layer, reflects the recent focus on waste management. As a result, it is much easier to locate recycling bins than to determine the name of a building, its street name or even the orientation of the block. The same thing happens to neighbourhoods and major institutional buildings. Senior citizens attempting to circumnavigate large hospitals, for example, must cope with the current mania for naming wings, doorways and even alcoves for people who have donated significant sums of cash. Whatever happened to signs that proclaim the actual function? Older people not only have less stamina, but also tend to get anxious in stressful situations. Visual clutter can add to this stress.

Safety and tolerance for error:

Ever since *The Death and Life*, planners have known that “eyes on the street” is an important aspect of community design. In many suburban settings, however, those eyes require binoculars because of the distances between buildings. At the building scale, applying principles of Universal Design, this implies that there should be no hazards—particularly for people in wheelchairs, for example—but at the neighbourhood scale, implied safety is a difficult standard to meet, and one that is biased towards “urban” solutions.

A key factor with respect to “tolerance for error” can be seen in road design. Narrower streets will naturally inhibit the speed of motorists but attention also has to be paid to the plight of drivers who select the wrong lane or select the wrong direction

Low physical effort: Community facili-

ties, other neighbourhood amenities and services should be designed in ways that make the transition between different grades as easy as possible. In places where pedestrian routes follow paths designed for easy vehicular access, the extra effort required to gain access to a building is often transferred to the pedestrian, who is forced to circumnavigate lengthy ramps or steep stairs. Many ancient European towns stand out even today as examples of how use topography to advantage for both pedestrians and vehicles because the original vehicles were horse-drawn or even human-powered. With the advent of disability legislation, many facilities have now been retrofitted with ramps. The next step is for planners to start applying the same principles at a larger scale.

Appropriate size and scale: A key determinant of urban form is the size of land holdings that form the basis for development. One of the reasons that suburban communities built since the Second World War are hard to navigate on foot or even by bicycle is that the subdivisions being developed are so large. When a land developer takes a project through the municipal process, the tendency is to focus on a single use—and scale. A residential developer will typically design a 100-acre subdivision with the intention of selling serviced land to builders ready to follow a particular formula. To replicate an urban situation—thereby skipping a few generations of development—a developer would have to line up specialists willing to construct four or five different forms of development at the same time. The alternative is to design a subdivision with a long-term end game in mind, a time scale that goes far beyond the original developer's purview. Planners are used to negotiating trade-offs with respect to size and scale in three dimensions. The real challenge is to do this "in plan" in anticipation of redevelopment that may only take place after they have retired.

What is next?

Our research into these issues is still in the early stages, but our intention is to write a book on the subject that appeals not only to policy makers and practitioners, but which also offers the public alternatives that can help them or their aging parents avoid "Un-Pleasantville." Or if they are already there, to plot an escape—with their dignity and their bank account intact. We are currently working with students in the Masters program in planning at the University of Toronto to develop an assessment tool that could be used to evaluate mobility challenges for seniors in suburban neighbourhoods. As this tool is refined, we also hope to develop the logical complement, which is a multi-disciplinary project that would bring together planners, architects, policy makers, municipal managers and many others. The group would dedicate itself to removing barriers to mobility identified through the assessment process. The model could be funded by government, but could also be sponsored by the private sector.

As this series has shown, the demographic tsunami is washing ashore in countries all over the world. Japan, the U.K., and Australia have already acknowledged the gravity of the challenges they face, and have already begun to change their thinking and their actions. The sooner we begin to learn from their experience, the better off we all will be.

Glenn Miller, FCIP, RPP, is director, education and research, with the Canadian Urban Institute in Toronto. He is also editor of the Ontario Planning Journal.

Gordon Harris, MCIP, is the principal of Harris Consulting Inc., in Vancouver. Ian Ferguson, M.D., FRCPC, is an old-age psychiatrist practising in Toronto. Visit www.canurb.com/aging for more information.

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Rural Development in Ohio: Have you ever heard of Bowling Alley and Flag Lots?

A farmer's lot can be key shaped in Ohio

Wayne Caldwell

Wayne Caldwell and seven graduate recently participated in a study tour to investigate rural planning issues and approaches in Ohio. This is the first of two articles that reflect upon some of the differences with the Ontario experience. This article focuses on rural development and "flag lots."

For the past 20 years, large parts of Ohio have experienced extraordinary growth. This has partially fuelled by intense pressure to create development that generates tax revenue for municipalities. This reduces any incentive for municipalities to cooperate on land use planning efforts to curtail sprawl and scattered rural development. Since 1970, Ohio's rural land base has been reduced by 34%, while its suburban and exurban land has been increased by 33.2% and 24.0% respectively (for a discussion of urban sprawl in Ohio, see *Urban Sprawl and Quality Growth in Ohio*, 2001, by S. Staley and M. Hisrich. The Buckeye Institute, www.buckeyeinstitute.org). This change in Ohio's landscape is represented in its national rank of 8th, among all states, for rural-to-urban land conversion. Yet, Ohio is only ranked 22nd for absolute population change. As a result, the footprint per capita is quite large. The extent of large-lot residential development makes it difficult to distinguish between urban and rural areas in Ohio. Many places are neither entirely rural nor entirely urban, but contain elements of both. Undoubtedly, if the current development pattern persists, this will lead to a significant reduction in agriculture land. The significance of this is that Ohio is one of four states with greater than 50% prime soils.

Policy as a reflection of local values

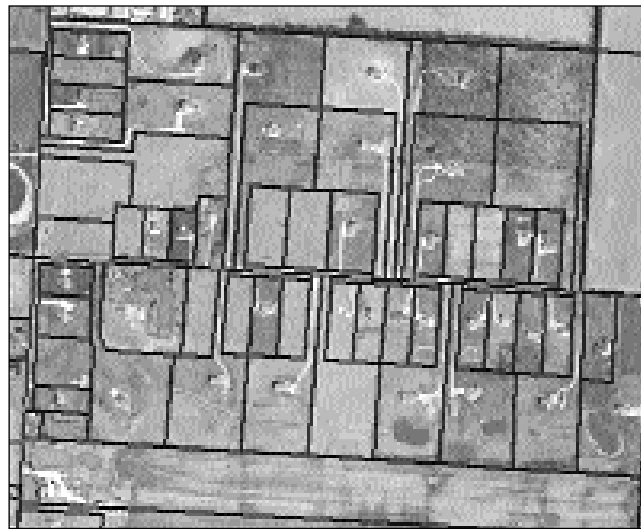
A region's land use planning policies are assumed to be a reflection of local community values. In Ontario, for instance, the Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) dictates that natural resources such as agriculture, water and aggregates should be protected in

the public interest. In Ohio, there is a public desire to maintain "rural character" while also allowing a wide range of development to occur. As a result of this public preference, Ohio's planning policies project a false sense of protecting rural areas and farmland. In other words, for a large portion of Ohio, an area can be completely built-out with residential units and still be perceived as "rural" because the lots are so much larger than in an "urban" setting. Clearly, Ohio and Ontario do not share a common public definition of what characterizes a "rural" area. More

for residential lot creation in an agriculture area are an annual limit in the number of new lots created depending on their size, and whether or not the lot split requires the construction of a new road. As a result, speculators can arrange the size and shape of non-farm lot splits into residential lots that do not legally require the planning authority's approval. Not surprisingly, most new developments in Ohio occur on greenfields, thus consuming significant acreages of farmland.

To elaborate, Ohio has a law which grants an individual the ability to create a residential lot in an area zoned "agriculture," without the need for county approval, if the lot can be created in such a manner that does not require the construction of a new road to gain access to the newly created lot. This law has spawned an innovative planning phenomenon evident in Ohio's countryside. In order to simultaneously conform to this regulation and maximize profitability, developers have created two kinds of lot splits that can be seen throughout the landscape: "bowling alley lots" and "flag lots" (see for example http://www.dcrpc.org/HOW_DO_I/subdivision.htm and http://www.dcrpc.org/HOW_DO_I/lotsplit.htm).

Flag lots resemble the shape of a flag on a pole as illustrated in photo from Delaware County. They comprise a narrow strip of land serving as the driveway and extending hundreds (and sometimes thousands) of feet back from the road to the residence. A flag lot development often facilitates the development of similar-shaped lots, hence creating a cluster development with many narrow parallel driveways, each with a lot extending out at the same end. Bowling alley lots are essentially the "flag pole" without the "flag." A bowling alley lot, for example, could have a frontage of 100 feet and a lot depth of 2,178 feet in order to create a lot which is 5.01 acres (the significance of the lot being slightly over 5 acres will be further discussed). Both flag lots and bowling alley lots maintain frontage on a



Are flag lots good for farming?

importantly, these different values are reflected in the varying rigour of agriculture land division policies for each jurisdiction. The following is a brief overview and comparison between Ontario and Ohio's policy regarding agriculture consents (known in Ohio as a lot split).

The fundamental difference in severance activity between Ohio and Ontario is found in the nature of land use regulation. In Ontario, Section 2.3.4.3 of the Provincial Policy Statement (2005) prohibits the creation of new residential lots in prime agricultural areas with the exception of surplus farm dwellings. Conversely, based on a review of policies and discussions with practitioners in Ohio, it is apparent that the only restrictions

public road. In so doing, developers evade county review by satisfying the regulation which limits lot creation to existing roadways. This planning loophole has the unintended consequence of further perpetuating sprawl and further reducing the rural character.


Beyond the above policy, Ohio had, until very recently, a law which also served to exacerbate the rapid consumption of farmland. Prior to April 2005, new lots created for single-detached homes over five acres were exempted from planning authority subdivision rules and review. This regulation encouraged the formation of lots greater than five acres, many of which are larger than many people desire or are able to properly maintain. The result is low-density development and a rapid decrease in farmland. In an attempt to reverse such wasteful consumption of farmland, Ohio passed Senate Bill 115 in 2004. This Bill grants planning authorities additional powers, including the ability to adopt new rules pertaining to the creation of lots less than 20 acres. The new statute permits Ohio's planning authorities to set in place policies requiring the creation of new lots between four and 20 acres to undergo a planning review and compliance with regula-

tions dealing with health and sanitation (including rules governing sewage disposal systems), minimum frontage, lot dimensions, placement of structures, easements for maintenance, drainage improvements, safe access, and conformity to regional development plans. In this sense, Senate Bill 115 attempted to address the widespread trend of oversized rural non-farm lot splits by increasing the minimum lot size subject to review from 5 to 20 acres. Ironically, there is one caveat. Although the new State law enables a planning body to regulate parcels up to 20 acres, local authorities are not obligated to adopt them. In other words, Senate Bill 115 was intended to address certain weaknesses in land use planning regulations, including those related to lot splits, but its local enforcement remains optional. Perhaps this is indicative of the negative perception, commonly held throughout Ohio, which considers land use planning a violation of private property rights. Regardless of the reasoning behind Ohio's optional regulation, there are significant differences between Ohio and Ontario in terms of the power that Ontario's *Planning Act* and related documents (such as the PPS) grants Ontario's local planning authorities.

Conclusion

Agricultural land in Ohio appears to be perceived as an infinite resource. In keeping with this general attitude, there is an absence of urgency concerning the need to limit rural non-farm lot creation. This is markedly different from Ontario, where agricultural land is more scarce and where issues such as food security, economic prosperity, and the preservation of open space have a higher priority. Both the stricter rules of the new PPS regarding severances and the provincial Greenbelt Plan result partly from such concern. Although the lack of stringent land division regulations in Ohio are clearly linked to the importance accorded constitutional rights to property, some alternative preservation techniques do exist. These will be discussed in the next issue of the *Ontario Planning Journal*.

Professor Wayne Caldwell, MCIP, RPP, teaches at the University of Guelph. His seven graduate students participated in the study tour to Ohio and helped write this article. They are D. Chhoyang, A. Clodd, D. Crinklaw, M. Kralt, C. Latimer, J. Nielson, A. Prindle, A. Zietsma. The next article examines Conservation Subdivisions.




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Need for EAs slows progress, creates false impression that nothing is happening on the Toronto waterfront

Looking for Efficiencies

Steven Willis

The Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Corporation (TWRC) was established as a vehicle to implement a vision shared by three levels of government to use significant public land holdings to revitalize Toronto's waterfront. It has a mandate to build new sustainable communities in a setting of enhanced public parks, vibrant and economically active streets, and improved infrastructure.

The TWRC has completed the planning phase and is now moving into the implementation phase for two precincts: East Bayfront, which is on the water's edge south of Queen's Quay Boulevard, east of Yonge Street, and the West Don Lands, which is on the west bank of the Don River at the

eastern edge of downtown. Combined, these first two precincts of development will have over 12,000 residential units, over 2 million square feet of commercial space, and almost 24 hectares of parks and open space.

The revitalization of Toronto's waterfront includes an overwhelming number of projects that require environmental assessments under both the provincial and federal processes. In virtually every case, without these approvals, no shovel can go into the ground.

Most projects are subject to the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (EA) process to meet the provincial requirements. But because of federal funding, many also require a federal EA under the auspices of the *Canadian Environmental Assessment Act*

(CEAA). A great deal of effort is being expended on finding efficiencies such as timing, batching, sharing information, consistent environmental management, and, where possible, synchronizing the two streams of approval.

Based on the corporation's development plan and business strategy, we originally estimated that there would need to be 10 individual EAs and 127 Class EAs under provincial legislation, 253 Screenings and one Comprehensive Study under the Federal EA legislation.

Streamlining reduces the EA burden

To manage these requirements in a timely and cost-effective manner, TWRC is working coopera-

tively with both levels of government. Screening has been standardized and there has been regular communication and project forecasting. The number of federal EAs has been reduced by changing how funds are distributed among the projects. Instead of continuing to allocate one third of the funding to all projects, federal funding is now concentrated on major public realm projects.

TWRC also successfully negotiated an alternative EA process under the Ontario legislation for five parks projects. The alternative process allows TWRC to comply with the EA Act without going through an Individual EA, provided that it meets a number of technical requirements and is perceived to be open and inclusive.

Using an Existing Tool in a New Way

EAs under the provincial legislation are principally required for infrastructure projects that TWRC delivers in partnership with the City of Toronto, Toronto Transit Commission, Ontario Realty Corporation and/or the Toronto Region Conservation Authority.

For municipal infrastructure projects (roads, water, wastewater and stormwater), TWRC and the City used the Master Plan process under section A.2.7 of the Municipal Class EA. According to the Class EA, "Master Plans are long-range plans, which integrate infrastructure requirements for existing and future land use with environmental assessment planning principles." The innovation was to look at these related projects as an overall system instead of one by one.

Until now, the EA Master Plan process had not been used in this way, in tandem with a planning process for a large area. A typical EA Master Plan process completes Phases 1 and 2 or the Class EA process, completing the necessary steps for Schedule B projects. The new approach is also considering the feasibility of carrying through with Phase 3—alternative designs—as well.

The benefits include:

- Time is saved by doing multiple EAs con-



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currently with the precinct planning, instead of back-to-back.

- The need and justification for projects is established in the broader context of developing the whole community.
- Certainty is increased, because planning decisions will not be held up or altered by EA processes, since the coordinated approach means arriving at a common "preferred solution."
- Considerable effort is saved by doing common work for both planning and environmental processes. Much of the technical inputs are common.
- Coordinated public consultation allows the public to see alternatives in a broader context with transparent decisions, and it avoids consultation fatigue.
- The quality of the output is higher, since infrastructure systems are planned in a comprehensive manner, intrinsically part of a land use scheme, and environmentally protective.

This process demands coordination of many elements and it does require resolving many infrastructure design details earlier than might otherwise be required. However, this process has already achieved the collective approval of over 40 infrastructure elements, and as TWRC applies it to future Precinct Plans, it will ultimately save 110 EAs.

Steve Willis, MCIP, RPP, is Vice President of Planning and Environmental Services with Marshall Macklin Monaghan. As part of the Toronto Waterfront Joint Venture, he was the Program Manager for the two EA Master Plan projects for the TWRC. Steve is a frequent contributor to the Ontario Planning Journal.



Process for infrastructure EAs not visible to the public

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York Students Inject a Dose of Reality for World Town Planning Day

New Urbanism. Places To Grow. Intensification. Sprawl. The terms are often highlighted and debated in discussions that take place in classrooms and boardrooms. Early in November, 15 York University planning students ventured out to get a first-hand look at what these terms really mean in the New Urbanist community of Cornell in Markham.

On a day that more closely resembled January, students began their tour, literally, with the rubber hitting the road. We made our way to the VIVA station on the York campus, paid our fares and excitedly watched the GPS real-time updates, counting down the minutes until we would get warm again.

Upon boarding the Purple Line bound for Markham, we met up with Vijay Chauhan, a communications representative with York Region Transit. While we experienced the modernity of York Region's new rapid transit system, Vijay explained the challenges that had been overcome thus far—the changes seen in the region as a result of the VIVA system, and the future issues that face it. As we sped along the Highway 7 corridor, past the still-developing nodes of Richmond Hill and Markham Centre, we all tried to imagine the vast changes that would need to

occur over the coming decade. The intertwined, conjoined relationship between intensification and transit was vividly apparent, and healthy debates about the age-old “chicken-and-egg” transit debate surfaced.

After experiencing the technology and ease of the VIVA system, we faced the harsh realities of typical suburban transit: The Transfer. While VIVA is planning to connect with Cornell in the future, currently we still needed to transfer to York Region Transit bus to reach the site.

Upon arriving at Cornell and warming up with some much-needed hot chocolate, we met with Dan Leeming, a partner with the Planning Partnership. He sat with us and showed us the community master plan, highlighting the history of the site and where future growth will occur. After the introduction, Dan Leeming led the walking tour, allowing us the opportunity to experience a New Urbanist community first-hand. While most of Cornell remains unbuilt or under construction, the experience helped many students to visualize the differences between this model and the traditional suburban development, most notably the strides in Cornell to make it a mixed-use, pedestrian-friendly community versus the typical cookie-cutter neighbourhood.

The front-facing porches, rear laneways, nearby parkettes and mixed-use corridors that we had read about were suddenly real. Debates about whether Cornell was a captivating new suburban model, or just another *Truman Show* raged. Many students were overwhelmed at the sheer size of the community. Gazing out over the tilled topsoil upon which New Urbanist houses will be

planted, it was difficult at times to grasp that over 45,000 people will eventually live or work in Cornell, especially since you currently do not see any people walking the streets. It was agreed that repeat excursions and subsequent re-evaluations will be needed in the upcoming years, in order to experience the full impact of VIVA and Cornell.

This trek into suburbia was an invaluable experience for York students, allowing us the opportunity to connect classroom to reality, determine fact from fiction and come to conclusions based on experiential learning.

Special thanks go to Vijay Chauhan and Dan Leeming for their time and effort in making this experience a reality. Elsa Fancello and Eric Berard are York University Planning students and OPPI Student Representatives.

Toronto's World Planning Day Whirlwind

Toronto's Chief Planner Ted Tyndorf was a busy fellow on World Planning Day, as was his staff. Collectively, they made 20 presentations to Toronto-area schools on the role and purpose of planning. The feedback was very positive, according to Tyndorf, who had an opportunity to brief a group of teachers responsible for designing the curriculum. Expect to see some interesting results from this initiative in the short to medium term.

Eastern

Stunning Success for Eastern Event

Michelle Taggart and Pam Whyte

“It's a great time to be a planner in Canada,” said David Gordon, who teaches in the planning program at Queen's University, in his opening address to OPPI Eastern District's workshop “Urban Planning at its Best.” David highlighted examples of some of Canada's most formidable planning achievements, which included the work of several of the event's impressive presenters. More than 100 professionals from the public and private sector as well as 45 students from Queen's University's Master's in Urban

(Cont. on page 21)



Dan Leeming leads walking tour with York University students



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EXECUTIVE ASSISTANT

Christina Edwards

Council's report to OPPI Members

OPPI Council is made up of 13 members elected by the OPPI membership

It has been a busy and productive year for OPPI. The members of OPPI's Council would like to highlight the work of OPPI's committees and districts. The activities cover a wide range, and the amount of volunteer time and talent that these efforts represent is impressive.

Policy Development Committee

OPPI's Policy Development Committee, led by Gregory Daly, has provided leadership in the development of planning policy in Ontario. Over the past year, the committee has worked on Bill 51, *An Act to amend the Planning Act and the Conservation of Land Act* and to make related amendments to other Acts.

Throughout the year, the Policy Development Committee consulted with more than 200 OPPI members and stakeholders, and met several times with the Minister and staff about the Bill. OPPI has had significant input on revisions to the Bill. OPPI submissions dated February 2006 and August 2006 are on OPPI's website.

Plans are under way with MAH, PIR and OMAFRA to provide training sessions for planners on the implications of Bill 51 and other planning reforms. The committee intends to maintain its watching brief on government initiatives in areas such as agriculture, rural affairs, economic development, environment, human services, natural resources, government and legislation, transportation and urban design; implement the Community Application Program at District level; and nurture ongoing partnerships with organizations that wish to work with OPPI.

Recognition Committee

OPPI's Recognition Committee, led by Susan Cumming, has worked to broaden public awareness of planning and the role of planners in Ontario. In conjunction with the Policy Development committee, the committee members have helped to promote OPPI and Ontario Planners.

The culmination of this work is September's Symposium, "The Shape of Things to Come: Improving Health through Community Planning." Based on the outcomes and findings of the Symposium, the committee will create position statements on the links between planning and improving the health of Canadians and their communities. This event also saw the Launch the OPPI Honorary Membership award in support of OPPI's community leadership awards for non-planners.


The links between planning and health will also be promoted during 2006 World Town Planning Day, the theme of which is also "Planning Healthy Communities."

In the coming year, the committee will continue to foster opportunities for promoting the role of planning and the role of planners in radio, TV, and print media, with a special focus on the topic of the 2006 Planning Symposium, and continue the ongoing development of the website to support OPPI's role as the recognized voice of planners in the province and to provide members with timely and accessible information.

Professional Practice and Development Committee

The Professional Practice and Development

(Cont. on page 20)



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William S. Hollo, MCIP, RPP

OPPI Treasurer's Report for 2005

Matt Pearson

Note: Summary financial information (Dec. 31, 2005) is available on the OPPI website.

Council's actions in 2005 were guided by its Business Plan for the year. The Business Plan is based on OPPI's Strategic Plan and is used to establish the budget for the year. With the help of OPPI staff, Council projected the Institute's expected revenues for the year, and factored in and set aside funds for its core functions and Strategic Plan initiatives. It is Council policy to operate within a balanced budget. With the help of staff, Council reviews its financial situation quarterly and adjusts spending priorities accordingly.

During the course of the 2005 annual audit, Kreins LaRose LLP, Chartered Accountants found no material internal control or accounting issues to bring to Council's attention. A full set of audited financial statements is available for review at the OPPI office. Contact Robert Fraser at 416.483.1873, ext.224 or finance@ontarioplanners.on.ca.

Revenues

The financial statements ending December 31, 2005, show an excess of Revenue over Expense in operations for the year of \$100,551 (\$97,739 in unrestricted net assets and \$2,812 in scholarship funds).

The financial statements ending December 31, 2005, show an excess of Revenue over Expense in the strategic fund of \$72,764. This represents \$30,000 (2004) start up of fund, plus \$42,764 (2005) in revenue—that is, \$47,573 strategic fund revenue less \$4,809 in strategic expenses.

The financial statements ending December 31, 2005, also show an excess of Revenue over Expense in the Capital Fund of \$38,294. This represents \$10,000 (2004) start up of fund plus \$28,294 (2005) in capital fund revenue.

The 2005 excess revenue can be explained by the following factors:

- OPPI's membership base grew from 3,247 members in 2004 to 3,381 members in 2005;

- mailing service revenue surpassed the budgeted revenue;
- revenue from Professional Development Courses surpassed budgeted revenue.

Council approved allocating the excess of \$97,739 as follows:

- \$27,236 to increase Strategic Fund, bringing it to \$100,000;
- \$51,706 to increase the Capital Fund, bringing it to \$90,000;
- \$18,797 to increase the reserves.

Expenses

The expense pie chart shows how OPPI spends its money. Approximately 61 percent of the expenses incurred by the Institute fund direct or indirect Membership Services. The remaining 39 percent is spent on administration and governance.

Direct Services include the Ontario Planning Journal and Professional Development initiatives. Indirect Services include:

- policy development initiatives (for example, the Affordable Housing and Growth Management Policy Papers or watching briefs);
- efforts to build general recognition for the profession (such as the OPPI branding statement, media training for staff and members associated with the policy work of the Institute);
- the work of the Discipline Committee in upholding the Institute's Code of Conduct;
- support to the Districts for local and strategic programming.

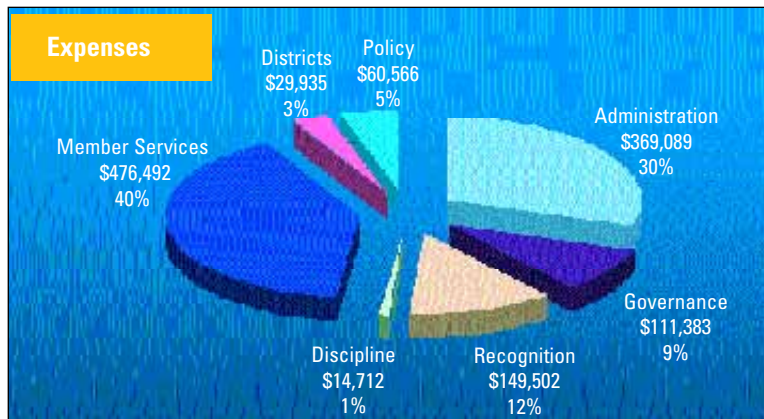
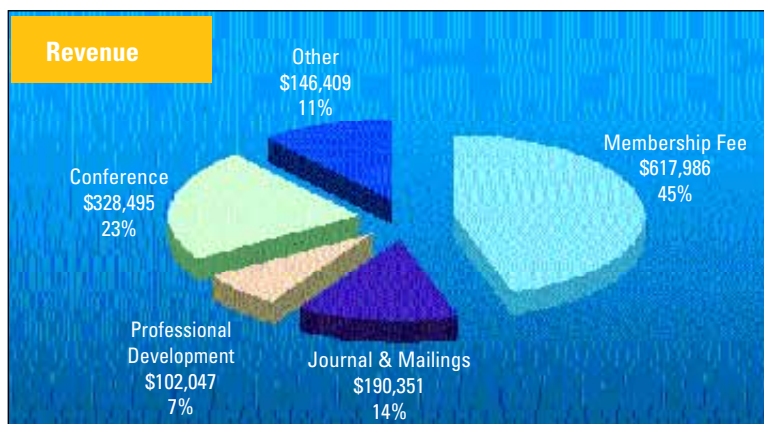
Conclusion

Council is committed to expanding its web-based services, including professional development courses and providing greater support for the Districts in delivering elements of the Strategic Plan. It is expected that we will draw on the Strategic Fund more in future as new CPL courses

are developed for delivery. This fund is supported by profits generated through our bi-annual conference. Continued support for the conference is critical for ongoing efforts.

Council would like to thank Mary Ann Rangam, Executive Director and Robert Fraser, Manager of Finance and Administration for their assistance throughout the year in managing the financial affairs of the Institute.

Matt Pearson, MCIP, RPP, is OPPI's Treasurer and Southwest District representative.



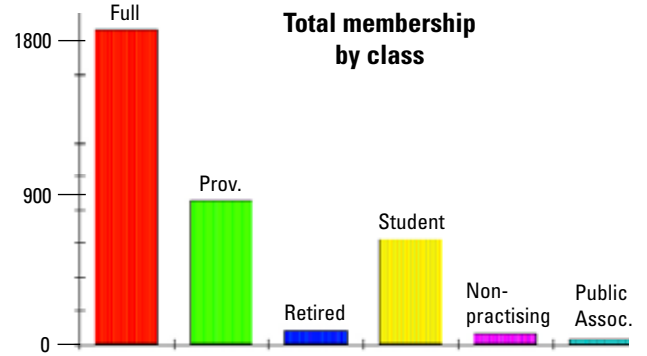
The pie chart shows where OPPI's revenues come from. Approximately 45 percent of OPPI's revenues come from membership fees, a revenue source that is considered to be relatively reliable. The other 55 percent of revenues are generated from non-membership fee sources such as job ad mailings and journal advertising. This source is more likely to fluctuate with the economy. Industry standards set by non-profit associations reflect that 60 percent for association revenues should come from membership fees and 40 percent from non-membership fee sources.

Facts and Figures on OPPI

OPPI MEMBERSHIP BY DISTRICT, AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2006

TABLE 1

District	Full	Prov.	Retired	Student	Non-Practising	Public Assoc.	TOTAL
Northern District	46	19	4	4	3	1	77
Southwest District	295	113	7	112	8	3	538
Central District	1287	636	58	452	48	20	2501
Eastern District	234	86	13	55	5	4	397
Out of Province	7	0	1	0	0	0	8
TOTAL	1869	854	83	623	64	28	3521
Total (2005)	1741	917	93	575	29	26	3381

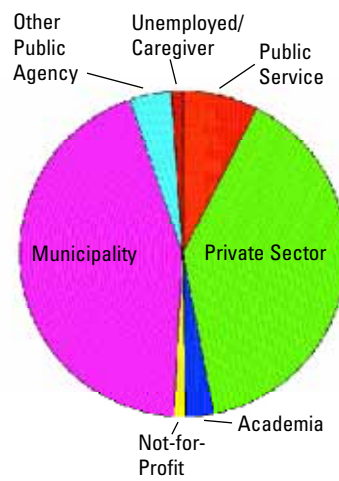


MEMBERSHIP BY CLASS AND SEX

TABLE 2

	Male		Female		TOTAL
	No.	%	No.	%	
Full	1308	69.9	561	30.1	1869
Provisional	475	55.6	379	44.4	854
Retired	67	80.8	16	19.2	83
Student	271	43.4	352	56.6	623
Non-Practising	31	48.5	33	51.5	64
Public Assoc.	18	64.3	10	35.7	28
TOTAL	2170	61.6	1351	38.4	3521
Total (2005)	2114	62.5	1267	37.5	3381

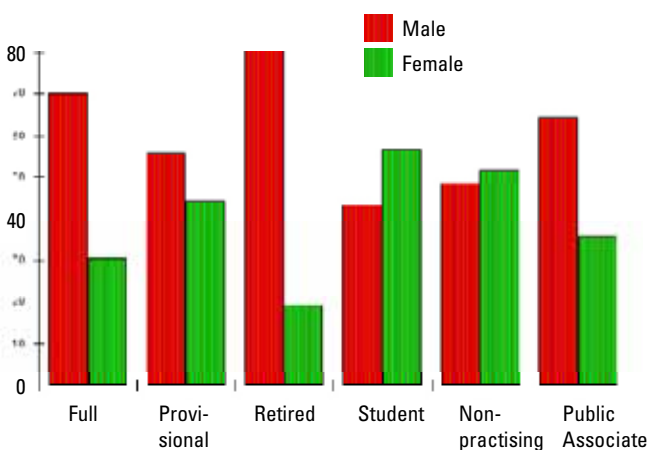
EMPLOYMENT CATEGORY



VOLUNTEER INTERESTS



Membership by Class and Sex (percent)



Employment Category

Category	Members
Ont./Can. Public Service	198
Private Sector	1012
Academia	70
Not-for-Profit	31
Municipality	1131
Other Public Agency	105
Unemployed/Caregiver	25
TOTAL	2,572

Volunteer Interests

Interest	Members
Discipline	71
Districts	296
Examiner/Interviewer	192
Awards/Scholarships	87
Media Spokesperson	46
Membership	68
Membership Outreach	66
Mentoring	223
Policy Development	233
Professional Practice and Development	188
Recognition	58
Sponsoring a Provisional Member	172
TOTAL	1700



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Council's Report (Cont. from page 17)

Committee, led by Vicky Simon, has spent the better part of the year surveying OPPI Full and Provisional members on their continuous professional learning needs. The committee would like to thank the membership for the excellent response—45.3%.

A five-year implementation plan has been developed and will start in 2007 with the yearly launch of frequently requested topics for a courses, such as "Project Management for Planners."

The committee members have also been promoting OPPI's Standards of Practice through a series of articles in the journal, and intensive training workshops on Ethics for Planners and OPPI Standards of Practice. Watch for news of upcoming workshops in your District.

Membership Outreach Committee

The Membership Outreach Committee, led by Amanda Kutler, is looking at the needs of our Student members. Student members and former student members were surveyed, and 55.5% of them responded. The Committee is looking at the results of the survey and will formulate services for students based on the survey results.

The membership outreach committee has also worked with OPPI's Student Delegates Annelly Zonena (past student delegate) and Rachelle Ricotta (current student delegate) on a handbook to help the Delegate and Planning School OPPI Student Reps with their role and responsibilities. The Handbook will be launched in fall 2006 with an orientation session hosted by the Planning School at the University of Waterloo.

The committee will continue this work in 2007, by evaluating current student programs to determine what is working well and what can be improved, and talking to the university planning directors about their perceptions of planning students' needs and whether OPPI is meeting those needs.

Membership Committee

Special thanks to the Membership Committee, led by Ron Keeble for the past four years. The committee members have worked diligently at moving provisional members through the membership process. Tools have been developed to help improve the membership process, such as an on-line membership course, on-line examination A preparation course, and an on-line logging tool.

Each year the number of provisional members moving to full membership grows

and we add new provisional members. We are administering a membership process to 800 to 1,000 provisional members annually. At the same time, the level of volunteer and staff time required to manage the process continues to grow. The administrative requirements of mounting and administering a provisional membership process to 1,000 provisional members can be challenging.

As a result, OPPI has requested a national review of our membership standards and processes. A national initiative is called "the membership continuous improvement project." With the support of all affiliates and CIP, a consultant was hired to undertake a review of CIP membership standards, processes, and examinations. The report and its recommendations are now being reviewed by affiliate and national membership committees and Councils.

In 2007, the Committee will continue the implementation of the multi-year year plan to improve the membership process, which includes further online membership services and courses, and hiring a Registrar on contract to help manage the membership process.

Districts—our point of connection

Central District is working on its restructuring plan, so that four districts will be functioning and represented on OPPI Council by this time next year. The District would like to thank all the membership for their support of the by-law changes to allow this restructuring to take place.

Eastern District has been busy delivering Continuous Professional Learning Workshops. In addition, they have worked with Habitat for Humanity to build OPPI House. They not only raised the necessary funds, they raised the roof for OPPI House in Ottawa.

Southwest District has also been offering continuous professional learning workshops. One event held in June in Brantford on downtown revitalization was prompted by the opening of a Wilfrid Laurier University campus there.

Northern District is working with CMHC to host a Sustainable Communities Workshop.

On behalf of all our volunteers who have participated on Working committees and Districts to support and implement OPPI's strategic plan, we say thank you.

You are OPPI, and we cannot do it without you!

and Regional Planning program attended the workshop, which took place on World Town Planning Day.

The packed house listened to five presentations throughout the day by some of Canada's top urban designers, planners, and developers. Jonathan Westeinde of Windmill Developments inspired everyone with his speech titled "Sustainable Redevelopment: How can we afford not to?" Wendy Carmen, a planner with the City of Kingston, and Yves Bonnardeaux of Baird Simpson Neuert Architects gave a presentation about downtown planning and urban design initiatives, focusing on Kingston's controversial North Block. The afternoon session kicked off with Basil Cavis, from Canada Lands Company and Sudhir Suri from L'OEUF Pearl, Poddubuk Architects, who outlined Montreal's remarkable Benny Farm Redevelopment Project. This presentation was followed by Nelson Edwards from the City of Ottawa who discussed the new City of Ottawa Urban Design Guidelines, illustrating the City's initiative for higher quality developments within the urban area. The workshop closed with a presentation by Rick Hughes, the project manager from Canada Lands Company and Design Consultant Ken Greenberg, who showcased their early concept plan for the Rockcliffe Lands Redevelopment, a picturesque development on the shores of the Ottawa River.

To thank OPPI for generously sponsoring a school bus and registration fees for the students from Queen's University, and in recognition of World Town Planning Day,

the students are donating \$500 to Habitat for Humanity's "Woman's Build" in Ottawa on behalf of OPPI.

Thank you to all the speakers and attendees that made the day a success.

The organizing committee was headed by Eastern District Chair Don Morse as well as Charles Lanktree, Kate Whitford, David Shantz, Natalie Hughes, Michelle Taggart and Pam Whyte.

Michelle Taggart is a second-year master's planning student at Queen's University and Student Representative on the OPPI's Eastern District Executive. She can be reached at 4mat3@qmlink.queensu.ca.

Pam Whyte, MCIP, RPP is a Planner with Delcan Corporation and Membership Outreach Representative on OPPI's Eastern District Executive. She can be reached at p.whyte@delcan.com

Southwest

World Town Planning Day 2006 in Grey County

Scott Taylor

How many of you have dreamed of standing in a poorly lit hall, surrounded by colleagues, all of whom are furiously networking and exchanging business cards? Sound like fun? Fortunately, for planners in

Grey and Bruce Counties, this year's World Town Planning Day proved to be a much more pleasant experience than that. For about 40 planners representing both public and private sectors, the event not only helped increase the awareness of planning in the community but gave practising planners an opportunity to discuss matters of common interest and really get to know one another.

The day began with a welcome and introduction by County Planning Director Janice McDonald. This was followed by a presentation by David Ellingwood, Communications Specialist for Grey Sauble and Saugeen Valley Conservation Authorities and the Municipality of Northern Bruce Peninsula. David spoke about the recently passed *Clean Water Act* (Bill 43) and source water protection. There were lots of questions and everyone gained a better understanding of the issues and timing for moving forward.

Dwayne Evans, a planner with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, gave an excellent presentation on the recently passed *Planning and Conservation Land Statute Amendment Act* (Bill 51). The audience was particularly interested in provisions related to renewable energy.

After consuming the essential staple for any World Town Planning Day event—WTPD Cake—the group felt able to handle a discussion about farm odours related to the new Minimum Distance Separation formulae. County staff provided details of special software created to deal with these issues. Renewable energy and wind in particular proved to be the most popular topics for the roundtable discussions that fol-



David Gordon addresses WTPD workshop

lowed. Developing a natural heritage system, significant woodlands identification and growth management were also discussed.

Mike Sullivan and Brandi Clement wrapped things up by talking about OPPI's restructuring and answering questions on the proposed Continuous Professional Learning program. A public open house session then followed with displays from a number of the participants.

Congratulations to everyone who helped make World Town Planning Day a success.

People

Charles Simon Receives Lifetime Achievement Award

The pioneering environmental work of Guelph-area architect-planner Charles Simon has been recognized with a Green Building Festival Lifetime Achievement Award presented at the second annual Green Building Festival in Toronto early in

November. The Award honours "individuals who have shown leadership, vision and determination in driving market transformation." The GBF is organized by the Green Building Alliance, which includes Sustainable Buildings Canada (responsible for the conference), Toronto Region Conservation Authority, the Toronto chapter of the Canada Green Building Council and the Canadian Urban Institute.

Charles' early green building design and community planning work pre-dates the oil embargo of the 1970s. "It was distinctly counter to the fashion or interest of the times," says Simon, "but fortunately we were able to find enough clients who liked what we were doing. Even if they hadn't expressed an

interest in 'green' ideas I found that it was always possible to incorporate a variety of advanced concepts. But this meant that the buildings had to work and at no extra cost (budgets were usually modest). A great discipline."

Over a period of more than three decades, his projects have run the gamut from small renovations to large building complexes, from neighbourhoods to new cities. These include Canada's first engineered passive solar house (Forster Residence, Arkell), staff housing for Grenville Christian College in Brockville (for many years



Charles Simon

Canada's largest passive solar housing project), a master plan and detailed housing design for the environmentally fragile Toronto Island housing community (with Black and Moffat Architects and the Hough Group Landscape Architects), and a master plan and detailed housing design for a new community near Atlanta, Georgia, which was set in a sensitive landscape and responded to the climatic demands of a hot and humid region.


The pioneering Environmental Learning Centre for the Kitchener-Waterloo YMCA is a unique demonstration of environmental design principles, integrating landscape, buildings, technologies and programs. "It's at the planning scale that we are doing the most damage, but is also where we could do the most good."



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Andrew Pipe Goes Postal*

Philippa Campsie

September's Symposium at the Nottawasaga Inn, "The Shape of Things to Come," was intended to nudge (or, if necessary, wrench) planning and planners in a new direction. For me, the most striking feature of the event was the way in which many of the speakers provided a new vocabulary in which we can talk about what we do, and how we do it.

The keynote speaker and the OPPI's first honorary member, Dr. Andrew Pipe of the University of Ottawa Heart Institute, introduced the story of Dr. John Snow and the Broad Street Pump. During an outbreak of cholera in London in 1854, Dr. Snow mapped the location of cholera cases, and determined that the affected households were getting their water from a single source—the Broad Street Pump. So he dismantled the pump. No more cases of cholera emerged in the district. Later in the day, I heard planners mention the Broad Street Pump, asking, what is its planning equivalent, and how do we dismantle it?

Dr. Pipe also made a memorable comparison between the activity levels of the average Canadian and that of the typical municipal fire hydrant and suggested that planners have regard to the Popsicle test in neighbourhoods—can a child walk to a store, buy a Popsicle and walk home before it melts? Can we design neighbourhoods that meet this test?

Finally, he suggested that change was possible, because in the last 25 years or so, we have successfully "denormalized" smoking. What was once considered normal is now recognized as harmful. Immediately I began to think of other things that deserve to be denormalized because they are harmful, even if most people at present consider them acceptable. Two-hour commutes. Sedentary lifestyles (which one participant inadvertently referred to as "sedimentary lifestyles"—an oddly appropriate Malapropism). Four-car households. The uncritical acceptance of fatal road accidents as an inevitable feature of modern life. The uncritical acceptance of premature deaths from smog. I could go on all day. Dr. Pipe suggested that we need to do now what people in future will wish we had

done, and I can't think of a better way to start than to denormalize pathological lifestyles.

Dr. Riina Bray, a physician, presented abundant evidence of the link between planning and health, but the phrase that stuck in my mind from her talk was the "biophilia factor." This is a fancy way of saying that humans are attracted to other living things. I can think of many ways to apply this insight, starting with PowerPoint slides. People are attracted to speakers who use pictures of humans and landscapes more than those whose visual aids consists solely of bullet points. But it is also worth remembering in planning—we need to denormalize community design in which people cannot see or meet their neighbours, for example.



Dr. Andrew Pipe

Dr. Meric Gertler of the University of Toronto spoke about creative city-regions, and used the phrase "unique territorial assets." Of course, he was talking about the quality of different places around the world, but I can think of other ways to apply this insight at the micro scale, which might be meaningful to local planners. For example, an article in the *Toronto Star* published earlier this year ("Why suburbs will never have tall trees," May 7, 2006) described how new subdivisions are developed—violently graded until not a single topographical feature remains, and then compacted so that trees grow up stunted, if they grow at all. In removing the "unique territorial assets" of a site, we have reduced the possibility of the residents' benefiting from the biophilia factor. Something else that needs denormalizing.

I attended an impressive concurrent session on urban form at which Kevin Eby used the expression "road dieting." I love that. Having fought my way up Highway 400 the night before, I am convinced that it is the most obese expanse of asphalt I have ever encountered (and I've been to Atlanta, so I can speak with some authority here). He further suggested that if multi-car households gave up only one car, the benefits would be noticeable.

Dan Leeming spoke of the "convergence of issues" from climate change to peak oil to

the tripling of mental health problems over the last 20 years. Among many good ideas in his talk, he suggested we reconsider the planning of recreational facilities—the current focus on soccer fields and baseball diamonds leaves out a large proportion of the population with very different recreational needs.

Tim Chadder made a good point that "respecting the community does not mean replicating it." It is too easy to do the "same old same old" in planning, he said, but that doesn't mean it's the right thing to do. Right—let's denormalize the same old same old.

There was more than enough food for thought at Nottawasaga and I am still digesting it. The Broad Street Pump. Popsicle tests. Denormalizing harmful lifestyles. The biophilia factor. Retaining unique territorial assets. Road dieting. Convergence. Respect without replication. Could this be the new vocabulary of planning?

Philippa Campsie is deputy editor of the Journal. She would like to hear from other participants at the Symposium who attended other sessions and may have heard other useful new expressions that planners can consider.

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*Pipe Goes Postal—he didn't get mad at planners, far from it. In fact he reminded us how useful the common postal code can be to de-code a community's socio-economic DNA. By matching postal codes with Statscan data, Dr Pipe can get a good idea about a person's income, social status, whether he or she lives in a place that is walkable or requires a car to get around, and many other useful pointers.

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Ron Keeble Recipient of Member Service Award!

Ron Keeble has been membership chair since September 2002 and during this time, the membership process has been improved and updated. Under his leadership, OPPI introduced the web-based log-on-line feature, examiner training workshops, web-based Exam A preparation workshops, and new forms of membership courses, including an on-line version. Ron also helped implement by-law changes to align OPPI with national membership standards, making the necessary changes to support professional liability insurance, developing new membership criteria, clarifying the requirements for retired membership, opening up the student membership category to students outside recognized planning schools, and creating a fee structure for non-practising Full and Provisional members. In addition to hours spent answering questions from members, Ron has travelled around the province to orient new district chairs and committee members about the membership process.



Martin Rendl, Lee Ann Doyle, Janet Amos, Ron Keeble receive Member Service Award



Mike Sullivan with some satisfied golfers



Gary Davidson and Annelly Zonena



Kevin Eby and Excellence in Planning Award team



Gary Davidson, Kevin Eby, Terry Butilier and Excellence in Planning Award team



Speaker panelists are thanked



Networking at the symposium



Gary Davidson, Mary Lou Tanner and Excellence in Planning Award team



Identifying the origin of apples handed out at the lunch stumped most participants



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Editorial

Twenty One Years and Counting— Ontario Planning Journal at 125 Issues

Glenn Miller


This is issue No. 125 of the Ontario Planning Journal. To gauge what this means relative to the real world, we went back to issue No. 1. Interesting stuff. The cover story was written in anticipation of OPPI's inaugural meeting. Hardly the Founding Fathers, but important in the life of an organization like OPPI. There was also a fascinating piece by Mitchell Cohen on airport planning, written long before Pearson began its massive transformation. There was a letter from a long-time member of CIP to OPPI's first president, John Livey, announcing his resignation from the Institute because he was no longer willing to wait for improved levels of service. How times have changed. Jeff Celentano was the Northern editor, and, as luck would have it, he has returned to this role more than 20 years later. That's staying power. John Farrow's first article on Management went through a "check list for managers"—he has promised to return to this topic in the first issue of the New Year. New members welcomed to the fold include Dan Leeming, who has gone on to become a regular contributor to the



Issue No. 1

Ontario Planning Journal. Macaulay Shiomi Howson Ltd announced the firm's rebranding to include Liz Howson's name. Publications available from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (no Housing !) included "MainStreet Planning and Design Guidelines" and "Towards Planning for an Aging Society." Articles in this issue continue those themes. There was also a plea from Toronto architect, Elizabeth Davidson, that the University of Toronto reconsider a decision to close its School of Architecture. More than 20 years later, the school is thriving. Hard to imagine what was on the minds of the university to even consider such a move. And the first editorial concludes: "You'll have to let us know how well you think the publication meets your needs." Couldn't have said it better myself.


Glenn R. Miller, FCIP, RPP, is the founding 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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St Louis Fights Back

Paul Bedford



Former Toronto planner Rollin Stanley speaks to students

This is the conclusion of an article describing the challenges of “managing decline” in St Louis that appeared in the September/October issue.

St Louis, with major help from the federal government and the state, recently invested nearly half a billion dollars in transit. Can you imagine the Canadian government providing this level of funding to the TTC or the proposed new Greater Toronto Transit Authority? Perhaps if the Greater Toronto community was also willing to levy a regional sales tax dedicated to transit development, the federal and provincial governments just might be willing to come on board. Regional cooperation is absolutely essential to show the senior governments that the GTA is prepared to act instead of just talk.

Another success story is the development of a Regional Green Rivers system of trails,

open spaces, bikeways, trails and pedestrian linkages to connect communities and bring about an increased appreciation of green networks in the metropolitan region. This initiative was championed by the largest of St. Louis's 150 foundations which collectively spend vast sums of money on a host of municipal causes. The Danforth Foundation led the charge for a 1/10th of one cent regional tax, drafted the legislation and promoted the referendum in all cities within both Missouri and Illinois. It has achieved a great deal in what to date has been a region in decline.

The role of foundations is also critical to the restoration and maintenance of two of the largest parks in St. Louis. Forest Park, which contains 1,300 acres and which was the site of the 1904 St. Louis World's Fair, was totally restored to its original grandeur with \$100 million raised by the Friends of Forest Park Forever. The park continues to be privately maintained, but is publicly accessible to everyone.

Reflections and Lasting Impressions

In order to counter the decline of St. Louis over the last 40+ years, there seems to have been a desire to experiment with big ideas. Some were successful, but many were not. Construction of the 630-foot-high Gateway Arch on the Mississippi riverfront

in 1964 and the development of Busch Stadium in downtown certainly helped to create a new identity for the city and brought residents and tourists into the downtown core.

However, the infamous Pruitt-Igoe cluster of highrise public housing towers on the north side of downtown has been demolished. Other experiments to rescue the downtown included the development of St. Louis Centre, which was a suburban multi-storey shopping mall inserted into the heart of the city, and massive above-grade parking garages throughout the core. The mall did not succeed and is now virtually empty. It is slated to undergo partial demolition and a complete rethink. The latest big idea was the development of a major casino on the riverfront. It is isolated and surrounded by parking and appears to be populated by people on limited incomes. I think it is important to recognize that many of these ideas tended to be all about bringing the suburbs to the downtown. I believe the best opportunities for the downtown's recovery remain in its rich stock of heritage buildings and the historic role of the city as a vibrant riverfront community. This is what is special and unique. As more and more people move back to live in the core, I think this is what will define its future. Because of this, I am concerned about two new big ideas now under study.

The Arch attracts about three million visitors per year, but most visitors do not venture into the adjacent downtown. A feasibility study is under way to determine whether to deck over the existing Interstate highway that runs in an open trench and create a green pedestrian linkage between the riverfront and the downtown. It has been called the “Arch Connector.” To be funded it has to be real, functional, doable, safe and, above all, be a catalyst for change. There is a need to carefully test the range of solutions against these criteria. The outcome of this process will be known by the end of 2006.

Another big idea under study is the development of floating islands in the Mississippi River, complete with restaurants and tourist attractions. The concept is under serious investigation with a targeted

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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completion date of 2014 to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Gateway Arch. This concept seems to have public support, but I have doubts about the merit of inserting artificial islands into an historic and natural riverfront.

What are the lessons that we took home?

Although our visit was short, Rollin Stanley gave our group many insights into the city. The combination of briefings, a riverboat tour, a half-day bus tour, a 20-kilometer bike tour and lots of walking allowed us to blanket much of the city. Perhaps what hits you most is the incredible disparity between very rich and very poor, often in areas that are side by side. There is a lot of wealth generated in St. Louis by major corporations who have their world headquarters there. While the local foundations spend vast sums of money in many fields such as health care, the arts, transportation and open space initiatives to improve the quality of life, there is still so much to do. The essentials of daily life are absent in so many neighbourhoods and the challenges of community building are enormous. Tackling severe poverty as a broad city-wide goal would be a very powerful theme. Given the magnitude of need, targeting available financial resources to rebuilding neighbourhoods in need and reinvesting in their public realm would seem to be more critical to the overall health of the city than spending large sums of money on single-purpose ideas, but this is clearly a question that only the people of St. Louis can answer.

I came away with a new appreciation of what U.S. cities can teach Canadian planners who are experiencing decline in their cities. We clearly do not have all the answers! A completely different mindset is needed to make planning work in declining environments. Without economics, nothing happens. Perhaps St. Louis best illustrates that the passion, energy and enthusiasm of a planning director really matters and can make a difference. It really matters here too.

Paul Bedford, FCIP, RPP, is contributing editor for Planning Futures. He is an urban mentor, providing advice on planning issues. He is a frequent speaker, and teaches at the University of Toronto and York University. He also serves on the National Capital Commission Advisory Committee and Toronto's Waterfront Design Review Panel.

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First Steps Towards EA Reform

Steven Rowe



EAs for Highway like the 407 will need approval of terms of reference before beginning the process

The Ontario Ministry of the Environment has posted draft guidance documents for various aspects of environmental assessment (EA) on the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry for review and comment. The draft "Codes of Practice" on public consultation, mediation, and preparing Terms of Reference, as well as a draft "Guide" on Federal-Provincial EA coordination, will eventually provide the first written guidance to proponents on Provincial EA since changes were made to the *Environmental Assessment Act* in 1997. The deadline for comments on all of these documents is January 29, 2007.

These materials form part of an EA reform package announced by Minister Broten in June. This "Path Forward" is her response to the Report of the Minister's Environmental Assessment Advisory Panel, which was featured in the May/June 2005 issue of the Ontario Planning Journal.

Other "Path Forward" commitments include:

- Codes of Practice on preparing Individual and Class Environmental Assessments
- Review of Class EAs to ensure an appropriate level of assessment

- EA training and education
- A comprehensive EA website
- Integration of EA with other planning processes, including coordination with Federal EA
- A requirement for proponents to adhere to workplans and schedules
- Protocols with other ministries and agencies to streamline government reviews of EAs
- A provincial EA facilitator
- Delegation of decisions on "bump up" requests for Class EAs and the Electricity Regulation from the Minister to the Director
- A shorter EA process for transit projects
- Revisions to Regulation 116/01 (requirements for electricity projects)
- A new EA regulation setting out requirements for waste management projects.

The Minister's proposals will fill important gaps in the regulatory framework and guidance for EA, and are intended to reduce delay and duplication. This is not, however, the wide-ranging reform that the Executive of the Advisory Panel recommended. There is no restructuring of EA based on common principles (although the scope of the Class



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EA review is as yet unknown), no participant funding, no enhanced role for the Environmental Review Tribunal, no provincial advisory body and no mention of improvements to monitoring and compliance. The proposals relate more closely to the recommendations generated by the three sector panels (waste, transportation and energy).

The issue that had perhaps the broadest support among Panel members, proponents and public interest groups was the need to reform the “bump-up” process for Class EA and electricity projects. The Panel recommended a formal adjudicative process administered by the Environmental Review Tribunal, however the “Path Forward” proposal is simply to prevent Director’s decisions on bump-ups from being appealed to the Minister.

The draft Consultation, Mediation and Terms of Reference Codes of Practice are revised versions of draft guidelines that were released for consultation in 2000. The following comments on these and the Federal/Provincial Guide are by no means comprehensive, and simply highlight some features that may be of interest to practitioners.

Code of Practice: Preparing and Reviewing Terms of Reference for Environmental Assessments in Ontario

The EA Act requires Terms of Reference (TOR) to be approved by the Minister before a proponent can prepare an “individual” EA or a parent Class EA. This Code of Practice deals with TORs for individual EAs, which tend to be for larger projects such as landfill sites, waste incinerators and new 400-series highways. While the term “Code of Practice” suggests a highly prescriptive document, the Code does not attempt to provide the proponent with a “checklist” of features that will automatically lead to approval. At the same time, Section 42 of the EA Act provides that a regulation can adopt a “code” by reference and require that it be complied with.

The Code focuses on procedure, and documents a number of the features found in recently approved TORs. It confirms the practice of allowing planning work that “focuses” the range of alternatives to be undertaken and the scope of work before commencement of the EA, as provided for by changes to the EA Act in 1997.

Interestingly, the definition of the “Government Review Team” that contributes comments to the formal government review of the Terms of Reference and the EA now includes conservation authorities and municipalities. These agencies can con-

tribute an important local perspective, but they have not traditionally been included in that inner circle.

If approval for a project is sought under several pieces of legislation including the *EA Act*, the Code encourages proponents to submit documentation that fulfils all applicable requirements. At present the regulatory framework actually discourages such an approach. Proponents can take advantage of Regulations that remove hearing opportunities for technical approvals related to EA projects. They can withhold information required to meet technical approval requirements until after an EA process has been completed, thereby limiting review, consultation and the potential for hearings on project details. The Minister's Panel recommended that these Regulations be repealed, but this was not proposed in the "Path Forward."

Information required for *Planning Act* approvals of EA projects can readily be incorporated into EA documentation—in fact the Code specifies official plans, the Provincial Policy Statement and Growth Plans as documents to be considered in preparing TORs. This appears to be in response to a Panel recommendation for closer integration of EA with provincial policy.

Code of Practice: Consultation in Ontario's Environmental Assessment Process

The 1997 changes to the *EA Act* confirmed the already accepted practice of requiring consultation as part of EA.

The expectations for consultation have changed over the years—in the 1987 guideline, "affected parties have the responsibility to share in a cooperative search for the best solution." The new draft describes "participation" as an approach to consultation, but the requirements relate more to providing information and identifying and addressing concerns than collaborative decision making. This is, perhaps, a reflection of the combative nature of many EA processes.

The Code reviews consultation requirements for Class EAs and the Environmental Screening Process for electricity projects, and suggests that the minimum requirements set out in those documents be enhanced by applying its principles and recommended activities to these processes.

Code of Practice: The Use of Mediation in Ontario's Environmental Assessment Process

The concept of mediation as a formal part of an EA process was introduced with the 1997 changes to the Act, but the Minister's

Review Panel Report notes that the provisions enabling the Minister to refer a matter for mediation have not been invoked to date. This is attributed to lack of guidance on the subject, and perhaps this Code will help bring alternative dispute resolution and mediation into the EA mainstream.

The Minister can refer a matter to mediation in relation to disputes over TORs, individual EAs, and "bump-up" requests for Class EA projects. Mediation can also be "self-directed," that is, independent of the formal EA process.

The mediation process is confidential and voluntary, and the mediator cannot impose a settlement on the parties.

Federal/Provincial Environmental Assessment Cooperation: A Guide for Proponents and the Public

In 2004, the Federal and Ontario Ministers of the Environment signed a "Canada-Ontario Agreement on Environmental Assessment Coordination." This draft Guide has been developed to help proponents and the public to understand how Canada and Ontario are applying the principles in the agreement. It sets out proce-

dures for the coordination of the differing requirements of screenings under the Canadian *Environmental Assessment Act*, and individual EAs, Class EAs and electricity screenings under the Ontario *Environmental Assessment Act*. It does not provide guidance on coordination with federal EAs other than screenings (comprehensive studies, mediations and panel reviews).

The "lead party" in a coordinated EA is usually the Environmental Assessment and Approvals Branch of the Ontario Ministry of the Environment, which establishes a "Joint Assessment Committee" to generate a work plan and coordinate input. The proponent is expected to produce a single body of documentation on environmental effects, sufficient to enable both federal and provincial agencies to discharge their mandates.

The Reform Process Unfolds

These documents range between 40 and 70 pages, and there is a danger that they may add to the EA intimidation factor for some readers. They are mostly clear and well written, however, and they shed light on practices and procedures that were formerly



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discovered only through working directly with an EA process. The release of these drafts also provides an opportunity for comment on the way the legislation is being interpreted and applied today, although the general approach as set out in the "Path Forward" now appears to have been established.

Interested readers are encouraged to review and provide their comments on these EBR postings, and to check the Environmental Bill of Rights Registry over the coming weeks for further postings including draft codes of practice, draft revisions to the Electricity Regulation, and a draft of the proposed waste regulation.

Steven Rowe, MCIP, RPP, is Principal of Steven Rowe Environmental Planner. He is contributing editor to the Ontario Planning Journal on the environment, and he chaired the "Energy Sector Table" of the Minister of the Environment's Environmental Assessment Advisory Panel.

Visit www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/news/2006/060601at.htm for more information on these materials.

Sustainability

There's No Place Like Home: The Link Between Housing Quality and Children's Health

Carla Guerrero and Fanis Grammenos

It stands to reason that good housing quality should foster well-being, but until recently, the relationship between residential environments and mental health had not been formally examined in Canada.

A CMHC-funded study looked at how the emotional health of a group of Canadian children varied with the physical quality and form of their housing. The study found that housing and neighbourhood quality had significant associations with behaviour problems in children. In fact, the correlation was striking. The analysis showed that housing and neighbourhood quality accounted for about an eighth of the observed variance in children's behaviour problems—an effect that is noteworthy given the large number of factors influencing child behaviour and emotional health.

Assessing both housing and neighbourhood quality
Children from two medium-sized Canadian cities were recruited for the study, which rated the children's homes and neighbour-

hoods based on hundreds of variables, including cleanliness, clutter, cracks, water damage, odours, litter, sidewalk condition and general state of repair of neighbouring houses. One parent from each home was interviewed about various other physical aspects of the residence,

including traffic and noise levels, whether the neighbourhood seemed safe, how close the nearby playground and school were, and whether the family interacted often with neighbours. Children's state of emotional health was determined



Kids are vulnerable

through a peer-reviewed questionnaire administered to parents and teachers.

The importance of good housing and solid neighbourhoods

In every case, children who lived in homes and neighbourhoods with more physical problems were less well-adjusted than those who lived in better residential environments.

An in-depth analysis of neighbourhood conditions—street width, traffic flow, litter and sidewalk maintenance, among others—revealed that parental concerns about traffic, noise pollution and crime were significantly or

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strongly correlated with children's emotional health. Noise pollution and traffic showed the greatest correlation with children's behaviour problems, while noise pollution was the most significant factor affecting parents' emotional well-being.

Lessons for planners

The study has important implications for urban planners and offered numerous suggestions for practitioners designing new or redeveloped neighbourhoods.

a) Traffic control

As a result of the relationship between children's behaviour problems and traffic, planners need to look at ways of creating more low-traffic streets.

Traffic-calming devices, including restricted access to neighbourhood streets, closures, narrowing and speed bumps, were among the recommended measures. The study also recommended redesigning busy streets into urban boulevards with wide, treed sidewalks, benches and other amenities that would allow children to have safe access to the area outside their front doors and ease the fears of parents. Ultimately, busy streets and heavy traffic are not only a problem because of their proximity to residences, but also because they act as bar-

riers to parks, playgrounds and other amenities when they separate local residents from these destinations. Neighbourhood design should therefore be based on the assumption that pedestrians will be the main users of the street.

b) Noise pollution

More than two-thirds of the parents in the study said they were bothered by noise at least once a week, and noise pollution was correlated with children's behaviour problems and with parents' emotional stress and satisfaction with the neighbourhood. These findings are consistent with other studies that emphasize the importance of acoustic comfort and well-being in urban spaces. It is therefore important that planners consider noise abatement when designing neighbourhoods. Some noise reduction can be accomplished at the architectural level; solutions such as double-glazed windows, building shape and orientation can reduce indoor noise levels. But architectural solutions do not mitigate the negative effects of noise outdoors. Neighbourhood design should focus on traffic reduction, the study says. Compact, mixed-use communities require fewer short car trips, translating into less noise and air pollution. Integrating bicycle networks into new and

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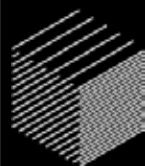
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existing neighbourhoods multiplies the benefits of compact development.

c) Crime and security

A parent's perception that the home was not safe from burglars or that it was not safe to be outdoors in the neighbourhood at night was strongly correlated with more behaviour problems in children. Both these perceptions and the associated behaviour problems were correlated with parents' fears of allowing their child outside during the day. Moreover, the parents' own emotional health was strongly related to their concerns about neighbourhood crime.

Planners and designers can contribute to neighbourhood crime prevention by designing secure neighbourhood spaces. These include designs in which all spaces are perceived to be under someone's territorial influence, homes and yards that are easily made more personal, designs that allow easy surveillance of public spaces by residents through careful placement of windows, and ensuring that developments and buildings are not too isolated so as not to create ghettos.

To help address parents' security concerns, designers should seek to carefully control the design of residences on major streets and to provide affordable housing on smaller connected streets. These streets should be well-lit and treed, with small buildings and green areas that can be easily maintained by residents. Basic amenities should be located nearby to reduce the need for short car trips and to encourage walking, which not only fosters social interaction among pedestrian-neighbours and familiarization with the neighbourhood, but also promotes better health. Since parents who felt insecure tended to restrict their children's mobility, the study results suggest that a place for children to play outdoors where parents can easily watch from the house would help reduce parents' worries and support children's autonomous mobility.

A new understanding

The study adds a new dimension to our understanding of emotional health in children. Most studies of children's behaviour problems focus on social factors. Although it is hardly surprising that such problems might also be related to shortcomings in a person's physical environment, the study lends support to the possibility that children's residential settings, when they are substandard, have their own unfortunate effect on mental health.

For more information or to obtain a copy of this report, please call Carla Guerrero, MCIP, RPP, at 416 218-3378 or cguerrer@cmhc.ca. Carla is the contributing editor for the Sustainability column. She is a senior researcher with CMHC.

Ontario Municipal Board

Detailed Analysis of Hogg's Hollow Variances

Peter Nikolakakos

Three years after Freddy and Wendy DeGasperis made an application for several minor variances, the Ontario Municipal Board provided some closure on what has been essentially a forensic review of what constitutes a minor variance.

The DeGasperises submitted an application for several minor variances that would permit the demolition of an existing two-story residential dwelling in Hogg's Hollow, an affluent neighbourhood in Toronto, and the construction of a new two-storey dwelling of approximately 7,871 sq. ft. The variances sought included relief from the height, side yard setback, dwelling length and size of balcony requirements in the Zoning By-law.

The specific variances requested were as follows:

- To permit the maximum dwelling length to be 21.3 m instead of the maximum 16.8 m
- To permit a maximum height of 10.63 m instead of the maximum 8.0 m
- To permit a maximum balcony area of 16.5 sq. m. (front of the home) and 32 sq. m. (rear of the home) instead of the maximum area of 3.8 sq. m.

The City of Toronto Committee of Adjustment originally refused the variances, and the applicants appealed the decision to the Board. The OMB agreed with the applicants and granted the variances. Subsequently, the Board decision was appealed to the Ontario Divisional Court. The Divisional court allowed the appeals, and sent the matter back to the OMB to be heard by a different panel.

The DeGasperis family appealed the City of Toronto's refusal to approve their Site Plan Application, and the matter was consolidated with the Minor Variance hearing.

The Board in its analysis of the issues and variances, reviewed the application of the "four tests" (size and impact, desirability, conformity to the Zoning By-law and the Official Plan) under Section 45(1) of the

Planning Act, and asked "What constitutes minor?" The Board panel suggested that the previous Board decision regarding the same matter focused its decision on the concept of unacceptable adverse impacts versus an application of a mathematical calculation. Referencing *Motisi et al. v Bernardi* (1987), 20 O.M.B.R. 129 and *Vincent v DeGasperis* (2005) 256 D.L.R. (4th) 566, the Board diligently reviewed each variance requested, testing both the unacceptable adverse impact and size concepts and re-applied the four tests on each of the variance requested.

After a thorough review with expert testimony from both the applicant and the appellants, the Board in its disposition concluded that the maximum dwelling length was authorized; the height variance was not authorized and the appeal regarding this matter was dismissed; the front yard balcony variance was authorized; and the rear yard balcony was authorized on the condition that a combination of masonry wall and decorative planters were constructed along the south and west limits of the balcony and that the only access to the balcony is from the master bedroom. The Site Plan application was also approved subject to the relief granted by the Board in its decision. Various conditions were also part of the Board decision applying to architectural, landscape and tree protection plans.

Source: Ontario Municipal Board
Decision/Order No. 1848, Issued June 27, 2006.

OMB Case No.: PL030529

OMB File No.: V030264 and M050120.

OMB Members: S. J. Stefanko and R. G. M. Makuch.

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Design Charrette Tackles Tough Assignments in Alliston

Tom Jensen

Equipped with markers, scales and trace paper, and fuelled by a healthy dose of creative energy (and coffee) a sellout group of over 30 planners and designers took part in this year's day-long Design Charrette at the OPPI Symposium in Alliston. Organized by the Urban Design Working Group, participants took two prototypical sites—one urban brownfield and one exurban greenfield—and prepared detailed community designs based on the application of public health principles. Following in the spirit of the Symposium, the Design Charrette introduced ideas and participation from outside the organization and explored the interaction between planning, design, the environment, technology, socio-economic issues

and public health. Walkability, use of alternative energy sources, diversity of housing types, mix of uses, air quality, transit supportiveness and the preservation of natural features were just some of the principles driving the community designs that were generated over the course of the day. Despite fundamental contextual differences between the two sites and varied approaches taken by the teams, the final designs shared a number of common elements, including community health care facilities, active recreational open space and trail networks.

The two teams that tackled the urban infill site—a former employment land area located on an existing streetcar line and adja-



Karen Hammond leads discussion



A group of designers ponders the next step



Rick Merrill makes a point



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cent to a CN railway line—focused on designing a healthy community providing for lifecycle housing options, live-work opportunities and high quality public open spaces connected to surrounding neighbourhoods and public transit.

The “Boxcar Town” design team, aptly named after the site’s connection to the railway, proposed a number of important design features including a gradient height and density increase from the west to the east of

the site, intensifying development according to proximity to public transit. The team also examined land use options, identifying the opportunity for maintaining existing industrial uses and supporting incubator industrial uses adjacent to the railway to provide community employment opportunities, as well as appropriate sites for seniors’ housing. Taking their design a step further, the Boxcar Town team also explored the three-dimensional implica-

tions of their concept, determining appropriate intensification levels for the site and sculpting the built form on each block of their plan.

The Adaptive Re-Use team focused on connections to the surrounding neighbourhoods through green streets and interconnected passive green spaces. Their design also emphasized the connection to the surrounding arts community by providing new commercial artisan space and interesting public spaces to support exhibitions and educational features on sustainable design. The team also looked at the use of green roofs and geo-thermal power generation in their design.

The two groups working on the greenfield sites emphasized the integration and preservation of existing watercourses, valleylands and woodlots as the basis for a connected greenway system to structure the community into defined neighbourhoods focused on central parks and schools. The greenfield designs also demonstrated a diversity of land uses and housing options to support live-work options and a permeable road systems permitting connectivity throughout the community by a diverse range of road sizes suited to the needs and characteristics of each locale, while supporting automobile, transit, bicycle, and pedestrian uses.

The Urban Design Working Group would like to thank everyone who participated in making the workshop so successful. Each year we have seen the level of response and participation increase, generating a lot of strong ideas, a sense of camaraderie amongst participants and a shared experience that many have said they have benefited from.

The Working Group would also like to thank Dan Leeming for chairing the Design Charrette and providing the sites, as well as Alex Taranu, Ryan Mounsey, Gabe Charles, Moiz Behar, Karen Hammond, Michael Crechiolo, Rick Merrill, Shawna Ginsberg, Christian Huggett and Tom Janzen who helped organize the event and lead the individual design groups.

Tom Jensen works with the Planning Partnership in Toronto.

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