

# ONTARIO Planning JOURNAL

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2007, VOL. 22, NO. 5

## Communicating Sustainability

*Collingwood's initiative*



2007 Annual OPPI  
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Farmers' Markets  
Cash Crops in Cameroon  
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**CONTENTS**

**Cover / 3**

*Sustainability in Collingwood* ..... p.3

**Features / 5**

*Cash Crops in Cameroon* ..... p.5  
*Farmers' Markets and the Greenbelt* ..... p.6  
*Urban Form and Travel Behaviour* ..... p.10  
*Effective Public Participation* ..... p.12

**Districts & People / 15**

*Eastern* ..... p.15  
*People* ..... p.15

**2007 Excellence in Planning Awards / 17**

**Commentary / 26**

*Editorial* ..... p.26  
*Letters* ..... p.20

**OPPI Notebook / 29**

*Better Planning for Healthy Communities* .. p.29

**Departments / 30**

*Transportation* ..... p.30  
*Planning Futures* ..... p.31  
*Environment* ..... p.34  
*Communications* ..... p.38

**In Print / 39**

*Bringing Buildings Back* ..... p.39

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# Uncharted Waters: Communicating Sustainability in Collingwood

Kathy Jeffery, Gordon Russell  
and Nathan Wukasch

**C**IVIC GOVERNANCE works well when there is a civic community marked by an active, public-spirited citizenry, egalitarian political relations and a social fabric of trust and cooperation. The social fabric of the community encourages cooperation. This point is crucial to understanding how management of public resources might be effectively carried out, and why Collingwood seems to be predisposed to emerge as a sustainable community.

## A 30-year journey

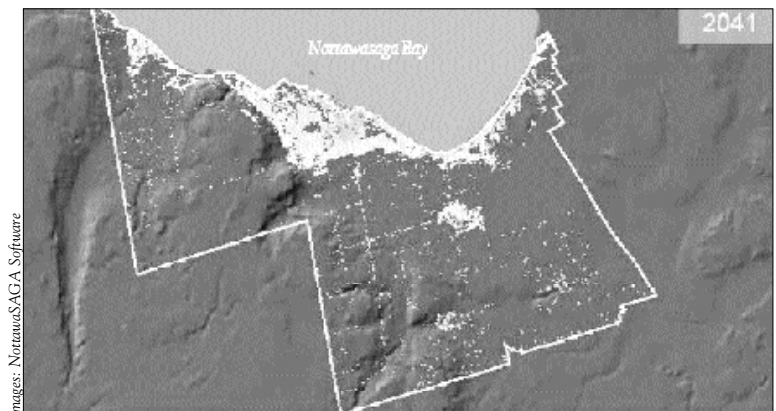
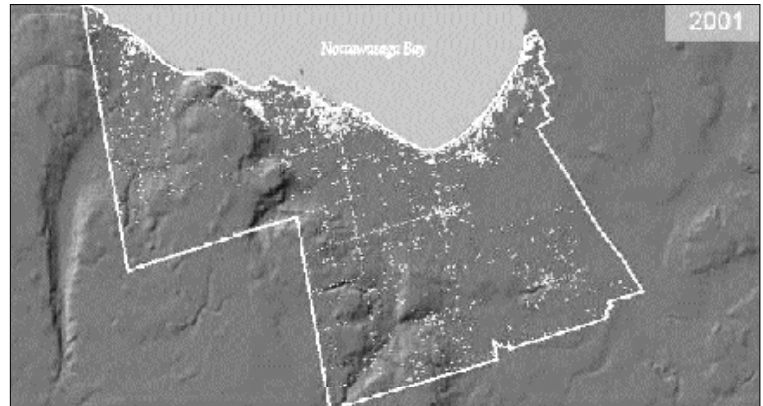
The Town of Collingwood's efforts to become a sustainable community date back 30 years. The journey to sustainability actually began in 1977 with restoration efforts for the harbour—the town's key resource. The Great Lakes International Joint Commission designated the community's harbour, together with 42 other sites, as an Area of Concern. By the mid-1980s the shipyard was no longer operational and a large brownfield site remained on the harbour. The harbour had high levels of phosphorous and other contaminants. Additional contamination problems throughout the watershed that emptied into the harbour also contributed to Collingwood being designated an Area of Concern.

The community created a Remedial Action Plan to restore the harbour, which was successfully delisted in 1994. It was the first of the 43 Areas of Concern to make inroads on the problems that had been identified.

In 1999 the Town of Collingwood formed a community visioning committee called Vision 20/20. The committee worked on goals and objectives for present and future growth management within the Town of Collingwood, which were subsequently incorporated into official plan policy. Council adopted a new official plan in January 2004, which was approved by Simcoe County Council a few months later.

In fall 2004, Collingwood Council undertook a Strategic Planning process that identified six objectives that support the Town's Mission Statement, "To preserve and enhance our unique quality of life in a changing global environment through innovative and responsive government." The six objectives were to:

1. strategically manage our land use and community planning;
2. respect our natural, historical, recreational and cultural environment;
3. generate additional municipal income;
4. develop, maintain and renew our municipal infrastructure;
5. strengthen cooperation of partnerships in areas of common interest;
6. provide services in a fiscally responsible manner.



2001 existing development by density; 2041 projected development by density based on low growth following behavioural current trend

Images: NortanaSAGA Software

## Engaging the public

In summer 2005, Collingwood Council established a Sustainability Committee that included five members of the community and two councillors. Its purpose was to research and develop recommendations to achieve sustainability within the framework of the strategic principles; raise awareness of the need for sustainability and long-term community well-being; foster knowledge and understanding of the sustainability principles to committee members and the general public; encourage public participation; and review the goals and objectives on a regular basis, with emphasis on identifying short-term priorities and achievable long-term goals.

The Sustainability Committee received a Green Municipal Fund Grant from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities to produce a Sustainable Community Plan for the municipality. The plan will be completed by July 2008. The funding requires that the municipality identify action plans and policy changes to implement the actions. The committee decided that a software tool was needed to achieve significant public input into the Sustainable Community Plan. After some research, the Town purchased the MetroQuest software designed by Envision Sustainability Tools in December 2006.

We have found that preparing a sustainable community plan in a small urban municipality is not for the faint of heart, but is a process that all municipalities should be undertaking sooner than later. Council support is essential and staff resources will be tested over and above the pressures of day-to-day operations of a municipality.

### Sustainability beyond municipal boundaries

It became obvious to Council, staff and committee members that management of the quality of life indicators and a strategy to overcome the issues would take more than “navel gazing.” When viewed through the lens of sustainability, and considered in a 40-year context, the Nottawasaga Region shares many resources and interdependencies with the Town of the Blue Mountains, the Township of Clearview and the Town of Wasaga Beach.

To deal successfully with the issues—many of which go beyond municipal boundaries—requires cooperation with neighbouring municipalities. Collingwood therefore decided to engage its neighbours to develop a communication tool that not only provides a regional perspective but which also assists each of the participating municipalities to develop their individual long-range sustainable community plans. More importantly, a collaborative process provides an opportunity to discuss issues of mutual interest to the region as a whole.



Photo: The Town of the Blue Mountains

Silos a symbolic reminder of why collaboration works

### Imagine!

Because most of us, from elected officials and staff to community members, tend to be focused on events and challenges that have a two- to-five-year timeframe, it is difficult to think about issues from a 20-year-plus perspective. The communication tool allows participants to imagine beyond business as usual, using maps and graphs in increments of 10, 20, 30 and 40 years.

Given the significant population growth and development pressures faced by our region, and implications for the resources required to manage those changes, the tool helps to visualize the impact of different levels of decision-making, to see how things will evolve if no sustainable choices, some sustainable choices or many sustainable choices are implemented. This visualization tool creates a unique opportunity for municipal decision makers and community members to come together.

Mike Walsh, with Envision Sustainability Tools, explains “that the software shows users the long-term outcomes of different choices by examining a wide range of indicators. It presents important questions concerning population growth, economic growth, public and private transportation, energy efficiency, air pollution, solid waste reduction, and water conservation.”

Scenarios are displayed using colourful maps and graphs that illustrate the consequences of decisions over four decades. The connections between choices and outcomes demonstrate the integrated nature of issues within a region and allow for

assessment of the desirability of a variety of scenarios.

The methodology uses several engagement techniques, including facilitated workshops and web-based outreach. The approach encourages public dialogue and creates a climate of support and cooperation for strategic regional planning.

### Gathering information

The majority of the information collected to formulate the visual illustrations is derived from Statistics Canada and satellite imagery. A regional perspective (personality) is added to the illustration by incorporating community-specific information, such as information from official plans; population forecasts; water, wastewater and solid waste management capacity; recreational master plans; transportation corridors; heritage districts; and municipal financial and budgeting data. The information also includes interconnected ground, water and air transportation networks, aggregate resources and significant natural heritage features such as the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Niagara Escarpment, wetlands and watersheds.

It is essential to adopt an inclusive approach with adjacent local and upper-tier municipalities and public agencies. In our case this meant four municipalities, two counties, two conservation authorities, and the Niagara Escarpment Commission.

Sustainability will not be achieved by simply producing a document. The involvement and education of the community is the key to

effecting change and ensuring an acceptance of responsibility for the initiatives. Municipal policies to support that community behavioural shift are also critical.

### NottawaSAGA, A Sustainability Epic

The Stakeholder Engagement Plan produced mutually by the Sustainability Committee and the software developers forms the project’s backbone. A regionally configured version of the MetroQuest software connects with and enhances workshop and community events. It is now known as “NottawaSAGA, A Sustainability Epic.” The communication tool will facilitate another chapter of our sustainable evolution, based on the input of a “civic community marked by an active, public spirited citizenry, by egalitarian political relations, by a social fabric of trust and cooperation.”

*Kathy Jeffery is a Councillor with the Town of Collingwood. Gordon H. Russell, MCIP, RPP, is Director, Planning Services with the Town. Nathan Wukasch, MCIP, RPP, is a Senior Planner. Carla Guerrero is the Ontario Planning Journal’s contributing editor for Sustainability. For more information on this initiative, see Gail Krantzberg, “Sustaining the Gains Made in Ecological Restoration: Case Study Collingwood Harbour, Ontario,” Environment, Development and Sustainability, vol. 8, 2006, p. 418.*

# How a Cash Crop Was Born

Letters From Cameroon

Shirley Crockett

In 2004, the government of Cameroon decided to get out of the business of governing. All responsibilities were devolved to the local councils. But, as often happens, the money to implement this policy was not available.

The government maintains local offices in all aspects of governing and you can get expert advice from these office, but at a price. The price is usually too high for most local councils. Although the government has devolved planning responsibilities in general, matters related to grazing, farming parcels, and the actual ownership registry have not been devolved.

Historically, farmer-grazing conflicts have occurred between two very different tribes: the native tribes and the Muslim or nomadic tribes. Across the border in Chad, people have died in the name of protecting their land or animals (whichever side you are on). While Chad's people focus on escaping the encroaching desert, the conflict in Cameroon usually arises during the dry season, when the grazers need to bring their cattle to water and grassy areas. Left unattended, the cattle roam into cultivated areas, destroying fences and crops.

.....

### The loss of grazing lands becomes a source of conflict

.....

The grazers and their cattle confine their movements to within the boundaries of their province and even their municipality. So it is that ancient traditions come up against an issue familiar to planners everywhere: fixed borders, increases in population (both people and cattle), and conflicts with land owners. The loss of grazing lands becomes a source of conflict, dealt with by government-appointed district officers. But even when money is exchanged and promises made, the outcome is often disappointment and frustration all round.

An alternative approach that shows promise is for the parties to deal take their complaints to the local Community Relations Officer, whose job it is to resolve

conflicts. If this step fails, the next one is to arrange a meeting with the mayor, whose decisions as an elected official are usually respected.

But one-off solutions do not address the fundamental issue of shrinking amounts of grazing land. At a recent local meeting, the leaders of the grazer tribes were given two options. The first was for the grazers to actually become farmers in order to sustain their cattle. This did not go over very well. But the second option proved to be more to their liking.

It was suggested that the grazers pay the farmers to grow food that they need during the dry season such as corn and alfalfa – a classic example of demand meeting supply. This would permit grazers to keep their cat-

tle closer to home and spend their time improving the local pasture lands with the help of local agricultural experts, by growing bracharia (a grass that doesn't dry out) and removing bracken and ferns. It could be the beginning of a meaningful friendship between tribes, as well as a profitable cottage industry, but more importantly—it could help get both the farmers and the grazers out of the poverty cycle.

*Shirley Crockett, MCIP, RPP, and her husband Alan Buck have prepared four master plans for councils in Cameroon, as well as other communities, for the Canadian Executive Services Organization (CESO, ceso-saco.com). They can be reached at crockettandbuck@yahoo.ca.*



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# Farmers' Markets and the Greenbelt

Farmers Ill Prepared for Market

David Gurin



Farmers know how to have fun

Almost two-thirds of the Greenbelt is farmland, and preservation of this “peri-urban” (close to the city) agriculture is essential to the success of the Greenbelt Plan. Farmers’ markets provide income that can help farmers stay on the land, and the number of farmers’ markets in Ontario (and all North America) has been increasing in recent years. This trend stems from greater health and environmental consciousness, like that which has propelled the organic food business to enormous yearly gains. But unlike organics, which can be imported from anywhere on the globe, farmers’ markets are by definition local. And in a global supermarket society, farmers’ markets need nurturing.

Canadian agricultural policy favours large producers who export bulk commodities through the international food supply chain.

Farmers’ markets are not the places to sell the products of monoculture; a diversity of crops is needed for market success. For a farmer who has invested in equipment for feed corn and soybeans, diversifying may represent a significant economic decision. Even among those already growing suitable crops, there is a reluctance to sell directly to consumers, because most farmers are not accustomed to doing direct marketing to customers. In recent years, they have worked through corporate buyers and processors.

## The benefits of farmers’ markets

The focus on exports misses opportunities to feed the population at home. In Ontario in 2005, there was a food trade deficit of more than \$4 billion. Of the province’s rapidly increasing organic food purchases, about 85% are imported. Farmers’ markets exist outside

this global exchange. They are part of a local food supply chain that gets far less official encouragement than agriculture for export. This relative neglect, combined with the aging of farmers and the fact that their children are not entering the family business, results in a scarcity of Ontario growers with suitable products and willingness to sell directly to consumers.

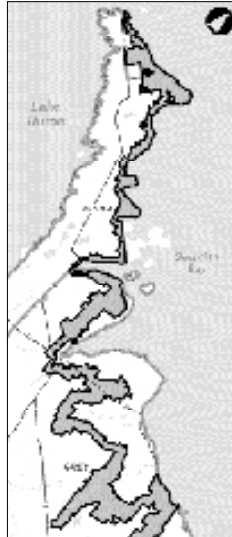
The option to avoid dealing with packers, shippers and brokers, the advantages of cash sales and immediate payment, and control over prices would seem to be obvious benefits of farmers’ markets, yet many farmers still hesitate. But a new way of thinking is gradually taking shape as the attractiveness of farmers’ markets becomes more evident.

Each farmers’ market must be predicated on producing income for participating farmers, but the markets also have numerous public policy benefits: they promote nutrition and health, foster urban-rural dialogue, preserve a working landscape and educate the populace about food. Financial success for farmers is most probable at markets located in middle- or upper-income neighbourhoods, but vendors can also succeed in lower-income areas (especially if there is a food subsidy program, as in the United States).

## Organizing farmers’ markets

Most Ontario farmers’ markets are organized by vendors’ associations and community organizations. An experienced market manager is essential to administer the market according to rules the vendors and community agree on. The markets are popular events in their communities; customers tend to be satisfied regulars who are drawn by the fresh quality of the produce.

Market gardening or animal husbandry on a small scale describes the typical work of farmers who sell at the markets. Some add value by using what they have grown to make baked goods, cheese, sausages or other products. Farmers who make the adjustment to selling directly to consumers can thrive at the markets and may participate in two or



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more, sometimes through cooperative arrangements with other farmers. They also sell at farm stands or through Community Shared Agriculture (weekly deliveries to urban residents). Combining various forms of direct sales can add up to a reasonable return for farmers.

The markets' membership organization is Farmers' Markets Ontario, which provides insurance, advice on starting markets and other services, but does not govern the markets. Each Ontario farmers' market is independent; by contrast, Greenmarket in New York City is a network with central control. For permission to sell at any market in New York, farmers must apply to the Greenmarket office, which sets rules and fees. Data on the farmers and their sales are compiled and transformed into frequent press releases that generate publicity and high sales volumes.

Farms of 20 acres or less, even a single acre, can produce diverse crops for a market season. Market sales can help ensure the future of Greenbelt farms. But not all vendors at a market are selling their own produce; some are not farmers at all, but resellers of products bought at the Ontario Food Terminal. This creates uncertainty in the minds of customers, which could be eliminated by permitting only

farmers registered by the Ontario government to participate in the markets. In California, farm certification, equivalent to registration in Ontario, is required to sell in the markets and New York's Greenmarket attempts to be producer-only.

The problem can at least be mitigated by signs that clearly tell where the produce was grown. Some farmers have suggested legislation for a producer-only rule at markets, but that might be difficult to enact, as the markets are complex: some allow imported products in order to stay open all year; many have non-farmer vendors of processed or prepared food. Any market on its own can enforce a producer-only rule.

#### Training consumers and producers

An obstacle to bringing more Ontario consumers to farmers' markets is that seasonality has disappeared from the well-stocked bins and shelves of our supermarkets and from the minds of many shoppers. Knowledge of the fruits and vegetables of the season, once taken for granted, now needs to be retaught. Some agricultural education for city-dwellers is necessary for expansion of the role of farmers' markets in their shopping habits.

The syllabus for that education might be

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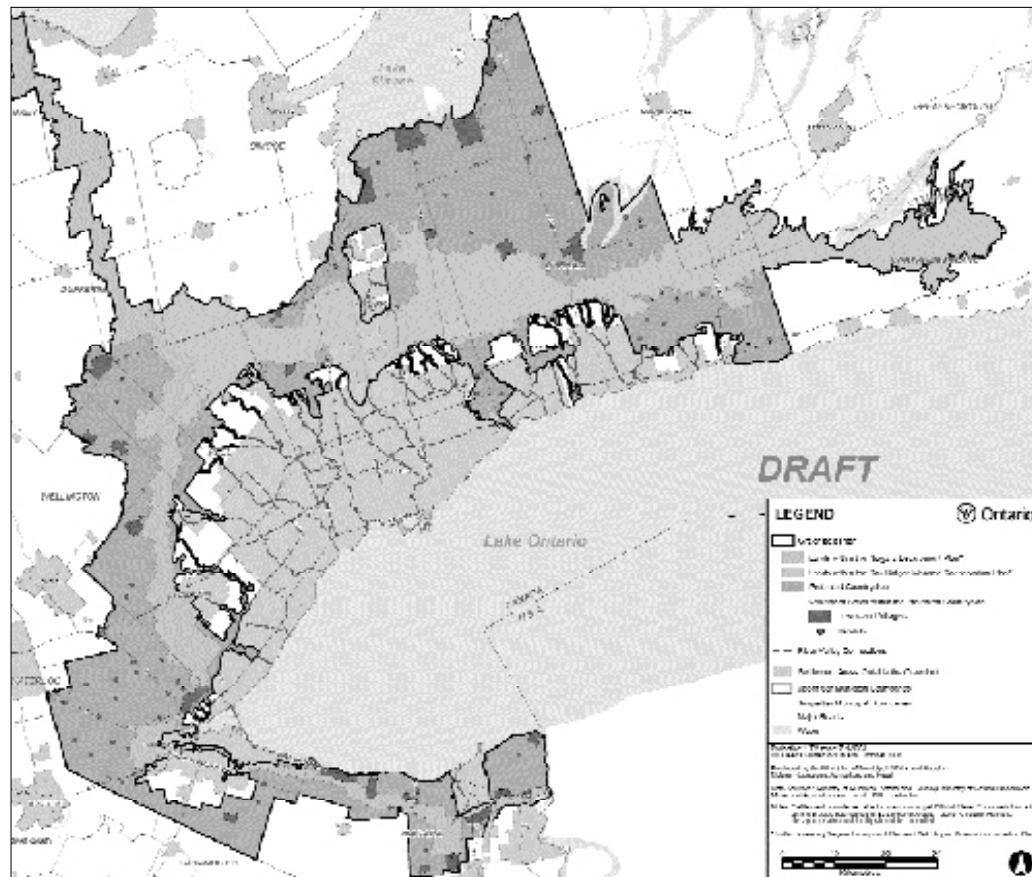
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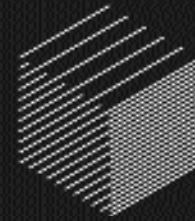
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the principles of the “slow food” movement, which opposes the standardization of taste, defends local food and gastronomic traditions, and promotes biodiversity. The movement connects the pleasure of food with awareness of how we get it and our responsibility to those who get it for us. For farmers’ markets, the public relations task is to make “local” the new “organic”—to advocate for food grown locally by sustainable methods.

The Ecological Farmers Association of Ontario (EFAO) and Canadian Organic Growers (COG) mentor farmers who are already practising sustainable agriculture and those who wish to convert from conventional farming to more sustainable methods. Because older farmers are retiring, new young farmers need to be trained. The Future Farmers Intern Program at Everdale Farm and 10 other farms in CRAFT Ontario (Collaborative Regional Alliance for Farmer Training) train young people in sustainable methods. Their graduates can increase the ranks of farmers’ markets participants. The success of these sustainable farmers could be made more certain if low-rent land is provided to them by conservation authorities, which have considerable reserves of agricultural land.

### Policy support and benchmarks


Support for farmers’ markets should be included in regional and municipal official plans. More important, official plans and zoning should support working farms in peri-urban areas, in conformance with the Greenbelt Plan. Encouragement from elected officials is vital to eliminating bureaucratic obstacles from new market development.

Mayor David Miller has said, “Farmers markets are a wonderful part of our urban fabric. For example, the City Hall Farmers Market on Nathan Phillips Square brings fresh produce to all of the people of Toronto.” Schoolyards can be good sites for markets, and Sheila Ward, chair of the Toronto District School Board, said “[farmers’ markets] sound like an excellent program . . . the kind I would be happy to support.”

Measuring the results of farmers’ markets

in terms of acres of preservation of farmland is difficult because of the many variables involved. But it is possible to measure the reduction in “food-miles” achieved by replacing imported food with local food. The consequent reductions in fuel use and greenhouse gas emissions can also be measured. These quantities, periodically measured, along with sample surveys of farmers’ market participation, could be benchmarks of progress.

*David Gurin is a consultant based in Toronto. He is the former commissioner of planning for Metro Toronto. This article is extracted from a report commissioned by the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation. For the full text and recommendations, visit [www.ourgreenbelt.ca](http://www.ourgreenbelt.ca).*



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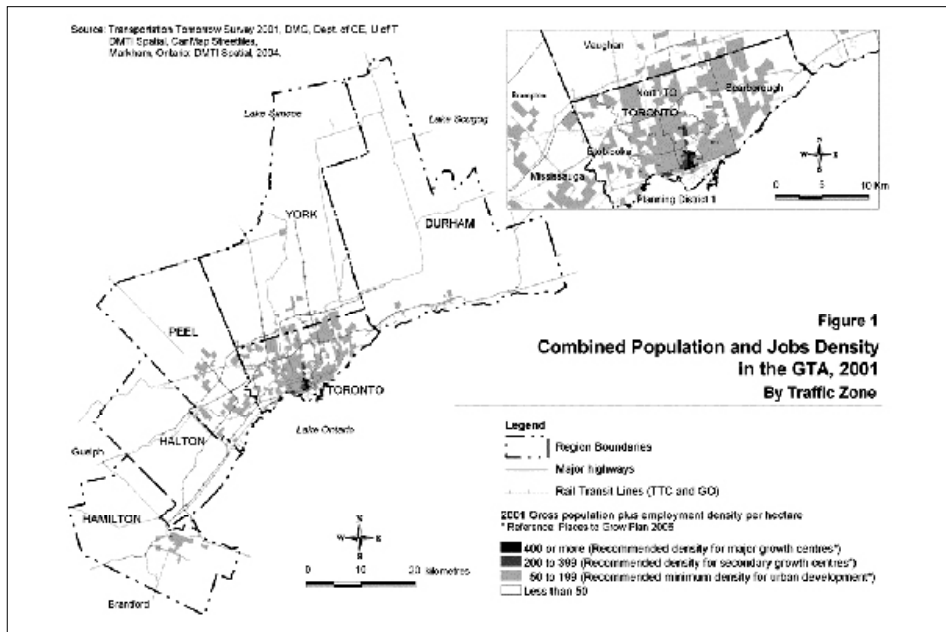
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# Have Urban Form and Travel Behaviour Changed in the GTA?

Commuters Behaving Badly

Raktim Mitra and David L.A. Gordon



The late 1990s were not a good period for Smart Growth in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) according to an analysis of the Transportation Tomorrow Survey (TTS). This is one of the most detailed urban travel databases in North America, maintained by the Joint Program in Transportation, at the University of Toronto. About five percent of the population in the GTA is surveyed every five years to obtain data on travel behaviour and some key urban form variables.

In 2000, the Neptis Foundation conducted detailed research on the 1986-1996 TTS and population census data, which demon-

strated that the GTA was spreading out at low densities and becoming increasingly auto-dependent.

## Bad news and good news

My analysis of the 2001 TTS data indicates that these trends worsened in the 1996-2001 period. The GTA regions saw more dispersed suburban population and employment growth, mostly following new 400-series expressways. The modal share of transit declined from 16% to 13% between 1986 and 1996, and had dropped to 12% by 2001. The spatial flow of trips has become more complex, with increased trip lengths

and more suburban-to-suburban and city-to-suburban trips.

There were, however, a few small glimmers of hope. Jobs-housing balance has improved somewhat in Toronto's newer suburbs and in York Region, and suburban densities have increased in some cases, as shown in research by David Gordon. GO Transit ridership and mode share increased slightly, as did walking to work in Toronto and Hamilton. But there is no doubt that most of the trends from 1986-2001 were heading in the opposite direction of Smart Growth and sustainable development.

## Policy implications are sobering

The policy implications of the 2001 urban growth pattern are sobering. In 2001, very few neighbourhoods in the 905 met the combined population and employment density targets set in Ontario's Places to Grow Plan, 2006. These gross density targets appear to be higher than those supported by market conditions, so a substantial change in consumer behaviour is needed to meet the provincial targets.

Our first indications of current trends will emerge over the next year as the detailed 2006 census results trickle in. Early indications are that Toronto's extraordinary boom in condominium apartments development may be affecting the spatial distribution of urban growth. The results of an estimated 150,000 surveys of the fall 2006 TTS (available by the end of 2007) will help understand whether travel behaviour is also changing.

*This article is based on Raktim Mitra's master's thesis, Evolution of Urban Form and Travel Behaviour in the Greater Toronto Area, 1986-2001: An Overview. He is a graduate of the School of Urban and Regional Planning at Queen's University.*

*David L.A. Gordon, MCIP, RPP, was Raktim's supervisor. For more information on the TTS, see [www.jpint.utoronto.ca/dmg/tts.html](http://www.jpint.utoronto.ca/dmg/tts.html).*

## Further reading

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# Effective Public Participation: Challenging and Changing

Can Technology Help?

Rob Horne and Keren Adderley



Engaging youth can be key

**E**ffective public participation in municipal planning is a critical part of community decision-making. Given the long-term nature of decisions affecting infrastructure investments, engaging the public becomes even more important.

But public participation needs are changing, and municipal planners need to meet these changing needs. Public participation activities should no longer be thought of as a necessary expense to meet statutory requirements but as an important investment that delivers a more credible, informed planning process and, arguably, better results.

However, sometimes our best intentions and efforts are compromised by the way we do business. We've identified some of these challenges using a four-stage framework for public consultation.

## Step 1: Notification

The standard municipal approach to notify-

ing the public includes signs on affected properties; mailings to individual households; newspaper, radio and TV ads and newspaper notices; web postings; and roadside signs advertising public meetings and events. A recent survey by the Region of Waterloo indicated that most people preferred individual mailings, as the message is delivered right to the home and less likely to be overlooked by busy people who may not view local media regularly.

While the "how" of municipal communications is generally effective, the "what" can be problematic. Meeting statutory notification requirements does not mean we are as effective as we should be.

First is our predisposition to use technical and jargon-laden language. We need to simplify the message. Words like "intensification," "massing" and "urban design" don't always mean much to non-planners. Information like the number of storeys, the location of parking and green space,

and exterior lighting are of interest to the public.

The second issue pertains to language and culture. Should information be provided in more than one language? Do different cultures have different protocols for receiving information? What about the those who are visually or hearing impaired?

The Region of Waterloo has adjusted its communication protocol, including greater use of plain language, cultural training for front line staff, and notices in several languages, with opportunities for translation on request. Services for the deaf, including TTY phone systems, are now also standard, as are other forms of assistance for those who need it to fully participate in public meetings.

## Step 2: Participation

Public participation should facilitate a two-way exchange of ideas and information. Municipalities try to offer different types of forums for participation to develop that dialogue beyond the statutory meetings required by the *Planning Act* and other legislation. These include workshops, consultation centres, dedicated telephone information lines, written submissions, informal meetings with special interest groups, and information centres in shopping malls and other community meeting places.

In this electronic age, municipalities are also using websites, e-mail and other interactive forums as public participation tools. We must be willing to offer different and varied formats for public participation.

A significant hurdle is ensuring multilingual access to public involvement opportunities. While Canada's larger municipalities may have dedicated multilingual staff to ensure access, this represents a greater challenge for smaller municipalities, especially those with diverse multicultural communities.

At the Region of Waterloo, our Citizen Services division has identified a pool of 101 multilingual volunteers employed by the Region who speak 32 different languages. This is a great first step, but we need to develop additional solutions, such as providing paid translation services for those who wish to participate fully.



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One way to ensure we understand the needs of a diverse public is to ask. Community-wide and event-specific questionnaires are useful tools to find out how the public and individual stakeholder groups would like to receive information. Stakeholder and advisory committees can also serve as "sounding boards" to ensure the outreach opportunities we are providing are useful and informative.

### Step 3: Consideration

Citizens need to know that their comments have been heard, documented and considered. Even citizens who do not agree with the eventual outcome will appreciate that their voices had been heard, and that the decision-making process was transparent and accessible. Input must be acknowledged (usually explicitly in a staff report) and used to develop recommendations for Council.

Problems are often reflected in comments made by delegations. If delegations identify problems with notification, confusion over facts, or an inability for people to find their input in staff reports, a thorough review of the public participation process is warranted.

### Step 4: Municipal Decision-Making

The public expects that consultation will

have a beginning, middle and end. All too often, we undertake an extensive public consultation process at the beginning or middle of a project, but don't follow through by informing the community of how or when decisions are made at the end.

While timeframes must sometimes be extended, credibility is often compromised when deliberations become too long before a decision is made. The public is tolerant, but its limits are not boundless, and confidence in the overall municipal planning process can be compromised.

### Social marketing

Municipalities are aware of the need to adjust approaches to public participation. Social marketing, which generally focuses on promoting public resources, are now being used more often by municipal planners. Social marketing has its roots in public health, exemplified by anti-smoking campaigns. The same approach has been used effectively with other planning issues, including affordable housing (as an essential resource for small business and its employee base) and the use of public transit with its connection to air quality.

The Region of Waterloo is in the midst of a Rapid Transit Environmental

Assessment, which stands to be the largest municipal capital investment in the history of our community. Effective public consultation is critical. To this end, we are expanding and refocusing our public consultation efforts to more effectively inform and involve the community. The result has been an unprecedented level of public involvement in, and support for, this important infrastructure project.

As journalist Sydney J. Harris once said, the words "information" and "communication" are often used interchangeably, but they mean very different things. Information is "giving out"; communication is "getting through." Effective communication is critical to what we do, how much we achieve, and how aligned we are with our community's needs and desires.

*Rob Horne, MCIP, RPP, is the Commissioner of Planning, Housing and Community Services for the Region of Waterloo; [hrob@region.waterloo.on.ca](mailto:hrob@region.waterloo.on.ca) or 519-575-4001. Keren Adderley is the Coordinator of Communications and Marketing; [akeren@region.waterloo.on.ca](mailto:akeren@region.waterloo.on.ca) or 519-575-4508.*



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## Eastern

### Second Annual Workshop Focuses on Winning Solutions

In May 2007, more than 90 OPPI members and other interested individuals gathered at the Old Almonte Town Hall in the Township of Mississippi Mills to discuss urban and rural planning issues. This second annual workshop provided an opportunity to network with other planners and experts in the field, learn from the experience of other towns and communities and discuss issues facing rural development.

The OPPI Eastern District Organizing Committee invited Steve Hanhart, a community planner from the Town of Okotoks, Alberta, to open the one-day workshop. Sustainable Okotoks is one of Canada's most progressive small-town communities. Steve described Sustainable Okotoks as neither a "project" or a "department," but a way of doing business. A corporate commitment to a sustainable future for the Town is demonstrated, in part, by the creation of 22 business centres. Each has a well-defined tactical plan and benchmarks. The centres are evaluated annually and aligned with council objectives.

In terms of strategic growth, the Town has negotiated clear targets. Okotoks has also demonstrated a commitment to water conservation in residential areas, including through density bonusing in areas where a minimum of 20% reduction in per capita water con-

sumption is achieved. Solar panels have been installed on the Recycling Depot, in addition to a solar wall at the Town Operations Centre. Hanhart concluded that Okotoks' success comes from setting tangible and deliverable objectives, including appropriate stakeholders in the process, and adopting and adapting ideas from elsewhere.

PerthWorks: A Sustainable Residential Project was included on the agenda as a local example of an innovative project. Eric Cosens, Alfred Von Mirbach and Geoff Hodgins introduced PerthWorks as a concept for a 2.3-acre brownfield site in Perth, Ontario. One of the goals of the project is to establish a process that can be replicated by other small rural municipalities, who otherwise have little opportunity to get innovative "green" developers to invest in their community.

Beth Sills of TriEdge Research and Consulting of Kingston, Ontario, made a presentation on the topic of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED). With the recent launch of the Green Building Toolkit for Municipalities by the Canada Green Building Council, the business case was made for green buildings, with a particular focus on the role of municipalities in Ontario. For more information, visit [www.cagbc.org](http://www.cagbc.org).

Finally, Forbes Symon and Geoff Hodgins presented the work currently being undertaken on Small Town and Rural Design Guidelines for Mississippi Mills. With the completion of a four-year, in-house Community Official Plan exercise in fall 2005, including extensive public consultation

and grassroots participation, the Township decided to take steps to determine how new growth will be incorporated into the existing community while maintaining the existing rural and small-town character.

One example of a key "design" decision to combat the suburbanization of the rural landscape in the Township was to decrease rural residential development by prohibiting estate lot subdivisions and, since 1973, limiting consents to two per holding. Other design issues include the role of environmental impact statements and full cut-off lighting requirements.

*Kate Whitfield, MCIP, RPP, EIT, LEED AP, is with J.L. Richards & Associates Limited in Ottawa, and Stephen Alexander, MCIP, RPP, is the General Manager of Planning, Parks and Recreation Services with the City of Cornwall.*

For more information on Okotoks, including the Drake Landing Solar Powered Subdivision, contact Steve Hanhart at [shanhart@okotoks.ca](mailto:shanhart@okotoks.ca). For more information on PerthWorks, visit [www.perthworks.com](http://www.perthworks.com). For more information on other initiatives in Mississippi Mills, including the Night Skies project, visit [www.mississippimills.ca](http://www.mississippimills.ca). Watch for more information on the second annual Urban Workshop to be held in Ottawa in November 2007 and the next Rural and Small Township Workshop to be held in spring 2008.

## People

### Ryerson Planning Gets New Home

Director David Amborski is tired but happy. After a hectic construction-filled summer, Ryerson University's School of Urban and Regional Planning opened its doors in a restored industrial-style building. The new space, for which LEED accreditation will be sought, has two floors of airy studio space, classrooms and administrative offices. "Our students deserve the best," Amborski observes. "Now they have a truly inspiring learning environment."

Hamilton City Council has approved a new organizational structure for its Planning and Economic Development Department, which is now led by Tim McCabe. Tim was appointed General Manager of the Planning and Economic Development Department,



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replacing **Lee Ann Coveyduck**. Lee Ann retired from her position of General Manager of the Planning and Economic Development Department. Prior to his appointment as General Manager, Tim was Director of Development and Real Estate for the City. The restructured department has ten divisions, including Parking and By-law Services, Building Services, Tourism, Development Engineering, Planning, Industrial Parks and Airport Development, Economic Development and Real Estate, Strategic Services/Special Projects and Finance and Support Services. **Tony Sergi** was appointed Acting Director of Development Engineering, **Paul Mallard** was appointed Acting Director of Planning, **Ray Lee** was appointed Acting Manager of Development Planning, and **Marty Hazell** is now Director of Parking and By-law Services.

**Susan Taylor Simpson** has established ProAct Ideas, a consultancy focused on project management, facilitation and strategic planning. She can be contacted at susan@proactideas.ca. A past contributor to the *Ontario Planning Journal*, Susan serves the public and non-profit sectors and NGOs. Susan previously worked for the Tamarack organization and York Region.

After nearly nine years as an association executive for UDI Ontario, the merged GTHBA-UDI, and BILD (Building Industry Land Development Association), **Neil Rodgers** has resigned to take on a new role with Tribute Communities. "The policy files and government relations issues were always exciting and challenging, and while they may not have always been welcomed by either me or the industry, the opportunity to have my opinion expressed was never denied. Thank you for that privilege," Neil commented in a note to colleagues. Effective August 2007, Neil became Vice President, Land Development with Tribute Communities, where he will be responsible the company's land acquisitions program.

After several years as Manager of Engineering Design and Development for the Town of Halton Hills, **Chris Mills** has been appointed to the position of Director of Engineering, Public Works and Building Services by Halton Hills Council. Prior to joining Halton Hills, Chris held a senior position with the City of Toronto.

*With files from Damian Szybalski, MCIP, RPP, one of two district editors for Western Lake Ontario District. Damian can be contacted at damians@haltonhills.ca.*

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## In Planning Awards 2007

### Planning Studies/Reports

**Du Toit Allsopp Hillier, with Diamond + Schmitt Architects Inc., Goldsmith Borgal & Company Architects, McCormick Rankin Corporation, Schollen & Company, Weaymouth & Associates**

*Parliamentary and Judicial Precincts Area:  
Site Capacity and Long-Term Development Plan*

Canada's parliamentary, judicial, and cultural buildings on the bank of the Ottawa River form a unique ensemble that represents the nation's identity. This plan, prepared for Public Works and Government Services Canada, provides direction for a phased program to upgrade these important buildings and landscapes and add much-needed accommodation for parliament and other national institutions. Stakeholder consultations began in 2004 and continued for two years. The plan builds on previous plans and responds to new requirements for security, visitor facilities, and sustainable development. It is organized around key planning and design principles that allow for flexibility in implementation. These principles define the architectural, topographical and landscape characteristics of the site and the design guidelines for new development and site interventions that will incorporate, preserve and enhance these place-making characteristics.



**Urban Strategies, Delcan, ERA Architects**

*University of Ottawa: King Edward Precinct Plan*

The University of Ottawa is Canada's foremost bilingual university, with about 35,000 students and 3,900 academic staff in 10 faculties. It is located in the historic Sandy Hill district of Ottawa. Some land use conflicts had arisen with the residential neighbourhood that surrounds the university, and over a two-year period of consultation, the decision was made to concentrate institutional development along King Edward Avenue in order to stabilize and strengthen the residential character of the adjacent neighbourhood and preserve its important heritage assets. King Edward Avenue is projected to become a vibrant pedestrian-oriented mixed-use focal point for the university. The plan has been well accepted by the community and the university intends to continue consulting with area residents as the plan is implemented and to submit any proposed new developments to the City's Design Review Panel.



# Research/New Directions

**Wayne Caldwell, MCIP, RPP**

*Jurisdictional Analysis and Best Practices for Land Use Planning  
Affecting Direct Marketing and Agri-Tourism Operations in Ontario*

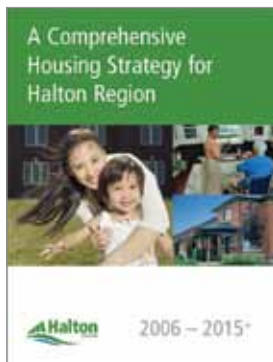


Direct farm marketing can take a variety of forms, such as roadside stands or on-farm sales, u-pick operations, farmers' markets, and sales straight to restaurants. Agri-tourism draws urban residents to farm communities where they experience the atmosphere of an active farm, buy fresh locally grown produce, and enjoy related activities. This study, prepared for the Ontario Farm Fresh Marketing Association, focuses on the way in which land use planning determines whether direct farm marketing and agri-tourism operations can be established or expanded. The report draws on best practices from Ontario, Alberta, and British Columbia, and contains recommendations for municipalities to help them support and promote these operations in their rural areas.

# Communications/Public Education

## Region of Halton

*Halton Region's Comprehensive Housing Strategy*

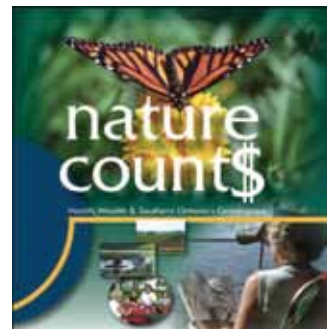


The Region of Halton is home to more than 400,000 residents. Although Halton is seen as an affluent community, approximately 1,200 to 1,300 individuals go homeless or are at the risk of becoming homeless every year. In 2004, the Regional Council endorsed the need for a housing strategy to ensure that a range of housing types would be available to all residents, from emergency shelters and government-assisted housing to private-sector affordable housing. The resulting strategy for 2006 to 2015, which was developed after extensive consultations with Halton residents, is organized around five elements: Promoting Healthy Communities; Encouraging and Protecting Affordable Housing; Encouraging and Protecting Assisted Housing; Supporting Independent Living; and Retaining and Regaining Housing [for homeless people]. For each one, the strategy identifies both short-term and longer-term priorities. The strategy has been publicized through a comprehensive report that includes personal stories of Halton Residents, a webpage and video, available on the Halton website.

## Canadian Urban Institute

*Nature Count\$*

What is nature worth? The Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources retained the Canadian Urban Institute to search out and document case studies from North America and around the world that could demonstrate the economic and societal value of natural space in order to provide a solid rationale for an expansion of the ministry's well-received Natural Spaces program. As a result of the rapid pace of development in Southern Ontario in recent decades, the opportunity to access or benefit from the presence of nature can no longer be assumed to be



available to everyone in equal measure. This work provides planners, policy makers and other stakeholders with a solid basis to re-evaluate the economic value of natural heritage assets in their communities.

# OPPI Excellence

## In Planning Awards 2007

### Urban and Community Design

#### **planningAlliance, architectsAlliance**

##### *Evergreen at the Brick Works Master Plan*

The Brick Works in Toronto's Don Valley operated from 1889 to 1989. The 16.4-hectare site was taken over by the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority in 1990, and master plans completed in 1990 and 1995 guided initial redevelopment. In 2004, Evergreen commissioned planningAlliance, architectsAlliance, and a team of consultants to create an innovative plan that would transform the vacant industrial portion of the site – 4.9 hectares, housing 16 heritage buildings – into an educational space and a “laboratory” for urban sustainability. The Master Plan includes a landscape plan, designs for the adaptation of the heritage buildings, a site access plan, a conservation strategy for the heritage resources, an interpretive strategy for helping visitors understand the site, a nature conservancy strategy to manage the effects of visitor traffic, a water management plan, and a green design plan. The resulting plan provides a valuable lesson in preserving and creating new uses for heritage industrial sites.



#### **The Planning Partnership, J.H. Stevens Planning & Development Consultants, EDA Collaborative Inc.**

##### *Mayfield West Community Design Plan*

Mayfield West is in the Town of Caledon, Peel Region, and has been designated as a growth area within the Town. The Secondary Plan for the area proposes that the village accommodate 9,000 people in just under 3,000 dwelling units, along with an employment area near Highway 410. The Community Design Plan for Mayfield West represents an innovative approach to the creation of a pedestrian-oriented urban village incorporating environmental planning and urban design principles on a community scale. It includes a distinct village core surrounded by a grid road system and green boulevards to connect neighbourhoods. The plan also protects natural heritage features and provides for pedestrian paths, recreational trails, and greenways. An environmental sustainability plan contains sustainability principles for the village.



# LEONARD GERTLER Award of Distinction



Leonard Gertler 1923-2005

*This special award has been named in honour of the late Leonard Gertler, FCIP. Dr. Gertler was educated at Queen's, Toronto, and McGill Universities in Politics, Economics and Physical Planning. He had over 40 years of experience in municipal management, community development, and urban and regional planning. His accomplishments were many, including being a founding director of the school of planning at the University of Waterloo. A leading planner in Ontario, his work led to the development of the Niagara Escarpment Plan. Dr. Gertler was also well known and respected for his many publications on planning and related themes. He was inducted as a Fellow of the Canadian Institute of Planners in January 1981 in recognition of his lifetime achievements as a Planner.*

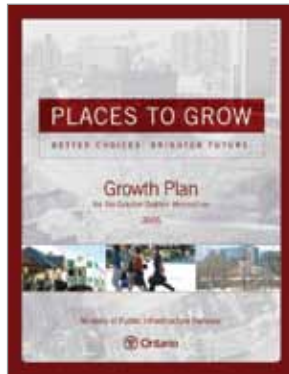
*2007 is the inaugural year for this award.*

## Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal

### *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*

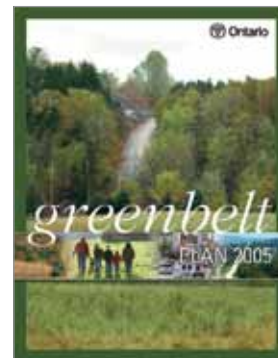
This growth plan for the area from Peterborough to Niagara Falls with Toronto at its heart represents an innovative approach to planning. It contains population and employment forecasts to be used as the basis for planning; supports urban redevelopment by establishing a minimum target for intensification; supports nodal development in 25 urban growth centres; sets Ontario's first minimum density targets for greenfield development; contains strict criteria for urban boundary extensions, and is backed up by the *Places to Grow Act*, which requires local planning authorities to conform to

the Plan's policies. The plan was developed after five years of extensive consultation, and involved many of Ontario's leading planning firms, as well as dedicated staff within the ministry. It has already received awards from the Canadian Institute of Planners and the American Planning Association.



## Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing

### *Greenbelt Plan*



The Greenbelt Plan is the first comprehensive, landscape-scale, environment-first land use plan for central Ontario, and the culmination of 40 years of efforts to shape the region's development. The plan protects 1.8 million acres of land in natural heritage and

water resource systems, as well as much of the remaining agricultural land in the area, including all remaining specialty crop lands. It forms the ecological framework around which the future urbanization of the area will be organized, and is a key component of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Its implementation is supported by the *Greenbelt Act*, and an independent government body, the Greenbelt Foundation, was created and given a provincial grant of \$25 million to carry out activities to support the goals of the Greenbelt. The plan has received awards from the Canadian Institute of Planners and the Environmental Commissioner of Ontario.

# Member Service Award

2007 RECIPIENTS



**Nancy Pasato, MCIP, RPP**

Nancy Pasato of London, secretary-treasurer of the Southwest District from 2003 to 2007, has helped with key initiatives in the district and in OPPI. She helped organize the 2002 conference in London as well as World Town Planning Day events in 2004, worked with the Planner's Action Team in 2004, sat on the Education Trust Foundation committee, and helped develop the district's professional panel, which gives presentations to planning students each year. She has also contributed to OPPI's work on continuous professional learning and healthy communities.



**George McKibbon, MCIP, RPP**

George McKibbon of Hamilton has been an important contributor to OPPI's policy development activities, as member of the Policy Committee, past chair of the Natural Resources Working Group, and currently as chair of the Sustainable Communities Working Group, which helped produce the paper "Healthy Communities, Sustainable Communities" released by OPPI this fall. He is cross-appointed to the board of the Upstate Chapter of the American Planning Association, where he provides liaison with OPPI and serves as Canadian representative on the board.



**Donald Maciver, MCIP, RPP**

Don Maciver of Ottawa has been active in Eastern District for the last 10 years, first as Member at Large for Awards and Nominations, and then as Eastern District Recognition Director, in which capacity he participated in OPPI's, as well as CIP's, branding strategy. He has worked in the District organizing World Town Planning Day events and helped create a PowerPoint presentation showcasing the practice of professional planning. He served several years as a district representative for the Ontario Planning Journal, solicited input for the Eastern District publication "Vibrations," and is currently the Eastern District representative on the Provincial Nominations Committee.



**Lynda Newman, MCIP, RPP**

Lynda Newman of Bradford, owner of Clara Consulting, is a member of the Lakeland Planners Group and the Lakeland District representative on Recognition Committee, and has been an active volunteer with OPPI since 1997. A former chair of the Nominations Committee, she helped draft the OPPI Strategic Plan in 1989-99 and continues to monitor the implementation of the Strategy. She also collaborated on the Annual Members' Survey in 2005.



**Jeffrey Port, MCIP, RPP**

Jeff Port of Kenora has been an active member of the Northern District of OPPI for five years, serving on the Membership Outreach Committee, where he worked to increase student memberships and promote OPPI in Ontario planning schools. He has been a jury member for the Excellence in Planning Awards and in 2007 he was chairman of the Communications and Public Education jury.



**Andrea Bourrie, MCIP, RPP**

Andrea Bourrie of Aurora has been an active volunteer since 1995, when she worked on the joint APA/CIP/OPPI Conference Committee. She has served as Central District representative on Council, during which time she worked on student outreach and on improving the membership process through examiner training. She is an Exam A Examiner herself and helped create the training course for examiners. She has contributed to OPPI's policy development through working groups on the Oak Ridges Moraine, the Provincial Policy Statement, the Greenbelt, and the Growth Plan, and acted as policy manager in Loretta Ryan's absence.


**Barbara Jeffrey, MCIP, RPP**

Barbara Jeffrey of Newmarket was one of the key organizers of the well-attended 2003 conference at the Deerhurst Resort, co-sponsored by OPPI and the Ontario Association of Landscape Architects.

She contributed to the OPPI's position statement on the Oak Ridges Moraine in 2000 and has led many mobile workshops (at the 2004 OPPI conference, the joint OPPI/CIP/APA conference in 1995, and for the University of Waterloo), familiarizing planners with the Oak Ridges Moraine and the planning challenges it represents. Working with the Regional Municipality of York since 1988, Barbara is an Exam A examiner.


**Alexandru Taranu, MCIP, RPP**

Alex Taranu of Brampton is a founding member of the Urban Design Working Group. In addition to helping organize the yearly charrette at OPPI's conferences and symposiums and other group events, he represents the group on the OPPI Policy Committee.

He has written on urban design for the Ontario Planning Journal and contributed to the recent policy paper on Healthy Communities. He coordinated the National Urban Design Interest Group of the Canadian Institute of Planners and is a founding member of the Council for Canadian Urbanism (CCanU).


**Lesley Pavan, MCIP, RPP**

Lesley Pavan of Mississauga has been a member of the Environmental Working Group for about 10 years, and chair for three years. In this capacity, she has contributed to OPPI policy submissions on environmental assessment reform,

the Greenbelt Plan, source water protection, and Bill 51, as well as the recent paper on healthy communities. She has made presentations at OPPI conferences on using information technology in environmental planning and on brownfield redevelopment.


**Melanie Hare, MCIP, RPP**

Melanie Hare of Toronto is a member of OPPI's Policy Committee and has acted as the Chair of the Government and Legislation Working Group. As part of her policy work, she helped review and prepare submissions on behalf of OPPI for Places to Grow, the Greenbelt

Plan, and Bill 51. She also prepared OPPI's policy paper on growth management, "Exploring Growth Management Roles in Ontario: Learning from 'Who Does What' Elsewhere" and continues to participate in an ongoing dialogue with the provincial government on the potential for collaboration and partnerships with OPPI and its membership.


**Daniel Leeming, MCIP, RPP**

Dan Leeming of Toronto was a founding member of the Urban Design Working Group and participates in the yearly charrette organized by the group at the OPPI conference or symposium. He has written several articles for the Ontario Planning Journal on urban

design and related issues, given many presentations at OPPI conferences, and represented OPPI to the media on several policy issues. Most recently, he contributed to the policy paper on Healthy Communities. He has served as a mentor to planning students and led walking tours of communities old and new.



# Scholarships

## GERALD CARROTHERS Graduate Scholarship



### **Michelle Taggart**

Michelle Taggart recently graduated with a master's degree in urban and regional planning from Queen's University.

She served as a representative of that university to OPPI's Eastern District from 2005 to 2007, a task which included promoting OPPI to her fellow students

and encouraging their attendance at OPPI events. She has coordinated fundraising among the students for Habitat for Humanity's work in the National Capital Region and prepared successful grant applications for Outreach St. George's Kingston, a non-profit organization that helps vulnerable people in that city. Her graduate studies research focused on midrise development in Toronto and sustainable infrastructure. She is currently working with Urban Strategies. Her career goals include gaining LEED certification and she hopes eventually to work on sustainable housing projects.

## Undergraduate Scholarship



### **Brian Webb**

Brian Webb has completed the undergraduate program in planning at Ryerson University. While still a student, he worked part-time for the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, in both the Disaster Relief Unit and the Education and Training Services Unit, and the City of Toronto's Heritage Preservation

Services Division. He was extensively involved in the Ryerson Association of Planning Students, including launching a lecture series focusing on alternative perspectives on planning issues and organizing fundraising for Habitat for Humanity. He represented Ryerson with the Canadian Association of Planning Students in 2005–2006 and has presented papers at CAPS conferences. He also helped organize the 2005 Canadian Risk and Hazard Network conference. In September 2007 he will begin doctoral studies in planning at the University of Manchester.

## Juries

*OPPI would like to thank all those who served on the juries of the 2007 Excellence in Planning Awards.*

Bill Armstrong, MCIP, RPP, Ministry of the Environment

Manon Belle-Isle, MCIP, RPP, Town of Hawkesbury

Claire Dodds, MCIP, RPP, County of Huron

Alan Drozd, MCIP, RPP, City of Oshawa

John Fior, MCIP, RPP, Township of East Ferris

David Gordon, MCIP, RPP, Queen's University

Quentin Hanchard, MCIP, RPP,

Toronto & Region Conservation Authority

Don Herweyer, MCIP, RPP, City of Ottawa

Bill Janssen, MCIP, RPP, City of Hamilton

Ian Kilgour, MCIP, RPP, City of North Bay

Jeff Leunissen, MCIP, RPP, City of London

John McHugh, Edelman (external Jury member)

Geoff McKnight, MCIP, RPP, Town of Bradford West Gwillimbury

Lynn Morrow, MCIP, RPP, Lynn Morrow Consulting

Gerry Murphy, MCIP, RPP, Municipality of Meaford

Jeff Port, MCIP, RPP, City of Kenora

Brian Whitehead, MCIP, RPP, Jp2g Consultants Inc.





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Editorial

# Consult by all means but by all means consult

Glenn Miller

**P**ublic consultation has come a long way in the past decade. For anything other than a routine approval, following prescriptive rules set out in the statutes is clearly no longer sufficient. Not surprisingly, planners now tend to focus not only on “the how” and “the who” but also “the why.” Establishing a convincing rationale for consultation is an important component for any engagement initiative worthy of the name. The price tag tends to be higher than for a pro forma process, but the pay off is usually worth it. When consultation is seen as an investment rather than a cost, this inspires confidence to everyone concerned.

Another positive innovation on its way to becoming mainstream is the concept of consultation and engagement being led by the private sector and other non-governmental organizations. Developers—often at the behest of their planning consultant—are beginning to see public engagement as a smart way to invest both their time and their money.

But as the application of consultation techniques broadens and deepens, who is looking out for the public in a more general sense? Project managers will no doubt insist that the stakeholders involved in the process under their control are well taken care of, but do we stop to think about the individual citizen? On any given day, a typical ratepayer activist could be asked to offer comments on a rezoning,

a class environmental assessment, an official plan review, development of a local area secondary plan, a hydro line extension, a community visioning exercise for cultural programs. . . . the list could be endless. Perhaps if we acknowledged that a 10 week consultation process designed for a specific project might overlap with a six month commitment to the siting of a municipal waste facility, and coincide with a neighbour seeking permission to double the size of the building next door we might begin to understand why the public is not always pleased to participate in the extremely smart consultation processes we design.

*Glenn Miller, FCIP, RPP, is director of education and research with the Canadian Urban Institute in Toronto. He is also editor of the Ontario Planning Journal. Write to him at editor@ontarioplanning.com.*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send letters to editor@ontarioplanning.com

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# Better Planning for Healthy Communities

Sue Cumming

Land use planning decisions shape us in ways that we are only just beginning to appreciate—obesity, heart disease, mental health, social isolation, as well as nutrition and air quality. There is growing public interest both in health, the built environment and how our communities are being planned. Where we work, live and play is vitally important to the quality of life in Ontario communities, and planners play a key role.

At the OPPI Symposium in 2006, it was clear that members were committed to creating and fostering healthy communities. Since then, the Policy Development Committee, supported by the Recognition Committee, has been hard at work researching and developing positions on planning for healthier communities focused on best practices, approaches and tools for creating sustainable healthy communities across the province.

In April, OPPI circulated four background papers developed by the working group chairs of the Policy Development Committee that were used to stimulate discussion informally and at six district consultation sessions. We heard views about key actions and ideas for connecting what planners do with the growing public interest and advocacy on the linkage between built form and health. These sessions, held in Barrie, Burlington, Kingston, London, Toronto and North Bay (teleconference), were attended by OPPI members, elected officials, health professionals and architects, who contributed many ideas for consideration.

What followed was a number of meetings with the Policy and Recognition Committee, which developed a framework for how OPPI could strategically support members through providing tools, resources and connections for taking tangible actions that result in healthier communities. This framework is focused on the following objectives:

- develop positions, resource material and tools for implementing healthy community planning and design;
- develop strategic communication and marketing campaign based on consistent positive messages to promote cultural/mind shift;
- develop strategy and form alliances and partnerships to recognize professional knowledge and leverage action around supporting healthier lifestyles and communities.

OPPI Council approved the framework and gave the go-ahead for continued work in this important area. As OPPI moves forward with this agenda, we recognize that there are significant urban and rural distinctions, geographic and cultural factors that will affect and shape outcomes—clearly there is no quick fix or one solution-fits-all scenario. A key aim is to make information relevant and positive with a focus on a full spectrum of ways that, as individuals, community members and planning professionals, we can move towards creating healthier communities.

OPPI is developing a position paper focusing on healthy and sustainable communities. We expect it will be released this fall. The paper emphasizes the importance of urban design, active transportation, and green infrastructure. Healthy Communities, Sustainable Communities explores the links between public health and land use planning, and includes strategies for collaborating on tangible actions that result in healthier communities.

As the Call to Action continues, OPPI is seeing some notable changes through its involvement with partner organizations (such as the Ontario Healthy Communities Healthy Community and Built Form Project). Across the province, momentum is building for World Town Planning Day (November 8th). After a banner year in 2006, year districts are planning even more events, around the theme of Creating Healthier Communities. Don't forget to read your e-newsletter and check the OPPI website (soon to be new and improved) for information on these events. Professional planners are the key to shaping communities in a positive way. The knowledge and commitment that is being demonstrated is recognized by local elected officials, community groups and partner organizations. I encourage you to learn more, share your views and take part and I believe that collectively we can move forward on this most important Healthy Communities Agenda.

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Sue Cumming

## Transportation

# Praising Ontario's Commitment to Transit—But is it Strategic?

Denis Kar

In June 2007, the Ontario Government caught many by surprise by announcing a multi-billion dollar investment in public transit that would fund two thirds of the capital costs for 52 rapid transit projects in the Greater Toronto Area, City of Hamilton and Region of Waterloo. The announcement came under the MoveOntario 2020 banner for transportation and transit investments by the province. It includes funding for:

- The City of Toronto Light Rail Plan (Transit City);
- Light Rail and Bus Rapid Transit Strategies in Brampton, Mississauga, Kitchener-Waterloo, York Region, Hamilton, and for GO Transit; and
- Track and service expansion on the GO rail lines, with the electrification of the main Lakeshore line.

While the announcement generated a sense of anticipation and optimism in the transit industry, many questions still need to be asked: Will the plan help relieve congestion and address overall quality of life issues faced in the various regions? Is there actually a metropolitan plan, or a series of individually approved plans? How does the GTTA fit in?

## Can Transit Investment Impact Congestion?

Investment in transit in the Greater Toronto Area has fallen far behind what is needed to make a significant difference in congestion reduction, improved accessibility, and targets for reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The GTA is growing by over 100,000 people a year. Unless changes are made to the way we travel, this will result in 50,000 additional vehicles a year to what is already the fourth-

most congested region in North America.

The funding announcement, coupled with the recent commitment to funding transit through the gas tax, provides municipalities with additional revenues to maintain existing systems and keep up with demand from population growth. More importantly, it provides municipalities with the funding to invest in transit systems that are more competitive with the private automobile. This includes improvements in service quality, reliability, convenience, and speed. All 52 projects announced by the province are based on this premise of rapid transit service—a service that will help transit compete, and may ultimately lure enough people away from their cars to make an impact in mode split and congestion reduction.

## Is the Announcement Based on a Coordinated Metropolitan Plan?

One of the benefits is that the projects serve all areas in the GTA. The 52 rapid transit projects will not only accommodate trips within and to the central city (Toronto), but also the growing suburb-to-suburb trips, recognizing the regions' diverse travel patterns. However, the question remains, is the funding strategic? Will it fund a coordinated and comprehensive transportation strategy that will give the largest impact on overall congestion reduction?

The origin of each project came from previous or ongoing studies undertaken by the responsible local authority. In fact, the implementation of many of these projects was already well underway before the funding announcement was made. Therefore, many of these projects make sense. However, the funding for so many projects came as a surprise. The electrification of the GO Transit Lakeshore line, for example, was a project that was considered by GO Transit in the 1970s and again in 2001, but never carried forward because it was too expensive to electrify lines that GO Transit did not own. With no detailed analysis to reflect current conditions, the question of whether this project will bring more value than some other rapid transit opportunity left out of the funding announcement also needs to be asked.

While the implementation of each rapid transit project will do its part to reduce congestion and meet our KYOTO commitments, there is also no clear direction on implementation priorities over the 20 year life of the funding plan, how priorities will be set, or how each system will be integrated or supported by development practices. How will Brampton's BRT tie into York Regions' VIVA line? Will municipalities implement the appropriate land use, densities, and urban design required to support these rapid transit initiatives? Much of this will depend on the involvement of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority (GTTA).

## Where does the GTTA Fit?

The one element missing from this announcement is the role of the GTTA. The board was obviously too new to have input into the development of the plan, so it begs the question: Does the plan represent a true region-wide perspective, or simply a collection of individual projects?

The province has stated that funding for each project will be subject to review by the GTTA, and that the GTTA will have ultimate responsibility for implementation. This should allow the board to take two steps back and reflect on the appropriateness of each project, understand how each fits into a broader perspective, and how each rapid transit investment supports the Places to Grow Strategy. The authority will be preparing a regional transportation plan within the coming year.

## Conclusion

It is clear through this funding announcement that transportation issues are climbing the social and political agenda. As urban areas face escalating population and employment growth that places an overwhelming reliance on the automobile, the province is responding to the full costs of increased congestion and decreased mobility.

While I applaud this commitment to supply needed funds in place to help bolster new rapid transit projects, these questions will need to be answered as the euphoria settles and implementation plans begin to be drawn.

*Denis Kar, MCIP, RPP, is the Ontario Planning Journal's contributing editor for Transportation.*

*He is a planner with Dillon Consulting in Toronto and also teaches a course in transportation planning at Ryerson University's School of Urban and Regional Planning.*

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# Future Shock: Life without a Car?

Paul Bedford



Photo: Michael Manett

Our way or the highway?

**T**he idea of life without a car is hard to fathom for most people in our society. We take much of our travel patterns for granted because we can drive. Our communities are so car-dependent that providing transit is one of the toughest challenges we face. This fact has been driven home to me since I was appointed to the Board of Directors of the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority and have travelled to various meetings throughout the region by transit.

Making these trips in the non-rush-hour period by transit has often meant lengthy bus rides and long waits for connecting buses. This experience has reinforced my determination to ensure the future Regional Transportation Plan and funding strategy to be developed over the coming year delivers a reliable transportation and lifestyle choice that allows people to live their life without depending on a car.

This will be a huge task because, despite the buzz over sustainable growth, the development of subdivisions, big box retailers and employment sprawl continues at a rapid pace, albeit at somewhat higher densities than in past years. Generally speaking, every new house adds two more vehicles to the existing road system, which compounds gridlock, adds to air pollution and erodes commuters' personal time. All-day rush hours have become the norm

throughout much of the region, adding to the frustration level of commuters. People seem to be approaching the tipping point and are demanding solutions. They want viable transportation choices and they want them soon.

## What if . . . ?

As Thomas Homer-Dixon, author of *The Ingenuity Gap* and *The Upside of Down* points out, societies generally go through a cycle of shock and breakdown before they enter a phase of creativity and renewal. He concludes that only when we recognize that we are all the same boat will we get serious about making concessions. This analogy applies to the transportation systems of the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton. Homer-Dixon also argues that we shouldn't be afraid to imagine the unimaginable so we can prepare contingency plans for the time when a crisis does occur.

The unimaginable scenario of life without a car has led me to ask a series of "what if" questions about the state of transportation between now and 2031. What if the political will of future provincial and municipal governments to embrace the Places to Grow growth plan falls apart? What if land use decisions bear little relationship to transportation planning? What if the price of gas increases to \$3 a litre? What if the average time spent

commuting by car increases to over two hours each way? What if the existing cost of \$12,000 per year to own and operate a vehicle skyrockets? What if the majority of people simply could no longer afford to drive to conduct their daily activities?

Figuring out answers could spawn creative responses to bold new transportation solutions that are long overdue. Let's examine them.

If all these things were to happen at once, the economy and life as we know it today in the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton would be in serious trouble. Getting to work, to school and to the shops would be very difficult if not impossible for most people. The availability of good transit service would likely be a prime determinant of real estate values. Collectively and despite our best intentions, we have built a sprawling urban region of more than 8 million people without the transit infrastructure to make it work. We would find ourselves in the collective soup.

To begin, if gas prices tripled as they have in the past 10 or so years, it would cost the average motorist about \$150 to fill the tank of a car. It would probably be necessary to fill up twice a week, given increased commuting distances. This would amount to a staggering \$1,200 a month. Who could afford it?

According to a 2007 Canadian Automobile Association publication on driving costs, the current annual cost to own and operate a 4-cylinder sedan and drive it 24,000 km is \$10,261. Annual driving cost for a 6-cylinder minivan for the same distance was \$12,834. Based on these costs, the average motorist with a 50-year driving lifespan from age 25 to 75 will end up spending a total of \$513,000 to own and operate one car and over \$1 million for two cars. This is more than most people spend on a house in the same timeframe.

Finally, the enormous amount of time wasted sitting in traffic must be put into perspective. A daily one- to two-hour commute each way adds up to 60 to 80 hours a month or up to forty 24-hour days a year. Over a typical 35-year working career, this adds up to three to four years of one's life spent in traffic! This takes a personal toll on one's physical and mental health that is often not calculated.

## Consider the alternative

Breaking down the big picture into personal terms that people can relate to may be critical to delivering all-day regional and local transit that is frequent and dependable. Who wouldn't want to put \$500,000 into an RRSP and live a longer and healthier life? The key to this option is less car dependence. While life without a car is really only possible today

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in the central area of Toronto, where the combination of subway, streetcar and 24-hour bus service enables residents to avoid dependence on the car, it could become a more realistic option for more of the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton as a network of frequent all-day transit grows, along with the increasing availability of car-sharing options now popular in Toronto.

It is also interesting to look back at times of crisis such as the world wars, when most people did not own cars and those who did were subject to gas rationing. The TTC's robust network of buses and streetcars kept the economy moving and enabled people to get to work. Building an extensive regional transit network across the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton should be seen as not only just desirable, but as an insurance policy against future global uncertainties or economic disruptions.

People will use transit if it offers good service and is dependable at all hours of the day and night. The simple concept of "always a streetcar in sight" is why transit riders have made the Spadina streetcar line one of the busiest in the system. If they miss a streetcar, they will wait because they can usually see the next one coming. The

same principle must apply to key bus routes throughout the region. Frequent service and dependability are essential.

As the Greater Toronto Transportation Authority gears up for the Regional Transportation Plan and funding strategy, it is essential to engage in a lively dialogue with the public on shaping the future with real transportation choices. The vision in the Places to Grow plan of complete communities connecting by transit corridors is a good one that can help to reduce car dependence, but it will need a robust transportation plan to bring it to life. As any planner knows, vision without execution is hallucination. We have a chance of a lifetime to make a positive difference and we had better not blow it.

*Paul Bedford, FCIP, RPP, is contributing editor for Planning Futures. He teaches city and regional planning at the University of Toronto and Ryerson University, is a frequent speaker and writer in addition to serving on the Greater Toronto Transportation Board, the National Capital Commission Planning Advisory Committee and Toronto's Waterfront Design Review Panel.*



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# The Oak Ridges Moraine: Five Years Later

Mike Sullivan

It is hard to believe that more than five years have passed since the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act* was made law (May 17, 2001) and implemented through the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan. Responsibility for implementation was subsequently downloaded to affected municipalities, which were required to decide which types of development applications were subject to the requirements of the plan.

Municipalities have since brought their official plans into conformity with the plan and planning staff have developed a working

knowledge of the plan's nuances. So, after five years, where are we? Has the plan changed anything? Has it provided the Oak Ridges Moraine with the level of protection that was intended? Have there been any unintended results?

## Has the plan changed anything?

As an environmental planner working with private-sector developers on the Moraine, I find that things have changed in two ways. First, the cost of seeking approvals for most projects has increased. Second, developers

now perceive the application process as more complex and time-consuming. For those who have never dealt with the development process, it can indeed appear daunting. However, the plan has brought natural heritage planning to a new level of maturity and awareness by improving the quality of ecological investigation required on a property prior to development. Input from biologists, and often hydrogeologists and water resources engineers, is now key to securing the required approvals.

Has the plan provided the Oak Ridges Moraine with the level of protection that was intended? This is a more difficult question to answer. My answer would be both yes and no. Yes, there is more protection provided to natural features, but no, some of the requirements of the plan have not yielded the intended results.

The plan has increased the reporting and due diligence requirements, which has the effect of improving the level of protection necessary for natural features and functions. A primary objective of the plan is "maintaining, improving or restoring all the elements that contribute to the ecological and hydrological functions of the Oak Ridges Moraine Area, including the quality and quantity of its water and its other resources." (ORMCP, p. 4). Simply stated, if you want to develop on the Moraine, the end result has to be at least as good, if not better than what existed there before. To maintain ecological quality is relatively straightforward, as it requires the applicant to demonstrate "no net negative impact" on the existing natural features. To improve natural features and functions requires confirmation of what exists there now, then requires the applicant to meet a new standard when considering development. As most of the municipalities on the Moraine have partnerships with conservation authorities, it is the conservation authority that reviews the application and provides comments based on approved ecological standards.

Of the unintended consequences resulting from the plan, I would like to focus on three: major developments; vegetation protection zones; and Lots of Record.

## Major developments

"Major development" includes projects that meet one of three stated criteria. Since the recent amendments to the *Planning Act*, severances to create new rural lots are essentially a thing of the past and major recreational uses appear to be few and far between. Most major development therefore consists of structures with ground floor area of 500 m<sup>2</sup>,



Photo: Michael Mamert

Progress on the Moraine?

or larger. For those unfamiliar with rural lands on the Moraine, especially north of Toronto, they consist mainly of estates – large single detached residential dwellings. While the creation of estate residential subdivisions is now prohibited by the *Planning Act*, those with the economic means and opportunity now purchase large lots (that is, 5 hectares or more) with plans to construct their “Canadian Dream” – a large house (5,000 ft<sup>2</sup> or larger), multi-car garage, in-ground pool, tennis courts, landscaped yard, and related items. These structures are greater than 500 m<sup>2</sup> and are therefore considered major development. Applicants must identify and protect hydrologically sensitive features; demonstrate sufficient water supply; and provide a water budget that confirms the water source, impact of the development on the source and identifies conservation measures being used (Section 24, sub 8).

Major developments typically have a greater impact on their natural surroundings than their smaller counterparts. The requirements are reasonable in that the Moraine

.....  
**The province did not likely realize that these estates would continue to be built, despite the higher standards**  
.....

contains many sensitive hydrological features, which may be affected by development. In conversation with municipal planners, conservation authority ecologists and other planners who work on the Moraine, the province did not likely realize that these estates would continue to be built, despite the higher standards. The result is an unintended, exponential increase in the volume of smaller applications being processed by conservation authorities and municipalities, which has resulted in longer review processes which taxes already overloaded staff.

Given the ongoing evolution of the technical review process for some of these applications, the manner in which conformity must be demonstrated often changes, without public notice or general understanding. The responsibility for explaining these changes to a frustrated property owner often falls to the consultant hired to obtain the approvals. This leads to more paid work for the consultant, but also to more time spent by the consultant in educating the property owner as to the process.

**Minimum Vegetation Protection Zones**  
Commonly referred to as MVPZs, Minimum Vegetation Protection Zones are defined as a minimum 30m area of “no development” between an area of significant vegetation and

the proposed development or site alteration. A minimum 30m “no development” setback is reasonable, as it is clearly stipulated in the plan’s implementing regulation. From an ecological perspective, protecting the leading root structure and compaction of soils around a mature tree via the use of a setback makes sense. What the plan didn’t foresee is that when development is proposed on a lot where impacts cannot be avoided, the solution offered is compensation in the form of planting new native stock in an agreed-upon area.

Essentially, and it varies by jurisdiction, for every tree or shrub removed, up to three more must be planted in its place (these are Toronto and Region Conservation Authority standards). While planted forests have less natural value than those occurring naturally, improving connections between

existing forests using native stock will result in improved habitat for area wildlife as well as increase the local forest cover.

Coincidentally, this also increases the screening for many residential developers by providing improved privacy and snow and wind protection. With input from ecologists and planners, the means of implementing the “improving or restoring” objective of the plan has been matured in the last few years. More and more private developments result in some form of compensation being required. This increases project complexity, and entails longer and more detailed reviews by conservation authorities and more expense for the developer. While likely an unintended result, these measures have gone a long way to ensuring that the Moraine’s natural integrity remains intact.

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## Lots of Record

Finally, there is the unresolved issue of existing Lots of Record. Existing Lots of Record are addressed in the transitional regulations for the plan, which allow some form of development to occur on legal lots that existed before the creation of the plan (that is, before 2001). Based on my experience, there are many within the area of the plan. The key issue that results is that, while a building permit will be issued, it is the size, scope and location of the development that is in question.

Take the example of a lot purchased in the Bayview Road and Stouffville Road area, which is on the Moraine in a sensitive area known as the Jefferson Forest. The lot is fully treed and has some inherent topographic constraints. In the process of completing a Natural Heritage Evaluation, in accordance with Section 23 of the plan, the biological review confirms that no suitable locations are available for building. As an existing Lot of Record, however, development is almost as of right, therefore the evaluation must focus on identifying the natural area where development will have the least impact. By working with

the conservation authority and the municipality, the biological priority areas can be identified and the development adjusted to fit.

Fortunately, experienced conservation authority staff can usually help guide the developer through the process. But staff can become overwhelmed by the number of such applications, which results in reviews taking longer. It also results in more than a single round of comments being received by the consultant on any given application. I doubt that the province anticipated that the transitional regulations would be used five or more years after the plan was implemented. But judging from my own experience, this trend is not likely to change for the next few years.

### What price protection?


The Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan has had a net positive impact on the Moraine by preserving what exists and requiring developers at all scales to improve features through the use of more appropriate setbacks and related mitigation measures. There is relatively little vacant land left on the Moraine, so private property owners now often focus on redevelopment.

Fortunately, the plan recognizes this trends and provides appropriate steps to protect the natural features and functions in a systematic fashion.

By focusing on protection, however, the province and its plan have created increased workloads for conservation authorities and municipalities. It is becoming harder to find appropriate ways to implement processes that support the objectives of the plan. In the end, the price of protection is often more than expected. Natural features that have been lost cannot be recreated with the same quality as they would have if they occurred naturally. It is fundamentally important that natural features be protected through legislation.

*Mike Sullivan, MCIP, RPP, is a Senior Environmental Planner with LGL Limited, located in King City and Barrie. He is also the Central District Representative on OPPI Council. Steven Rowe, MCIP, RPP, is the principal of Steven Rowe Environmental Planner. He is the contributing editor for this column.*

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# Snakes and Ladders

Philippa Campsie

Every planning student is familiar with the “Ladder of Participation,” first proposed by Sherry Arnstein in 1969. It presents a way of thinking about public participation in terms of the extent to which citizens are involved in decision-making, and their influence over the outcomes. At the bottom of the eight-rung ladder is manipulation (non-participation), at the top, citizen control (full participation).

It’s a useful way of thinking about methods of participation, but it doesn’t tell you anything about who is participating, and how representative the final outcomes may be. Those citizens at the top of the ladder who are in control—who are they? for whom do they speak?

Think of the meetings you’ve attended. Even in a meeting intended to fully involve members of the public in a decision, things can go wrong. Let’s call them snakes. Meetings dominated by a small group or an individual. Meetings that nobody attends. Meetings for one purpose that are bent to another purpose. Inconclusive meetings. Confrontational meetings. Chaotic meetings.

And what about the people who aren’t at

the meeting? How are they represented? One can imagine another ladder to represent the involvement of the public. At the bottom are those who do not attend because they aren’t interested in civic decision-making. Above them are those who are somewhat interested, but not enough to make the effort to attend a meeting. Then there are those who would like to attend and can’t (they have other commitments; the meeting place is hard to get to; they can’t get a babysitter). Next come those who do attend, but sit at the back and say nothing. Finally, there are those who come and actually have a say. (We’ll omit for now those who come to complain about government services in general, those who come for the free coffee, and those for whom attending meetings is a hobby.)

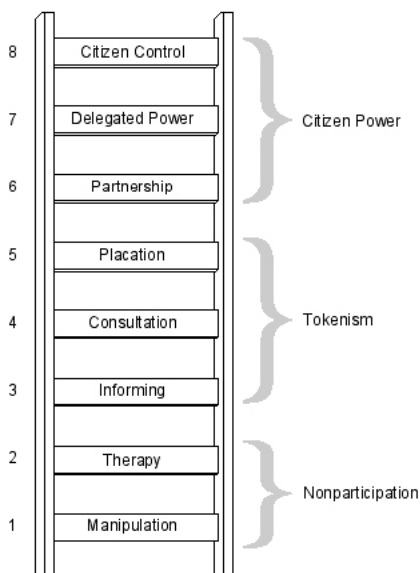
It has been suggested that online forms of participation may open up debates to more people. In theory, those who are interested in an issue, but do not or cannot attend meetings can make their thoughts known online. Those who are shy about speaking up in a meeting can send in ideas electronically.

It sounds appealing, but some recent research suggests that participation through

the web does not necessarily engage everyone equally. A new report from Forrester Research Inc., called Social Technographics, puts web users into six categories according to their social use of the web.

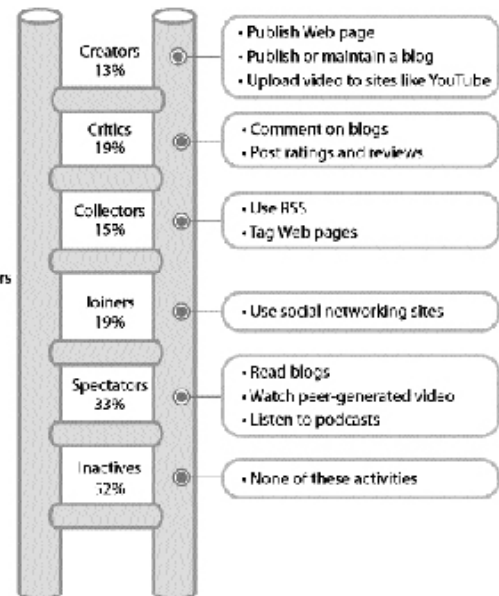
1. The first and largest group is called Inactives, constituting 51% of all web users. These are people who do not participate in the web socially at all—they use it to find information from mainstream websites, but not much else.
2. The next group is called Spectators (33%). These users read blogs, look at videos and listen to podcasts, but they do not post content on the web.
3. The next group, Joiners (19%), use social networking sites such as Facebook and may publish their own blogs, as well as reading those by other people.
4. Collectors (15%) share information with others by tagging websites or using RSS (really simple syndication) feeds.
5. Critics (19%) like to comment on blogs and post ratings and reviews.
6. Finally, Creators (13%) are those who write a regular blog, maintain a web page, or upload videos to the web.

These groups overlap (so the percentages do not add up to 100%)—Creators may also be Critics, Joiners may also be Collectors. Which group you are in may



Sherry Arnstein's "Ladder of Participation"

Segments include consumers participating in at least one of the indicated activities at least monthly



Forrester's categories of web users

Source: Forrester's NACTAS Q4 2006 Devices & Access Online Survey

depend on your age—Inactives tend to be over 50, Joiners are the youngest group.

I can imagine that the percentages will change over time as the generation that grew up with computers matures. But for now, we have to realize that online forms of participation still leave a lot of people out. They may be held back by unfamiliarity with the technology, fears about loss of privacy, or difficulty putting their thoughts into written words. Online surveys will be answered by those who enjoy completing online surveys and have the time to do so. And more time-consuming and engaging types of public participation, which call for people to interpret information, contribute their knowledge and collaborate on projects, will be dominated by Creators, Critics, Collectors and Joiners, leaving the Inactives and Spectators out of the picture.

And let's not forget the online snakes. Multiple anonymous posts by a single person. Untruthful anonymous posts. The "online disinhibition effect" (which means that people tend to be ruder online than in person). Lengthy rants on unrelated concerns. Incoherent comments. Moderating an online discussion can be every bit as difficult as moderating one in a public meeting.

All of which is not to say that online public participation doesn't have enormous promise, and that as people gradually become more comfortable with the technology, they will be less hesitant to contribute their ideas. Cities that are using online participation methods say they are certainly getting more citizen engagement this way.

Perhaps the lesson is to offer people many ways to get involved—paper, phone and web surveys, plus newsletters and posters, plus open houses, plus conventional meetings. Of course, there are budgets to be considered, but for really important issues, when you really need to know what people are thinking, you have to give people a variety of ways to make their ideas known.

For more information on Social Technographics, visit: [http://blogs.forrester.com/charleneli/2007/04/forrester\\_new\\_.html](http://blogs.forrester.com/charleneli/2007/04/forrester_new_.html). This is a blog written by one of the authors of the report. The full report costs \$279.00 (U.S.) from <http://www.forrester.com/Research/Document/Excerpt/0,7211,42057,00.html>.

*Philippa Campsie is deputy editor of the Journal and principal of Hammersmith Communications. She is largely a Spectator, sometimes a Joiner, and very occasionally a Critic. She writes this column instead of a blog.*

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## Bringing Buildings Back

### Bringing Buildings Back: From Abandoned Properties to Community Assets

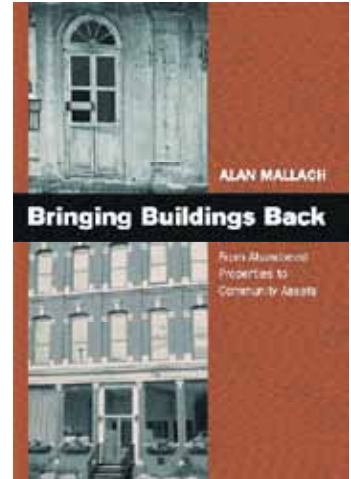
*Author:* Mallach, Alan  
*Publisher:* United States of America: National Housing Institute.  
*Date:* 2006  
*Pages:* 328

**T**his book, which focuses on abandoned buildings, discusses how to maximize the sustainable use of buildings so they will be an asset rather than a burden or a wasted space in a community. The book is a guide for anyone interested in building reuse, particularly policy makers and practitioners.

Mallach analyzes the issue of reuse of vacant buildings through the "abandonment

cycle." The cycle has three stages. The first is preventing abandonment, the second is taking control of abandoned properties, and the third is fostering the sustainable reuse of abandoned properties. Through this cycle, factors such as economics, law, finance, government regulations and ownership must be considered.

As our cities age, the adaptive reuse of buildings is becoming a more prominent



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issue. We are running out of room to expand and need to think in more sustainable planning terms. *Bringing Buildings Back* is therefore a key resource for planners. The book has much to offer in terms of specific processes to follow, problems to be faced and strategic methods for planners to deal with abandoned properties. It has a clear and concise layout and includes diagrams and charts. In addition, throughout the book there are “good practice” sections that demonstrate successful examples of sustain-

able reuse. Lastly, it provides a resource list for planners to obtain further information. *Bringing Buildings Back* is recommended to all planners and policy makers involved in adaptive reuse processes. The method proposed is effective and efficient in a community setting. It breaks ground on bringing together different participants in the planning process and on including many perspectives into the analysis of reusing abandoned buildings.

# The World is Flat: A Brief History of the 21st Century

Thomas L. Friedman  
*The paperback edition*

Finally caught up with Thomas Friedman’s much talked-about book when the paperback edition came out this summer. Befitting a storyline that weaves tales of innovation with technological breakthroughs from software developers and other techno-whizzes, Friedman’s book has a catchy tagline: Release 3.0. My bottom line advice to planners: if you haven’t read it, do so! Consider that this is the third time Friedman has felt the need to update his book in the space of two years. Although sometimes guilty of squeezing a story into the shape dictated by his thesis—you will be left in no doubt that in Friedman’s view the world is indeed flat—Friedman is an inquisitive and thoughtful writer whose insights help us track the pace and impact of change. I also suggest Googling other authors who have written provocative counterpoints such as “the world is spiky.”

Glenn Miller, FCIP, RPP, is editor of the *Ontario Planning Journal*.

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