

ONTARIO Planning

JOURNAL

MARCH/APRIL 2009, VOL. 24, NO. 2

NORTHERN ONTARIO'S CHALLENGE

How do you create a plan
for a place bigger than France?

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Learning About China
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Dead Malls: Is There an Afterlife?

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Volume 24, Issue No. 2, 2009

ONTARIO PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS INSTITUTE
The Ontario Affiliate of the
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The BIGGEST Plan: Getting to the “how” is Northern Ontario’s Challenge

Glenn Miller

THE PROCESS FOR CREATING a Growth Plan for Northern Ontario is well advanced, and a draft plan is expected to be released for public consultation in mid-2009. The Ontario Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure and the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines have been engaged in discussions with community leaders from all walks of life—politicians, educators, researchers, businesspeople, and representatives of First Nations. To guide development of the Northern Growth Plan, the Ontario government established the G-North Ministers Table to promote interministerial collaboration and coordination.

How do you create a plan for a place that is bigger than France? Glenn Miller sat

down with the Assistant Deputy Minister for the Ontario Growth Secretariat, Brad Graham, to find out more about the province’s work in Northern Ontario. Fresh from a well-attended symposium—Think North, in Thunder Bay—Graham was upbeat about the opportunity but realistic about the challenges. Surprisingly, the deep recession facing the country isn’t his biggest concern.

“In some ways,” he told me, “this is an opportune time to plan for the North’s future. The North already has several advantages, including a strong postsecondary education system, a bilingual workforce, a growing Aboriginal population, a wealth of natural resources, an abundance of talent and a strong entrepreneurial

drive. Now is the opportunity to harness those strengths and be ready to take advantage of the eventual upturn in the economy. Another key opportunity is the recent upturn in population growth. While projected to decline overall in the North, recent figures show four of the larger centres are experiencing growth. One of the biggest challenges however, remains the ability to

retain their youth.

“Of particular importance is the role of Aboriginal peoples in shaping the North’s future. The strong participation of Aboriginal peoples in the education system, economic development opportunities and environmental stewardship of the land will be even more important.

Critical to the successful

achievement of these goals will be addressing the vast geography and disperse population base. It will require innovative ways to make sure education and economic development opportunities are accessible to all.”

Graham and his staff are not starting from scratch; they are building upon reports, studies and investigations prepared over many years. “We did not want to re-invent the wheel,” he explained. “We wanted to take advantage of the well-thought-out reports that had already been completed and provided clear direction. The real task was to start figuring out ‘how’ through very precise action-oriented policies.”



Broadband will play an important role in Northern Ontario’s future



Vancouver and London are further north than Thunder Bay

A distinct Northern focus

Another important discussion was to make it clear to all concerned that although the process for developing the Growth Plan for Northern Ontario will mimic the process used in the South, the focus will be entirely different. "This plan is about the economy and sustainable development," Graham admits. "You will see a focus on strategic investments to build a more supportive climate for innovation to flourish, both in helping traditional industries evolve and in new and emerging sectors. But there are one or two similarities with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. A good example is the importance of quality of place in planning for the North's future. In my view, this is fundamental to keeping the younger generation, as well as key to attracting and retaining knowledge workers."

Northerners acknowledge that immigration can work in their favour. Creating a welcoming environment is central to the philosophy of community leaders throughout the North, Graham believes. "We are all competing for people, and although it may sound trite, this really begins with creating places that people want to be. A welcoming environment is in everybody's interests. In the end, it's about quality of place."



Decision makers from throughout the North have been engaged in the planning process

Education, connectivity and research

There are many complementary threads running through the Northern plan, such as the importance of postsecondary institutions and the role of broadband as essential infrastructure. "Take the example of the Northern Ontario School of Medicine (NOSM)," Graham suggests. "The strides made by that institution in just a few short years—led by its founding director, Dr Roger Strasser—and its impact are nothing short of remarkable."

NOSM operates the medical school at universities in Sudbury and Thunder Bay, using the latest in high-speed broadband to link students and teachers via telepresence. This is also the platform for connecting to clients spread across a vast territory, as well as to resources in the south. "It's quickly become the nexus of reachable expertise," Graham comments. "In fact, with the Ontario Research Innovation Network (ORION) connecting all postsecondary and research institutes to each other and to the world, the North is

already well positioned to be at the centre of a global network."

Similarly, the North's location and its access to U.S. markets is a unique advantage. "If you look at the rest of the country and indeed other countries," Graham suggests, "major centres are actually centrally located." He points to a map showing that Thunder Bay is on about the same latitude as Vancouver, London and Paris.



Brad Graham in conversation

For an economy only too familiar with the cyclical swings associated with resources like forestry and mining, northern leaders don't have to be reminded about the opportunity to excel in research and development. The level of innovation, in Graham's view, is impressive. "Led by the biosciences and the health sector, the scientific community in the North is positioning itself for a very different future. More than 60 research institutes have come into play in recent years—they are incredibly entrepreneurial, always looking for the opportunity to find the value-added component that can



Think North provided a launch pad for the next critical phase in plan development

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Auspices for a grand plan

The auspices for the Growth Plan for the GGH and the current initiative is the *Places to Grow Act, 2005*, predicated on sustaining a robust economy and building strong communities. Growth plans set out a long-term vision and goals to guide and coordinate provincial decision-making. A priority will be the growth of emerging sectors and innovating existing industries to compete in the evolving global market.

improve their competitiveness.

“One of my favourite examples is the ability to break down tree fibre to its molecular level and reprocess it to create products that replace a variety of manufacturing petroleum-based products. The science is there. But connecting this to the market is the key.”

The importance of collaboration

In developing the Plan, Graham shares leadership with his colleague Cal McDonald, Assistant Deputy Minister at the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines. “While we work with all ministries to develop the Plan, it’s great to have a co-lead with MNDM,” explains Graham. “They clearly have the expert knowledge of the north and their mandate will be critical to the Plan’s implementation success.”

Although expectations for success are high after the extensive list of accolades received by the Growth Plan for the GGH, Graham and his staff are not intimidated by the challenges of creating a plan for an area as vast as

Northern Ontario. “When you see the depth of the human assets available in the North, it’s easy to see that thinking broadly and the willingness to take the long view will win out.”

Glenn Miller, FCIP, RPP, is editor of the Ontario Planning Journal and vice president, education and research with the Canadian Urban Institute in Toronto. He can be reached at editor@ontarioplanning.com.

OPPI submitted comments on “Towards a Growth Plan for Northern Ontario: A Discussion Paper” in September 2008.

A copy of the submission is available at: <http://www.ontarioplanners.on.ca/content/Publications/watchingbriefs.aspx>. The Policy Development Committee, in conjunction with our Northern District members, is maintaining a watching brief and will provide further comments and input as this progresses.

5 / FEATURES

Re-zoning Plan a Go—Despite Opposition

Letter from New York

Christina Sgro

TROUBLE IS BREWING in the city that never sleeps. Manhattanites have been entrenched in a bitter battle concerning new zoning and planning regulations that threaten to turn citizens against each other, with each contingent battling for the “right way to go.” The affected groups belong to the East Village and the Lower East Side. While skyscraping hotels and condos have come to symbolize Manhattan—to the chagrin of some—low-rise tenements seem to be suffering in recent years. The time has come for change, it seems. In response, the city worked with the local community board to address local concerns.

Their solution? For the past three years, the City Planning Department has been working with Community Board 3 on proposals to change the area’s zoning for the first time since 1961. Altering the 47-year-old zoning would affect 111 blocks. According to proponents, the plan will encourage the construction of lower-priced housing while giving developers an array of incentives to construct residential and commercial buildings. For the first time, the proposals limit building heights.

Not everyone is happy though. The rezoning plans have angered, among others, residents and business owners in Chinatown. They complain that the new changes would force high-rise, high-rent development into their neighbourhoods, and potentially drive them out. Meanwhile, some preservationists and other residents were upset that the new zoning restrictions do not include the Bowery, which has often attracted upscale buildings.

New activist groups have emerged to campaign against the proposals. One is the Coalition to Protect Chinatown and the Lower East Side. Representatives claim that planners who propose these new plans are attempting to rid the area of certain pressures and push them out onto the outskirts. This claim is refuted by the proponents, who argue that the plan is a better alternative to current regulations.

This is a perfect example of big city ver-

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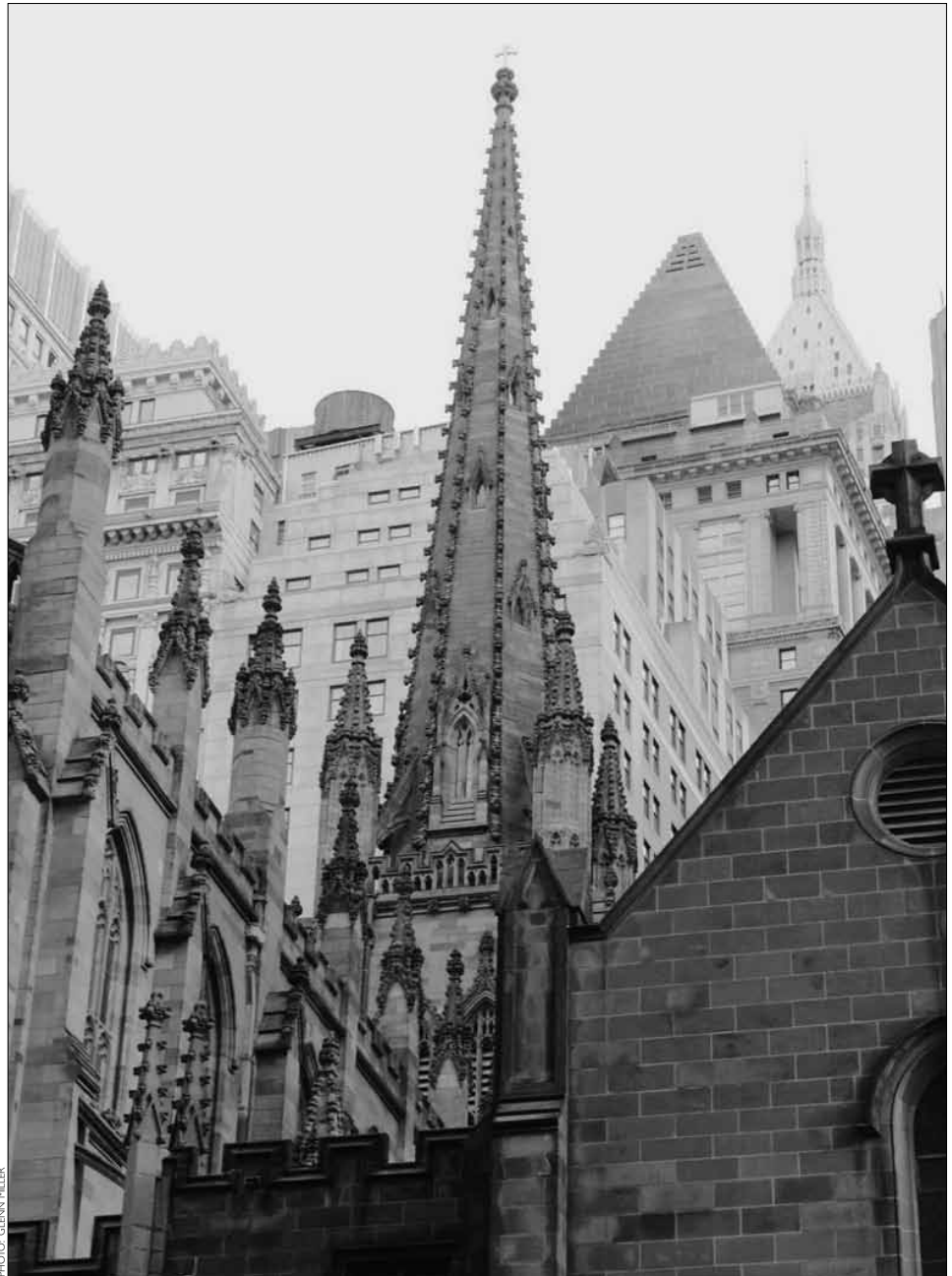
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sus small community, overlaid with complex issues of social justice, social inclusion and possibly even racism. What happens to people who cannot afford increased rents? Without obvious alternatives, they could be “out in the cold.”

In a vote in November 2008, City Council approved the questionable plan with a few minor changes, despite some very vocal opposition.

What can we learn from this example? As Marco Polo said wisely in Calvino’s *Invisible Cities* (1978): “Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else.” Maybe we can work towards building cities that will testify to something better.

Christina Sgro is completing a Master’s of Environmental Studies at York University with a certification in Urban Planning. She recently founded the first local chapter of a charitable organization, Pencils for Kids at York University, which helps to lift children from poverty throughout the world, primarily through education. She can be reached at christina_ls@hotmail.com.



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Learning about China and about Canada— from a Chinese perspective

Two-way knowledge exchange

Andrew Sacret

FOR TWO WEEKS in late 2008, FoTenn Consultants had the pleasure of hosting Chinese planners Yanping Huang and Zhong Zheng in our Ottawa office. The two planners were participants in the multi-year International Collaboration Project between the Canadian Institute of Planners and the Chinese Ministry of Land and Resources. In 2008, teams of two Chinese planners travelled to five cities across Canada—St. John's, Halifax, Ottawa, Winnipeg, and Vancouver—to spend about two months exploring the Canadian planning system, while also taking in some of the sights.

During their time at FoTenn, our staff introduced Yanping and Zhong to a wide

variety of projects across Canada. One example was a large-scale village master planning exercise, which also allowed us to explain the role of the Ontario Municipal Board. Yanping and Zhong attended part of a hearing and were fascinated by the process of offering professional evidence and opinions to resolve planning matters. Because of their interests in rural and regional planning, we also introduced our guests to the challenges of working with largely Inuit stakeholders in Nunavut, which is one of the areas in which FoTenn has expertise. We also highlighted the company's ongoing involvement in the creation of a Community Sustainability Plan for the

Municipality of Jasper, Alberta, and Parks Canada.

From our team's perspective, the highlight of the visit was a tea-tasting ceremony, throughout which our guests presented a slide show of their home cities of Xiamen and Fuzhou in Fujian province. Fujian province, which is about the size of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia combined, contains 36 million people—slightly more than Canada's entire population. Yet only 10 percent of the land area of Fujian province is classified as plains; the remainder is largely mountainous.

It was obvious from these compelling images that the Chinese solution to accommodating such large urban populations, while pro-



Yanping Huang (standing) and Zhong Zheng (presenting) treated FoTenn staff to a tea-tasting ceremony and presentation about their home cities

tecting environmental and agricultural resources, is to build taller building. Yanping and Zhong showcased some of the creative urban design solutions that Chinese planners are using to make higher densities more appealing, such as creating attractive multi-use public spaces along waterfront areas; designing functional pedestrian streets; and encouraging innovative architectural designs for new building projects.

At the end of their visit to Ottawa, Yanping and Zhong presented a summary of what they had learned. Some of their observations were surprising.

They saw a need for stronger environmental and agricultural protection policies in their country. With the majority of their province's 36 million individuals occupying the most fertile and productive lands, they highlighted the pressing issue of preserving key environmental assets and food-producing land resources.

Yanping and Zhong expressed their appreciation for the work of conservation authorities, and Canadian municipal governments in protecting the region's resource lands.

They noted differences in the meaning of "participation" within the planning process. In the Chinese planning system, consultations on emerging policy initiatives typically involve interactions between different government departments. There is far less emphasis on public participation in China, but Yanping and Zhong were nonetheless



After a seemingly short two-week visit, FoTenn staff celebrated with Zhong Zheng and Yanping Huang (second and fourth from left). The article's author, Andrew Sacret, is standing at the far right

eager to learn about the innovative public engagement techniques that FoTenn is using in various communities and situations, such as in Jasper and northern communities.

They were impressed by the application of advanced information systems. During their time at the City of Ottawa and the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, our colleagues were introduced to the power of GIS databases to compile complex data sets.

Considering the range of issues facing Chinese cities, there are many obvious benefits of using GIS in the Chinese context.

They were interested in the relationship between consultants and government authorities. In North America, the role of private-sector consulting firms is well-established. In contrast, Chinese planning takes place almost exclusively under the aegis of government.

However, after spending time in our office, our guests expressed the view that the Chinese planning system could benefit from the cultivation of a private sector.

They commented on the utility of appeal mechanisms. In China, there are

limited mechanisms to appeal planning decisions. Our guests were interested to discover how appeal bodies such as the OMB can help to resolve planning matters.

Aside from the mutual professional learning, it was our privilege to get to know Yanping and Zhong on a more personal level and to partake in the exchange of cultures. We must have done something right, as our guests eagerly invited us to return the visit!

Andrew Sacret, MCIP, RPP, is an urban planner with FoTenn Consultants Inc., a planning and urban design firm with offices in Ottawa and Kingston, Ontario. Andrew participated in the Queen's-Fudan University Exchange (Shanghai, China) in 2004. He can be reached at sacret@fotenn.com.



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Plan for the Needs of Children and Youth: A Call to Action, February 10, 2009

Call to Action

Dr. Richard Gilbert and Dr. Catherine O'Brien

THERE ARE GOOD REASONS to give priority to the needs of children and youth in land-use and transportation planning. This Call to Action proposes that Ontario municipalities endorse a set of 21 child- and youth-friendly land-use and transportation guidelines.

Background

In 2007 OPPI prepared its position paper *Healthy Communities, Sustainable Communities*, which emphasizes the importance of urban design, active transportation, and green infrastructure. In its consideration of the impacts of planning on young people, the position paper notes that “for the first time in many decades, our children’s life expectancy may not exceed our own.”

The present Call to Action addresses what may be the most important of numerous concerns about unhealthy and unsustainable communities—the impacts on children and youth—and highlights *Child and Youth Friendly Land-Use and Transportation Guidelines*, a document prepared by the Centre for Sustainable Transportation at the University of Winnipeg.

Overview

The 21 child- and youth-friendly land-use and transportation guidelines were developed in the spirit of a statement by Enrique Peñalosa, former mayor of Bogotá, Colombia. “If we can build a successful city for children, we will have a successful city for all people.” The guidelines have been endorsed by OPPI and thus represent OPPI’s position on these matters, at least for urban and suburban communities. The guidelines are organized in six groups.

1. Give priority to the needs of children and youth [Guidelines 1-3]. These three guidelines are the most important in that they call for a focus on the needs of young people and indicate processes to achieve this focus.
2. Plan for children and youth as pedestrians [Guidelines 4-7]. Walking is the most available mode of active transportation, and thus the most important. It can provide the maximum of exercise for the mini-

PUTTING CHILDREN AND YOUTH FIRST

- Guideline 1. In transport and land-use planning, the needs of children and youth should receive as much priority as the needs of people of other ages and the requirements of business.
- Guideline 2. Within each municipality, designate a staff member or council member, or both, as responsible for bringing the perspectives of young people to consideration of transport and land-use planning issues.
- Guideline 3. As may be appropriate, establish or adapt one or more forums for children and youth to ensure that their perspectives are considered by land-use and transport planners.

PROVIDING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH AS PEDESTRIANS

- Guideline 4. Identify where children and youth want to go or need to go and, to the extent possible, provide ways of getting there by foot.
- Guideline 5. Assess pedestrian routes used or to be used by children and youth to ensure that they are as safe and suitable for them as possible.
- Guideline 6. Separate sidewalks used by children and youth from heavily travelled roads.
- Guideline 7. Ensure that sidewalks are always cleared of ice and snow.

PROVIDING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH ON BICYCLES (AND OTHER WHEELS)

- Guideline 8. For older children and youth, ensure that destinations that cannot be a walk away are no more than a bicycle ride away.
- Guideline 9. For younger children, ensure that sidewalks are suitable for their tri-cycles and bicycles.
- Guideline 10. For destinations to be reached by bicycle, provide separate bicycle paths or trails or, if not possible, install bicycle lanes on regular roads.
- Guideline 11. Ensure that bicycle riders are well provided for at intersections and have sufficient priority for forward movement.
- Guideline 12. At destinations, provide secure, convenient bicycle parking.

(Cont. on page 10)

mum financial outlay. Land uses should above all facilitate young people’s walking.

3. Plan for children and youth on bicycles (and other wheels) [Guidelines 8-12]. Bicycling is the most common mode of mechanized, non-motorized transportation, and is available to most young people. It can be an important means of enhancing independence in youth; but, even more than adults, young people require a safe bicycling environment.

4. Plan for children and youth as transit users [Guidelines 13-15]. As with cycling, the availability of transit to young people can enhance their independence and social maturation. Young people will take transit if it is easy to use and if they and their parents consider it to be safe.
5. Focus on journeys to and from school. [Guidelines 16-18]. During the school year, trips to and from school usually comprise the majority of young people’s weekday

travel. These trips should receive the highest priority when seeking to encourage active transportation (i.e., non-motorized transportation such as walking and bicycling).

6. *Reduce transport's adverse impacts on children and youth* [Guidelines 19-21]. Almost all of these impacts result from operation of motorized vehicles. They are experienced mostly when travelling but also when children are near traffic.

Why be concerned about young people and transportation?

Here are several reasons to be concerned about young people and today's transport and about the related matter of how land is used:

- Young people appear to be spending more time in cars.
- Some of this car travel has replaced walking and bicycling, removing needed opportunities for physical exercise.
- Some car travel has replaced more environmentally benign transit use, adding to

what may already be an excess of car use, reducing both the present and the future viability of transit systems, and further reducing young people's opportunities for exercise.

- Being in cars can be harmful, because in-car air quality can be lower, and enervating, because the view of the passing world through a windshield can be limiting.
- Young people travel to where young people gather, meaning that if they travel by car pollution from traffic in the vicinity of these places—e.g., schools—will be higher.
- Whether or not young people travel by car, they are susceptible to pollution from traffic and thus from the increased pollution that results from traffic growth.
- As well as exercising less, and weighing more, other effects may be associated with the lost exercise associated with the increased automobile use. They include reduced academic performance and compromised emotional development.
- The transport needs of young people differ from those of adults, partly because their

destinations are different and partly because they travel differently. On schooldays, for example, the majority of walking and cycling trips are still made by young people notwithstanding the recent large increase in travel by car. Thus, facilities for non-motorized modes are much more important for young people's travel than they are for adults.

- Overall, about a fifth of all local trips may be made by young people, a significant share that impels attention to their transport needs.

The following specific data were drawn from surveys in south-central Ontario in 1986 and 2006. They are probably indicative of wider trends.

Children and youth make more than half of all schoolday walking and bicycling trips. Their rate of walking or cycling is about ten times that of adults. Thus, when facilities for pedestrians and cyclists are being considered, the needs of young people may be the most important.

Young people's schoolday travel by car increased greatly between 1986 and 2006. For 11- to 15-year-olds the per-capita increase was 96 per cent. For 16- to 19-year-olds, the per-capita increase was much lower—12 per cent—chiefly reflecting a sharp fall in driving by this age group across the two decades. Per-capita car use by adults, as passenger or driver, increased by only 4 per cent, further highlighting the extraordinary increase among young people under 16 years of age.

Considering 11- to 15-year-olds only, just over half of the additional trips by car in 2006 were trips to and from school. These car trips replaced trips that in 1986 had been made by transit, walking or bicycling. Just under half of the additional trips were trips other than between home and school. Essentially all of these trips were new trips, i.e., trips that had not been made in 1986.

The 21 guidelines concern land use as well as transport because land use is a key factor in determining the transport patterns of young people as it is for adults. Above all, they are directed towards reducing the amount of travel by automobile by children and youth, and also towards reducing the amounts of all road traffic near children and youth.

Our Position on Land-use and Transport Planning for Children and Youth

Ontario municipalities should endorse the *Child and Youth Friendly Land-Use and Transportation Guidelines*. OPPI members and others should work towards securing such endorsement. All 21 guidelines are shown here. (Further explanation of individual

(Cont. on page 11)

(Cont. from page 9)

PROVIDING FOR CHILDREN AND YOUTH AS TRANSIT USERS

- Guideline 13. Ensure that every part of a transit system is safe and welcoming to young people, and affordable.
- Guideline 14. Avoid transfers by routing vehicles where children and youth want to and need to go; make transfers easy where necessary.
- Guideline 15. Examine every aspect of a transit system from the perspective of a parent with a child in a stroller, and make adjustments to meet such a traveller's needs.

PROVIDING FOR JOURNEYS TO AND FROM SCHOOL

- Guideline 16. Act to ensure that school policies and practices favour walking and cycling to and from school and other modes of active transportation, or, where appropriate and possible, regular public transportation.
- Guideline 17. For younger children, help arrange walking school buses and other means of supervision.
- Guideline 18. Act to reduce the time children spend in school buses to a maximum of 40 minutes per day.

REDUCING TRANSPORT'S ADVERSE IMPACTS ON CHILDREN AND YOUTH

- Guideline 19. Where destinations cannot be reached by foot, bicycle or transit, arrange land uses so that in-car time is reduced.
- Guideline 20. Particularly in urban areas, post and enforce much lower speed limits.
- Guideline 21. Do what is possible to reduce amounts of motorized road traffic generally and reduce its impacts.

Northern

Cutting New Cloth

Wendy Sauder

The Northeastern Municipal Services Office of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing held its annual Planning Technical Workshop in Sudbury from September 22 to 24, 2008. This year's theme was "Sharpening Your Planning Tools." The event was attended by approximately 100 planning staff and decision-makers from across the North.

Dr. Dave Pearson from Science North/Laurentian University opened the workshop by talking about climate change and sustainability. Presenters covered a mix of topics from land division and land registry, to comprehensive and five-year reviews, and stimulated lots of discussion. There was also a great session on First Nations/Municipal Relationships. This annual workshop provides an important forum for northern practitioners to meet and share information on common planning issues.

Wendy Sauder can be reached at wr_sauder@hotmail.com.



PHOTO COURTESY: MICHELLE WAGSON

Southwest

An Urban Planning Charrette in Wallaceburg

Benjamin Puzanov

In late February, about 80 GIS and urban planning students from Fanshawe College hosted an urban planning charrette in the Town of Wallaceburg, a small community in Chatham-Kent. The study area was the downtown core in Wallaceburg and the day-long event was the brainchild of the Wallaceburg Community Task Force (WCTF) and Ryan Jacques, a planning technician with the Municipality of Chatham-Kent.

The WCTF is a committee of Council, created to address economic concerns in the Town. Wallaceburg was once a thriving industrial community, but has been struggling for the last decade because of factory closures. The WCTF comprises representatives from the Council, the Wallaceburg Business Improvement Association, the municipality's Economic Development Services and community groups and clubs.

Ryan Jacques, a graduate of the GIS and Urban Planning program at Fanshawe College, spearheaded the effort to bring the students to Wallaceburg. "The Fanshawe charrette is an excellent planning exercise for the students and an opportunity to engage the community of Wallaceburg on planning issues," he explains.

The students of the GIS and urban planning programs were put into 10 groups of up to nine students each. Jacques had travelled to London earlier in the month to introduce the students to the Town of Wallaceburg and

the study area. The students then visited the Town and listened to speakers, including members of the WCTF, the St. Clair Region Conservation Authority and a local historian. After spending the next six days preparing, the students presented their land-use master plans for the study area in front of a panel of judges that included members of the WCTF, as well as local business owners and professionals. The top three groups were asked to return to Wallaceburg on March 11 to present their plans to the community at large.

I could tell from the students' appearance on the morning of the presentations that many had very little sleep during the week of preparation. Nonetheless, they offered an excellent analysis of the Town of Wallaceburg and presented innovative plans for developing the downtown core.

(Cont. on page 12)

Call to Action (Cont. from page 10)

guidelines is in the 90-page document *Child- and Youth-friendly Land-Use and Transport Planning Guidelines for Ontario; Version 2*, at <http://www.kidsonthemove.ca>.)

The Centre for Sustainable Transportation and development of the Guidelines

With support from the Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Centre for Sustainable Transportation (CST) produced the 72-page *Child and Youth Friendly Land-Use and Transportation Guidelines* document in 2005, when CST was located in the Toronto region. That document is available at <http://www.kidsonthemove.ca>. Since then, CST has become part of the University of Winnipeg.

With support from the Public Health Agency of Canada, CST is now preparing guidelines documents for the other nine provinces. In the course of that work, the guidelines have been revised and reduced in number from the original 27 to the 21 that appear above. Version 2 of the *Guidelines* document is also available at <http://www.kidsonthemove.ca>. With further support from the Trillium Foundation, CST has been disseminating the guidelines within Ontario, with the help of OPPI. This Call to Action arises from that collaboration.

For further information, please contact Loretta Ryan, MCIP, RPP, CAE, Manager, Policy and Communications, OPPI, 416-668-8469 or policy@ontarioplanners.on.ca.

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(Southwest, cont. from page 11)

As expected, the central theme of the presentations was the redevelopment of the banks of the Sydenham River. Running through the heart of Wallaceburg, the river has been a source of concern for local residents, especially when flooding in the area forced the municipality to declare a temporary state of emergency. Several groups recommended the development of a marina, while others suggested public docks as a more cost-efficient alternative. Most importantly, however, the groups addressed the issue of the riverfront and the need to redevelop it as an inviting and open public space.

In preparing their land use master plans for Wallaceburg's downtown core, the students examined municipal documents, including the Wallaceburg Community Vision 2020. Drafted in 2007 by the WCTF and the residents of Wallaceburg, Vision 2020 was the result of several days of talks and discussions on the future of the Town. The chief objectives of the plan include improving economic development, creating a vibrant quality of life, building sustainable infrastructure and marketing the Town as a year-round tourist destination.

The winning plan included a phased redevelopment approach, downtown beautification, redevelopment of the river, better vehicular and pedestrian traffic circulation in the downtown core and incentives for businesses that back onto the river to build patios and inviting rear entrances into their establishments. The judges were impressed with all of the submissions and decided to invite the top four groups back to present their land use plans to the community at large in mid-March.

Benjamin Puzanov is the newly appointed district editor for the South West district. He can be reached at benp@storeysamways.ca.

Toronto

Annual Friends of Planning Spring Social

The U of T's 13th annual Friends of Planning Spring event will be held on April 16 at Hart House. Well-known architect Bruce Kuwabara, a partner with KPMB Architects, is the featured speaker. His talk will ask "Is Toronto Ourtopia?" His evolving thesis is Toronto has the potential to become a viable and sustainable urban model that is directly a reflection of that uniquely Canadian condition.

Western Lake Ontario

Whistler Mayor talks to Halton about becoming sustainable

Linda Axford

Early in January 2009, Halton Region held a Community Sustainability Forum. Ken Melamed, the Mayor of Whistler, British Columbia, spoke to local residents, community groups and municipal employees about Whistler's journey towards becoming a sustainable community.

Through the Whistler 2020 Sustainability Plan, Whistler progressed from a community that practised environmental stewardship to one that looks through a sustainability lens at all its decisions. The community used the steps and framework of The Natural Step to create a strategic plan, which included 17 action task forces. The plan brought together community groups and businesses to work with local government to build a stronger community and promote sustainability.

Mayor Melamed talked in detail about the process of developing and implementing

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Whistler2020, and also about the steps Whistler is taking to make the 2010 Winter Olympic Games the most sustainable games ever. He stressed the importance of community pride, the need for long-term thinking, and being systematic in one's approach. He noted that one of the reasons for their success has been that Whistler2020, although city-led, is in fact community-owned.

The Forum began with both Halton Region and local environmental groups showcasing some of the current "green" initiatives already underway across the region, including the Air Quality Program, the Landfill Gas Capture Project, and Energy Management.

Linda Axford is a Senior Policy Analyst with the Region.

People

Ron Glenn Moves to Halton

The Region of Halton has made three appointments in its planning services division. **Ron Glenn** is the new Director of Planning and Chief Planning Official. Ron comes to the Region with 25 years experience in planning policy and development at the municipal and provincial level. Most recently, he was the Ministry lead in the implementation of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe with the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure. Ron was also instrumental in the 2007 *Planning Act* reform with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Ron's educational background includes urban and regional planning, urban design and public administration. Also joining the Region is **Robert Walters** who takes on the role of Manager of Current Planning. Robert was previously a Senior Project Manager with the City of Hamilton and brings over 20



Ron Glenn

years of current planning and development application experience. Robert holds a masters in planning. **Haiqing Xu** is the Manager of Long Range Planning. Haiqing previously worked with the City of Toronto and the Town of Caledon. Haiqing holds a PhD in Urban and Town Planning.

Christian Huggett was recently promoted to Associate at the Toronto architecture firm, &Co (Sweeny Sterling Finlayson & Co Architects). He can be reached at Christian@andco.com and directly at (416) 971-4942. Christian is also the Toronto District's representative on Council.

Steve Rowe, known to Ontario Planning Journal readers as contributing editor for Environment, has been appointed Chair of the Environment Working Committee of OPPI's Policy Development Committee.

Chris Madej has moved from Manager of Planning for the Town of Huntsville, the position of Director of Planning for Seguin Township.

In April 2008, **André Robichaud** joined the Planning Division of the City of Timmins as an Intermediate Planner. He has also worked as part of the Timmins Economic Development Corporation, conducting research and analysis seeking to improve local health and judiciary services. Andre feels fortunate to have this opportunity to apply his planning skills with the City of Timmins, where he was born and raised.

Adam Kozlowski started with Seguin Township as Intermediate Planner in May 2008. Prior to this position, he was Planner at the Township of Oro-Medonte.

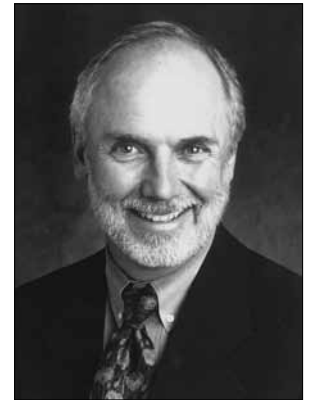
Charley White has joined the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Sudbury Office as the Algoma District Planner. Charley began her planning career with the City of Thunder Bay; she then moved to Ainley Graham as a planning consultant and most recently served as planner for the County of Hastings.

Steve McArthur was recently promoted to Senior Planner, Current Operations, in the City of North Bay. He is also chair of the City's Development Application Review Team and Secretary-Treasurer of the Planning Advisory Committee. This is his second term with the City of North Bay, having been employed by the Planning and Economic Development Department shortly after graduating from Nipissing University in 1995. Before rejoining the City, he was employed in a variety of capacities in the private sector. He is thoroughly enjoying his return to the public sector, as the City of North Bay has experi-

enced three straight years of record-breaking construction activity.

Dan Leeming, a partner with the Planning Partnership, co-chair of the Toronto Design Review Panel, and a frequent contributor to the *Ontario Planning Journal*, has

been appointed co-chair of the Canada Green Buildings Council's LEED-ND committee charged with reviewing the LEED-ND credit system, making revisions and recommending changes



Dan Leeming

through a national committee to develop an appropriate rating system for Canadian use. The committee will work through 2009 on the rating system, in consultation with USGBC, in order to have a finalized system ready for early 2010. Dan has also been appointed to the Board of Active Healthy Kids Canada. AHK is a charitable organization that advocates for the importance of physical activity for children where they live, work and play.

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Obituary

IN MEMORIAM Donald M. Paterson

Don Paterson, MCIP, RPP, died in February 2009. He was 84 years old. Don was one of the pre-eminent planners of his generation in Ontario, and made a significant contribution in both public and private sectors. Don joined the Town Planning Institute of Canada in the early 1950s and remained a member of the Institute virtually until his death.

Growing up in Toronto, Don graduated from the University of Toronto with a B.A. in Political Science and Economics, and an M.A. in Economics, followed by a Diploma in Urban Planning.

The early 1950s was an exciting time to be a planner in the Toronto area, dealing with post-war growth and, with the formation of Metro Toronto, the first attempts at regional planning. Don's planning career began in the former Township of Toronto (now part of Mississauga). He then joined the newly formed Metropolitan Toronto Planning Department, rising to the position of Director of Research and working with colleagues such as Eli Comay, Hans Blumenfeld, Murray Jones, John Bower, John Carson, and John Bousfield.

Don was a major contributor to Metro's first official plan, undertaking research on land needs, preparing growth forecasts—all before the availability of computing power. In the late 1960s, Don established Paterson Planning and Research Ltd., one of the first consulting firms to focus on planning research (growth strategies, housing, market, municipal finance and transportation), rather than official plans, zoning and subdivisions. The firm, which grew to a staff of eight in the 1970s, was an immediate success, and Don's reputation for integrity and professionalism attracted a wide range of work. Don was

also one of the first practitioners to recognize the role of municipal financial issues as a consideration in development approval processes.

Don was involved in many significant planning issues of the late 1960s and the 1970s, including the approval of the St. Jamestown expansion in Toronto, the development of the Metro Transportation Plan, the long-term development strategy for the Town of Oakville, the location of

Highway 402 around the City of London, and school facility planning for the Ottawa-Carleton School Board.

His expertise in local government organization and finance resulted in assignments related to the creation of the District of Muskoka, the Region of Durham, the Region of Ottawa-Carleton, the Region of York, and the City of Thunder Bay. He did similar studies for the Province of Newfoundland, involving the St.



Don Paterson

John's Avalon Peninsula and the Windsor/Grand Falls areas.

For those who worked with Don, his calm, patient, cheerful demeanour, whatever the task or circumstances, will be one of our greatest memories. His willingness to mentor those who worked for him—many of whom have gone on to form their own firms and/or establish prominent careers in their respective fields—has created an enduring legacy.

Outside his professional life, Don was devoted to his wife and family, particularly enjoying gatherings of family and friends at his Muskoka cottage. He loved Big Band music, old movies and photography. More recently, he reconnected with his Air Force squadron, often attending events and reunions. Don is survived by five children and four grandchildren.

Connie Kilgour, MCIP, RPP, is an Associate with Watson and Associates Economists Ltd. and worked for Paterson Planning and Research Ltd. from 1973 to 1983.



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The importance of children

George McKibbon

AT A RECENT OPPI Council meeting, a colleague shared the news that he had become a grandfather. Parenting is a wonderful experience and my wife and I remember fondly the times we spent together as our children matured into the people they are today. This experience permeates how I practise planning.

Since November 2006, I have been engaged in the development and implementation of OPPI's Healthy Communities initiative as a member of the Policy Committee and Director of Policy. Nothing has impressed me more deeply than the findings of public health scientists such as Dr. Stephen Cook from the University of Rochester.

Dr. Cook reports that youth are affected by obesity at such high rates that we are now seeing health conditions such as hypertension and adult-onset diabetes in teens. Our children and grandchildren who have weight problems and whose lives are characterized by lack of exercise and poor nutrition face the prospect that their lives will likely not be as long and as rich as ours.

OPPI is developing resources to respond to these challenges. In advance of February 16, 2009, Family Day, we released a Call to Action titled Plan for the Needs of Children and Youth (see feature story, page 9). This call explains the necessity of giving priority to the needs of children and youth in land use and transportation planning by creating more active built environments for our communities.

We highlight the excellent work of our partner, the Centre for Sustainable Transportation at the University of Winnipeg, and lay the foundation for

promoting new development standards. Our Policy Committee members are also helping the Canadian Green Building Council Committee adapt the LEED ND standards for Canadian use. We raised these issues on the eve of Family Day to urge you to help bring about the necessary changes so our children and grandchildren can grow up in active communities.

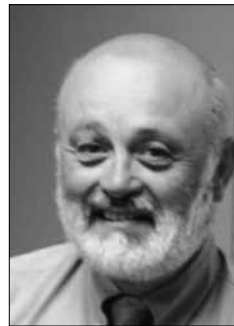
You can do your part to reduce our reliance on the automobile and provide young people with reliable and safe opportunities to walk, cycle and take public transport. OPPI's Healthy Communities Policy and this Call to Action will provide you with guidance.

Your Policy Committee will also continue collaborating with stakeholders such as the Centre for Sustainable Transportation and the Ministries of Municipal Affairs and Health and Long Term Care to promote more active environments.

Remember, "Unless effective interventions to reduce obesity are developed, the steady rise of life expectancy observed in the modern era may soon come to an end and the youth

of today may live shorter lives than their parents." That is the conclusion of an article in the *New England Journal of Medicine* (March 2005, vol. 352, no. 11, pp. 1138-1145). Think of our profession's response to this challenge as a gift for our children and their children.

George McKibbon MCIP, RPP, AICP, is OPPI's Director of Policy Development. He is also a principal of McKibbon Wakefield Inc. environmental planning in Hamilton. He can be reached at Georgeh@mckibbonwakefield.com.



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Research is the bridge between professional silos

Bruce Singbush

ENSURING THE GROWTH of our profession, our body of knowledge and our continuing relevance requires strong connections between the academic and professional sectors.

Over the past four years, OPPI's Membership Outreach Committee has focused on reaching out to the academic sector, students in particular, recognizing the importance of developing the next generation of planners. We recently asked the students and faculty for their perspectives on what OPPI could do better and we got some sound advice.

The students told us that OPPI needed to work more closely with our accredited planning schools' faculty, as they were their first point of contact about Institute and the profession itself. They also told us that OPPI needed to provide better networking opportunities to help them make the transition into the workforce.

The faculty told us the OPPI could diversify

and improve the methods of information exchange between faculty and practitioners, particularly if we were to advance OPPI's Strategic Plan goal of promoting research in planning.

Research is a common thread across the academic and professional sectors of OPPI.

- Students use research activities as an approach to help develop their planning skills.
- Faculty produces research to expand the knowledge base and forge connections among the many areas of activities within the profession.
- Practitioners apply research on emerging trends and best practices to inform their professional practice.
- OPPI applies research to become a leader in public policy and innovative planning practice.

With the launch of Research Link on OPPI's website, planners can now stay on top

of emerging trends, analysis and thinking that will impact our profession and communities, and stay in touch with those working in our accredited Planning Programs.

Research Link provides direct access to the knowledge contained within Ontario's accredited planning programs, including the latest faculty and staff research.

In future, the Membership Outreach Committee will explore opportunities to help match researchers' needs with potential partnership opportunities as well as opportunities to use of OPPI's existing communication vehicles, such as the Journal, the e-newsletter and conferences and symposia, to ensure that the profession has the research information it needs to address emerging issues and trends.

Bruce Singbush, MCIP, RPP, is the Toronto District Representative for the Membership Outreach Committee. He is also the Director of Real Estate Policy for the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure.

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World Town Planning Day Recap

David Aston

WORLD TOWN PLANNING DAY (WTPD) 2008 was one of the most successful in years.

Congratulations to everyone who volunteered their time to create opportunities for greater recognition of the planning profession.

This year's WTPD included design workshops, presentations, site and neighbourhood tours and social events. We also reached out to a wide range of people and ages, from a Grade 1 class to university students and members of the public. Public health, the urban food system, sustainable design, aging communities and development of neighbourhood stadiums were among some of the topics featured. The success of WTPD sends a clear message that planning for healthy communities is important to people of all ages and interests. Here are some examples:

- A public lecture by Gerald Hodge on the geography of aging and preparing communities for an aging population;

- A design charrette for a main street corridor in Downtown Kitchener;
- Planning for sustainability and a presentation on the history of public health planning;
- Presentation on models of stadium design within suburban, downtown, neighbourhood settings;
- A presentation from a Cuban planner on the Master Plan for 21st-century Havana;
- A walking tour of old town Toronto;
- Community-building exercises with public schools, high school and university students, including a program reaching out to eight high schools with 18 sessions (where approximately 850 students were involved).

All of the volunteers and participants reported on great new relationships and partnerships being formed. Thanks again to everyone who participated.

David Aston, MCIP, RPP, is the WTPD Representative on OPPI's Recognition Committee and works with MHBC Planning. He is also contributing editor for In Print.

Toronto District Update

Christian Hugget

THIS YEAR is proving to be a busy one in the Toronto District. Our winter social was a terrific success, held at the Miller Tavern for the second year, where we shared hosting duties with Oak Ridges District. We welcomed new student, provisional and full members and held a raffle: the grand prize was a set of Platinum Leafs tickets. We reduced the attendance fee from last year by \$10, and with an attendance of 110, coupled with donations from generous sponsors, we generated a profit of \$3,500. These funds will be used within the District towards events and partnerships over this current year.



Christian Hugget

On March 27, we will be holding our third annual P4: Planning Perspectives at the Gladstone Hotel. This event will feature different planning perspectives from practicing planners, offering a sense of the range of opportunities a planning background can provide. For the past two years, about 90 people have attended this popular event.

Upcoming events include:

- An investigation of TransitCity/Metrolinx Plan
- The Motel Strip Revisited
- Building Green in Toronto.

We will soon start planning for World Town Planning Day in November. We hope to repeat last year's successful formula of holding three or four events.

A special thank you to the following people who have helped make the Toronto District run smoothly over the past year:

- David Oikawa, representative on the Policy Committee

- Paul Richardson, representative on the Recognition Committee
- Aviva Pelt, OPPI student representative.

I am pleased to say that David, Paul and Aviva will continue as members of the Toronto Executive. Adrian Litavski is our new representative on the Policy Committee, Dan Nicholson has taken on Professional Practice, and we will soon announce our new representative for Recognition.

Please contact me if you are interested in getting involved with any of the activities in Toronto or have any questions or ideas.

Christian Huggett, MCIP, RPP, is the OPPI District Representative for Toronto. He was recently promoted to Associate at the Toronto architecture firm, &Co (Sweeny Sterling Finlayson & Co Architects). He can be reached at 416-971-4942 or Christian@andco.com.



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Choosing the Right Path

Glenn Miller

WHO WOULD WANT to be a politician in today's economic climate? The policy choices that have to be made typically vary from "bad" to "really bad." "Fair" would be a positive relief. For better or worse, however, the Ontario budget has been brought down, and the government has attempted to strike a balance between stimulating the economy and laying the ground for a transition to a radically different, greener economy while protecting our most vulnerable institutions.

David Owen, writing in the *New Yorker* magazine about recent decisions by the Obama administration, points out that the desire to revive the economy and the ambition to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by creating "green" jobs may well be antithetical goals. Here in Ontario, Bill 150—tabled just before the budget—promises to aggressively accelerate the pace of investment in renewables. If adopted by the legislature, the proposed "feed-in tariff" would put Ontario at the forefront of jurisdictions seeking to reduce their dependence on fossil fuels.

The response to the concepts promoted by the *Green Energy Act* from potential investors is apparently significant. The second part of the title of Bill 150—"the Green Energy and Green Economy Act"—tends to be forgotten, even though the preamble of the bill boldly

states that 50,000 jobs will be generated. Industry observers suggest that this claim may even be conservative, but at the very least it is credible, citing the fact since that the government relied on the same economists hired by President Obama to calculate the economic spin-off of U.S. energy-related investments.

It is still early days to know if the Ontario government's plans can stimulate the economy and steer a path to lower emissions, but if York professor José Etcheverry is correct, planners need to learn more about the energy sector if we are to understand what is feasible in this new economy. Evidence from Europe documented by Etcheverry suggests that intermittent renewable energy sources such as wind power can in fact become a valuable power source. The answers lie in a concept promoted by Bill 150—the "smart grid." More on this in Steve Rowe's article on page 24 and in the next issue.

Glenn Miller, FCIP, RPP, is editor of the Ontario Planning Journal and vice president, education and research, with the Canadian Urban Institute. Visit www.mei.on.ca for more information on Bill 150. A copy of OPPI's submission on Bill 150 is available at <http://www.ontarioplanners.on.ca/content/Publications/watchingbriefs.aspx>.



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Letters

MANY THANKS to the Institute for printing the Decisions of the Discipline Committee in the January/February issue of the Ontario Planning Journal.

But more needs to be done, particularly if the Institute is to mature toward credible self-regulation. The shroud of secrecy must come off disciplinary proceedings. At the very least:

1. There needs to be regular reporting of complaints as they are received. This action does not require publication of names at this stage. However, Members need to know the substance and the boundaries of the areas of concern where alleged breach is occurring. Without this awareness continuous improvement of our collective standard of conduct will be delayed and frustrated, and the Institute held in a state of 'arrested development'.

2. There needs to be greater transparency and openness in the disciplinary process, and 'confidentiality' must be abandoned

where breaches of the Code have occurred. Names must be openly reported in all instances. Members who choose to breach the Code need to know that there will be direct and personal consequences, and that the shroud of 'confidentiality' will not protect them.

In addition, the Institute needs to take ownership of the complaints process. The personal investment required to pursue a complaint may be an impediment to an individual Member's ability to exercise his/her responsibility to support the Code, and should therefore be removed.

The Institute exists to represent all Members. The indiscretions of one Member affect the reputations of the collective. Hence collective disciplinary action, as manifested by the Institute, is warranted. Enforcement of its own rules is a basic commitment for any organization that aspires to be a credible self-regulating profession.

—Alan Gummo, MCIP, RPP

Transit Vision 2040—CUTA Takes the Long View

Michael Roschlau

THE CANADIAN URBAN TRANSIT ASSOCIATION (CUTA) is developing a vision and a comprehensive definition of the role of public transit in Canada with a generational view: it will articulate a vision stretching out to 2040.

The public transit visioning exercise is taking place in the context of increasing concern about future community sustainability, changing demographics and new settlement patterns. It will involve future scenarios that take these issues into account, and will be structured around key strategic perspectives.

The framework will include models at different scales: small town and rural; small and medium-sized city; large city; and metropolitan. At each scale, multiple scenarios will be developed, reflecting the impact of the continuation of business as usual, or a transition towards new transit-oriented community designs and better integration between land use and transportation planning.

These scenarios will have different investment implications, both in terms of infrastructure and transit operating costs. They will also have implications for transit governance, funding and revenue streams, as well as the capacity of the industry, in terms of transit systems and suppliers. In considering these implications, CUTA will articulate requirements for achieving its vision.

The first phase involved a detailed session with the CUTA Executive Committee and outreach to engage the entire public transit community as well as other stakeholders.

Plans call for development of substantive vision elements for release at the June 2009 CUTA Annual Conference, to be held in conjunction with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in Whistler, B.C.

At the 2008 CUTA Youth Summit on

Federation of Canadian Municipalities, the Transportation Association of Canada, the Canadian Home Builders Association and the Canadian Institute of Planners. Initial presentations were made to the FCM's Standing Committee on Municipal

Infrastructure and Transport Policy as well as to the Urban Transportation Council of the Transportation Association of Canada last fall. Further consultations with these other organizations took place in November and December of last year, and again in January and February 2009.

As initial draft versions of the vision emerged, a group of some 25 expert panelists were interviewed for comment and feedback. These included former provincial premiers, former federal ministers, academics, visionaries and other key people of influence, who are helping to shape and verify the vision elements.

Plans call for the final version to be presented at the joint CUTA-FCM Annual Conference in Whistler B.C. in early June, at which point the full content will be available for wide distribution.

Michael Roschlau is President and CEO of the Canadian Urban Transit Association. Provided that the vision is adopted at the June conference, planners can expect to see the details addressed at meetings such as the joint CIP/OPPI conference this fall.



PHOTO: IAN MYRANS

Province stimulates transit vision with spending plans

Sustainable Urban Transportation, held in Vancouver last August, a group of delegates involved in the World Youth Parliament process of the International Association of Public Transit provided the first input to Vision 2040. Involvement of the youth delegates is a natural part of this initiative, as young people aged 17 to 25 are the generation that will be in key leadership and decision-making positions in 2040.

As part of Vision 2040, CUTA is consulting with related organizations, such as the

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

If you have any comments about what you see or read in the Journal, send your letters to: editor@ontarioplanning.com

Formatting Do's and Don'ts

Do name your files ("OPPI article" doesn't help) and do include biographical information. Don't send us PDFs. Don't embed graphics with text, or text in text boxes.

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Planning Futures

Dead Malls: Is there an afterlife?

Paul J. Bedford

MY RECENT DRIVING trip down the U.S. east coast was a real eye-opener, with the mortgage meltdown and depth of the recession in full view. The landscape was littered with vacant shopping centres, lifeless malls and even empty big-box stores. Many had clearly been in this condition for some time, but others were relatively new facilities that had been abandoned.

The impact of the recession in the United States is far more severe than in Canada, but I couldn't help but wonder if I was seeing a preview of our own future. My planner's curiosity was piqued. What is behind the throw-away mindset of shopping centres? Is there an afterlife for dead malls? What lessons should Canadian planners take from this phenomenon?

Facts of Life

Some Internet research unearthed a mountain of information on the state of malls across the United States and Canada. I was

amazed to discover there is a website called deadmalls.com that documents the number of dead malls by state and province. It comes complete with statistics, pictures and stories about retail establishments, including past and present malls. I do not know how up-to-date the inventory is, but I noticed the Ontario list included the Bayside Mall in Sarnia, the Galleria in London, the Honeydale Mall in Etobicoke and the Whitby Mall.

Apparently there are about 2,000 malls in the U.S. and 20 percent of them are failing. A staggering half a billion square feet of retail space lies empty. Even Wal-Mart has abandoned 400 stores across the United States. The concept of throwaway malls, plazas and big-box stores seems to be very common, especially on traditional commercial suburban strip highways. The sight of rundown empty plazas and malls with acres of asphalt sprouting weeds was depressing. Some facilities have been left to rot; others are being replaced by

larger and newer big-box centres, located further out on new greenfield land. It makes you wonder where society is headed, if this is the best we can do.

Alternative Futures

Given the sorry state of the U.S. economy and the dominant role that retail shopping plays in generating economic growth, several different approaches are being tried to keep malls alive, to revive them and to re-invent the nature of the mall. The biggest single factor in determining if there is an afterlife for malls is location, location, location.

Some malls have opted to become thrift centres, specializing in discount stores catering to a population experiencing hard times. This model has been around for some time, especially in older and marginal shopping plaza locations. There are just a lot more in evidence these days. This approach is often temporary and is usually the last stage of mall occupancy before it closes.



Some of the vacant half a billion square feet

At the opposite end of the scale is the exclusive high-end mall that targets upper-income households. This model is also well-established and appears to have reached its limit. New malls of this type are rare. In fact, new malls of any type are rare.

Suburban outlet power centres are common in larger centres. These monsters gobble up greenfield land, perpetuate sprawl and tend to kill off older malls and shopping centres. They are usually located in rapidly growing areas and are of course 100 percent car-dependent. Larger Ontario cities are full of them.

Lifestyle open-air centres are a relatively new phenomenon. They may be built new or as replacements for old malls. About 30 lifestyle centres have been built since 2005.

De-Malling the Mall

To me, what shows most promise for planners and developers alike is the transformation of former malls into completely different mixed-use centres, encompassing a full range of retail uses with a variety of housing types, as well as community and recreation facilities, offices and parks. These places are not merely added on to existing malls, but involve a partial or total demolition of the mall with plan for blocks and streets.

The key to making this vision work is a desirable location, served by major roads and transit. Examples can be found in suburban Denver, Salt Lake City and Boston. The former Don Mills Mall at Lawrence and Don Mills Road in Toronto, scheduled to reopen in April 2009 as an urban village, has some features of this concept.

The principles associated with deconstructing the mall hold potential for successfully transforming established malls like the Scarborough Town Centre, Mississauga City Centre, or Sherway Gardens into diverse, mixed-use centres that are real places. Each of these locations already has isolated pockets of residential, office, government, and community uses, but they surround the mall and parking lots, instead of being integrated into the fabric of the mall itself.

Such a change involves re-thinking the mall by transforming the acres of free surface parking into underground and or parking structures, developing a street grid instead of a circular perimeter road, building a full range of low-, medium- and high-rise rental, condo and townhouse units on new blocks lined with sidewalks, putting housing above stores, and creating new parks at grade and on the roof of the mall.

Community centres, recreation facilities, health clinics, libraries, day care, and all other normal daily uses found in successful

neighbourhoods would be part of the concept.

The key would be to transform the mall into a community asset, not just a retail asset. The place could attract young couples, empty nesters, traditional mall lovers and a new breed of suburbanites who are tired of living in cul-de-sacs, yet do not want to live in a dense inner-city environment. De-malling the mall could bring together many of the best parts of urban and suburban life.

Canada's malls are generally in pretty good shape, but given the deteriorating state of the economy, this could change quickly. Their continuous evolution from shopping centres to real town centres is a tremendous opportu-

nity that should not be lost. The good news is that we have an endless supply of greyfield malls in Ontario of all sizes that could benefit from such tough urban love.

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. He is also a Senior Associate with the Canadian Urban Institute.

Climate Change

Cashews and Climate Change

Beate Bowron and Gary Davidson

HOW CAN CASHEW TREES possibly be linked to climate change? If you are the Governor of the island province of Guimaras in the Philippines' Western Visayas Region, they can make a big difference. Governor Felipe Nava, an orthopedic surgeon who treats patients free of charge out of his gubernatorial office, knows what he is talking about.

The provincial government of Guimaras grows thousands of cashew tree plants a year

and gives them away, with instructions for cultivating them, to any citizen who wants them and has some land on which to plant them. A public education campaign ensures that Guimaras

residents are aware of the program. Cashew trees are easy to grow, do not need to be sprayed, contribute to the province's tree canopy and improve the economic livelihood of

the grower. For the record, Guimaras cashews also taste better than their Brazilian counterparts! Each year, the Governor registers the number of trees distributed through the Kyoto Protocol for carbon credits. That's the link to climate change: mitigation, one tree at a time.

Arctic connections

Our work in Nunavut on climate change adaptation with the Canadian Institute of

Planners and in the Philippines on regional planning issues with the Canadian Urban Institute has brought us face-to-face with the direct connections between the two geographies.



Rising water levels threaten residents throughout the Philippines

The Fourth International Panel on Climate Change (IPCC) has projected a 1.3-metre rise in sea levels around the world by the end of the century. This forecast is

extremely conservative. IPCC scientists chose to omit Greenland from their calculations, since they could not agree on the pace of change in the deterioration of its ice cap. The latest reports are far from reassuring. More recent scientific studies have suggested that, if the rate of sea level rise observed between 1993 and 2003 continues at the same pace, the ultimate rise in sea levels will exceed three metres over the next 100 years. The difference between these two projections (1.3 metres and 3 metres) is alarming.

Threatened coastlines

Even if only the lower predictions materialize, the impact on coastal landscapes all over the world, including the Philippines, will be severe. The area we have been working in—the City of Iloilo and its five suburbs—is less than 1.5 metres above sea level for the most part. This area alone is projected to grow to 1.25 million people by 2020, many of whom will live in flood-prone districts.

Ilonggos had a taste of what may be to come when Typhoon Frank (internationally known as Typhoon Fengshen) devastated the area on June 21, 2008, flooding roads, houses and schools and resulting in many deaths and the displacement of thousands of people. Within 24 hours, the area received 354 mm of rainfall, which is more than the average monthly total.

Iloilo's three rivers, the Jaro River, the Batiano River and the tidal Iloilo River, could not deal with the storm surges. Typhoon Frank was classified as a one-in-400-year storm. The extensive and costly floodway currently under construction to protect the city is being built for a one-in-50-years flood. Not a reassuring thought.

Responding to the challenges

Planners in Metro Iloilo and Guimaras Economic Development Council (MIGEDC) are aware of the challenges. They realize that planning has to embrace a bio-regional approach and include the municipalities within the watershed areas outside the voluntary regional association. They also realize that climate change is here

to stay and that mitigation and adaptation planning are no longer optional, but necessary. Like planners everywhere, they struggle

Not only the planners are rising to the occasion. The aforementioned Governor of Guimaras has initiated wind-monitoring on the island to determine the feasibility of future wind turbines. Preliminary results are encouraging. If all goes well, Guimaras will be able to produce enough energy through wind power to meet its own needs and even sell a surplus into the grid. When that happens, the province can acquire more carbon credits. In many respects, it is the accumulation of carbon credits that makes these programs economically feasible in the short term until the longer-term benefits kick in.

Making essential connections

In Guimaras's capital San Miguel, we met another political climate change crusader, a councillor from San Lorenzo, one of the province's seven municipalities. He is on a personal mission to educate his colleagues about climate change in general, its potential effects on the Philippines in particular, and actions that must be taken.

He was preparing a presentation on sea level rise, re-forestation and flood protection. However, he had not yet made the connection to the causes of potential sea level rise in the Philippines. The Canadian Arctic and Greenland are thousands of miles away, not only physically but also in terms of cultural understanding.

Nunavut and the Philippines—two extreme climates, from 40 degrees below zero to 40 degrees above—and yet climate change affects them both equally. It's the number of people affected that is vastly different. In the Canadian North, hamlets of 800 people will have to alter their way of life, while in the Philippines millions of people may have to be relocated.

Sea-level rise may be the connective tissue for international climate change planning and the links are not only between the Canadian Arctic and the Philippines. Most of the world's population lives close to the sea.

Consider the impact that even the lower estimate of the projected sea level rise will have on the South Sea Islands. Last year's Planning Institute of Australia conference



Flood damage is destructive and costly in a jurisdiction with no money to spare

with how best to incorporate appropriate planning policies into land use plans that are up for review next year.

drew a contingent from Samoa and Fiji to learn about sea level rise and the role of the Arctic Seas to inform their climate change adaptation planning.

Planting a cashew tree may not seem like a big step in the fight to slow global warming, but it is a local adaptation that encompasses a wide range of issues—climate change, re-forestation, flood control, community economic development and poverty reduction. Guimaras is doing its part, one tree at a time.

Beate Bowron, FCIP, RPP, is the Ontario Planning Journal's contributing editor for Climate Change. As president of Beate Bowron Etcetera she handles an eclectic portfolio of planning projects in Canada and abroad. Gary Davidson, FCIP, RPP, also works extensively on climate change. Beate and Gary are completing the Climate Change Adaptation Plan for the Government of Nunavut. Beate can be contacted by e-mail at beatebowron@sympatico.ca.

Heritage

Town of Aurora Receives Prince of Wales Prize for Municipal Heritage Leadership

Michael Seaman



Aurora's heritage earned recognition from the Prince of Wales

WHEN the Heritage Canada Foundation announced the 2008 award winners last September, residents of the Town of Aurora, Ontario, were thrilled to hear that their community was to receive royal recognition as the winner of the ninth Prince of Wales Prize for Municipal Heritage Leadership. In choosing the recipient, the jury cited both the determination of Aurora to preserve and promote its legacy

through bylaws and policies, and the commitment of the community to ensuring that local heritage is preserved.

The Prince of Wales Prize was established in 1999 by the Heritage Canada Foundation, under the patronage of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, to honour a municipal government for demonstrating exemplary commitment to the preservation of its built heritage. The local gov-

ernment must have a record of supporting heritage preservation through such means as regulation, policies, funding and exemplary stewardship.

Previous winners have included Victoria, Quebec City, Charlottetown, St. John's, Saint John, Annapolis Royal, Perth and Markham. Aurora is the third recipient from Ontario, and the first since the *Ontario Heritage Act* was amended in 2005 to give municipalities the power to permanently protect heritage resources.

Testament to local involvement

The selection of Aurora for the 2008 prize is a testament to the enthusiasm of volunteers and willingness of heritage property owners in Aurora to preserve and celebrate local heritage, despite intense development pressure and the doubling of the population since 1986 to the present-day 50,000. Aurora has maintained more than 95 percent of the heritage buildings that existed before the Second World War.

Its Planning department, headed by Sue Seibert, Director of Planning for 32 years, and more recently by Marco Ramunno, must take some of the credit. Successfully balancing unprecedented growth with a strong interest in preserving its rich history and heritage, Aurora has consistently been a pioneer in the development and implementation of heritage conservation tools and policies.

Aurora was one of the first communities in Ontario to establish a Municipal Heritage Advisory Committee and as early as 1975, include heritage policies that emphasized the preservation of historic neighbourhoods in the Town's official plan. These policies have provided the benchmark for the successful conservation and adaptive reuse of heritage resources in new developments and along arterial roads such as along Wellington Street.

Another innovative tool is the "Area of Heritage Resources" overlay in the official plan, which provides a simple yet effective policy framework for encouraging the conservation of heritage resources and compatible design in Old Aurora.

A commitment to ensuring all staff have an understanding of heritage legislation and objectives is an important part of Aurora's heritage planning program. For example, when the *Ontario Heritage Act* was changed in 2005 and 2006, and Aurora's heritage register and first heritage district were established, all Planning and Building department staff received training in the *Ontario Heritage Act*. As a result, heritage is not just the responsibility of the heritage planner, but something that all staff have a mandate to support.

The centrepiece of Aurora's conservation program is the 1886 Church Street School, which the Town acquired in 1952. Today the Church Street School remains a much-loved landmark and the centrepiece of Aurora's progressive heritage conservation program. In 2008, the Town committed over \$2.5 million to the restoration and conversion of the Church Street School into the Church Street School Cultural Centre, scheduled to open in spring 2009.

Given the important role of the railways in the development of Aurora (which in 1853 was the first Head of Rail in Canada West), the community successfully lobbied for the restoration of the Aurora train station for commuters in the early 1990s. The restoration and reuse of the historic train station has inspired the restoration of other historic train stations across the GTA. In 2007, Aurora also conserved and designated the Radial Railway Pillar, the last remaining remnant of the Electric Radial Railway that provided service to the community in the early 20th century.

Reflecting on progress

The award reflects the progress Aurora has made in enhancing the municipal heritage conservation program. The Town has more than tripled its number of heritage designations since 2005, which demonstrates that the permanent protection afforded to designated properties is not a deterrent.

A key to Aurora's successful heritage program is the dedication and intelligent promotion of heritage resources by local heritage advocates, some of whom have volunteered in this area for more than 40 years. They have shown a consistent commitment to portraying heritage as an opportunity rather than a constraint when considering development proposals and provide education about heritage in a non-threatening way that most stakeholders can understand.

The heritage plaque program established in the mid-1980s is a classic example. Although heritage plaques impose no legal restrictions, their widespread distribution promotes a sense of awareness, which has led to strong support for designation and conservation. Aurora's heritage advocates have maintained positive relations with heritage property owners and have used these relationships to conserve heritage resources. As a result, a common appreciation has grown that Aurora is a place where heritage is important.

Michael Seaman, MCIP, RPP, is contributing editor for Heritage. Although he now works for Oakville, he was Aurora's heritage planner for a number of years.

Environment

Green Energy on the Horizon

Steve Rowe

IN LATE FEBRUARY, the Minister of Energy and Infrastructure, George Smitherman, introduced Bill 150 into the legislature. Notice and an invitation to comment was subsequently placed on the Environmental Registry. This important legislation represents a new level of provincial commitment to facilitating increased renewable energy generation, energy efficiency, the implementation of a "smart grid," and addressing climate change, with corresponding radical changes to approval processes and mandates. OPP's Policy Committee will review the legislation and provide comments.

This legislation will exempt renewable energy generation facilities and projects from *Planning Act* approvals and establish new

provisions for their approval under the *Environmental Protection Act*. New regulations and policies will include requirements, such as consultation and matters previously dealt with by Certificates of Approval and land-use approvals. While the process would use the *Environmental Assessment Act* definition of the environment, grounds for appeal of a Director's Decision before the Environmental Review Tribunal would be limited in scope.

The facility-permitting provisions may be controversial, but should not detract from other important provisions. For example, municipalities will need to prepare and implement energy conservation and demand management plans in accordance with regulations



Wind power investment could receive a boost from Bill 150 (Shelburne, Ont.)

that require them to consider energy conservation and efficiency when acquiring goods and services and making capital investments. These provisions may be extended to other classes of private facilities.

The challenge to business as usual

The role of green building standards such as LEED should be explored as a means of implementing these provisions. We also need to explore whether transportation demand management plans will be required where new municipal buildings such as hospitals, schools and city halls are constructed.

This new approach could result in awkward situations in which public facilities are planned to maximize transportation fuel efficiency and minimize greenhouse gases, while municipal land use and transportation planning continue with "business as usual."

Should the LEED Neighbourhood Development standards now being adapted to Canadian use and OPPI's recent "Calls to Action" on healthy communities and planning for the needs of children and youth also be considered in developing applicable standards? How do we integrate municipal energy conservation and efficiency plans into the larger municipal planning framework?

Integrating green energy into the grid

Important provisions address the inability of the current transmission grid to integrate large and small renewable energy sources into the provincial electricity grid. Important decisions will need to be made about how renew-

able energy is priced and what classes of consumers will be paid.

We are making the transition from an electrical grid where power generated in larger generation facilities is distributed to consumers to one in which power may be generated from large numbers of smaller generators through a denser transmission grid (known as "distributed energy"). What does this mean in terms of the transmission grid required in municipalities (potentially using municipal rights-of-way) and how will new cost structures affect municipal economic development? How could northern and rural communities, including First Nations, benefit from the generation of local wind and other renewable energy facilities?

The question of noise levels

More important, the transmission system will accommodate electrical generation as an accessory use for many urban and rural uses. Several recent OMB decisions address land use compatibility between small wind and solar generators built as accessible uses. While smaller generators (10 kW or less) are quieter than large wind farms, they may exceed acceptable noise levels in residential neighbourhoods.

The Ministry of the Environment defers to municipal noise bylaws where these are in

place. Many municipalities have approved bylaws to address these land use incompatibilities. Will these provisions also be incorporated into the proposed review and approval schemes or will they be left under municipal jurisdiction in a bifurcated approval system? [Editor's note: the Minister has suggested that the province will establish new provincial setback requirements.]

Tell us what you think

The Policy Development Committee will continue to review these and other issues. Your comments are welcome. Please send these to Loretta Ryan, Manager, Policy & Communications at policy@ontarioplanners.on.ca. The comment period for the Environmental Bill of Rights posting (www.ebr.gov.on.ca) expired on March 26, 2009.

Steve Rowe, MCIP, RPP, is contributing editor for the Environment and principal of Steven Rowe Environmental Consultant. Steve is a member of OPPI's Policy Development Committee and Chair of its Environment Working Group. A copy of OPPI's submission on Bill 150 is available at: <http://www.ontarioplanners.on.ca/content/Publications/watchingbriefs.aspx>.

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Eastern Avenue: City prevails at OMB

Mark Ostler

THE Ontario Municipal Board has rejected a proposal to build a 700,000-sq.-ft. retail development on Eastern Avenue, issuing a decision early in March 2009 following a long and high-profile planning case. The decision denies Smart Centres' appeals for permission to develop a large-scale retail complex at 629, 633 and 675 Eastern Avenue.

The city felt that Smart Centres' proposal would destabilize a healthy employment district. "If it's not broken, there's no need to change the uses," said Brendan O'Callaghan, the city's solicitor in the case. "It's almost fully tenanted, it's functioning well, [it's] a successful employment district."

A changing planning regime

One hurdle for the city was that the applications, originally submitted by Toronto Film Studios Inc. and later taken up by Smart Centres, predated the province's adoption of the Growth Plan, the 2005 Provincial Policy Statement and the *Planning Act* amendments of Bill 51.

"In Bill 51 and in the Growth Plan, we are now for the very first time starting to see that retail is being segregated out for perhaps a dif-

ferent perception of how it functions," O'Callaghan said. "For the first time ever we started to see this differentiation within employment lands between manufacturing and retail, for example. Before that it was all just, 'Jobs are jobs and employment is employment.'"

Because the applications were submitted in 2004, the planning documents in force were the *Planning Act* prior to the adoption of Bill 51, the 1997 Provincial Policy Statement, the former Metropolitan Toronto Official Plan and the former City of Toronto's 1994 Official Plan.

Secondary plan also rejected

The decision rejected not only Smart Centres' proposal, but also the city's own South of Eastern Secondary Plan, approved by Council more than a year ago. The intent of the plan was to protect the employment uses in the area while restricting permissions for large-scale retail developments. The secondary plan sought to cap retail uses in the area (bounded by Eastern Avenue to the north, the Don Valley to the west, Lake Shore Boulevard East to the south and the east side of Woodfield Road to the east) at

300 sq. metres and limit new developments to 30 metres in height.

The OMB found that the secondary plan and the implementing zoning by-law "represent a panicked reaction to an unwanted development scheme and are neither a measured nor rational response . . . They are not the product of a bona fide planning initiative, they are not appropriate, practical, workable, or achievable, and they do not represent good land use planning," OMB vice-chair James McKenzie wrote in the decision.

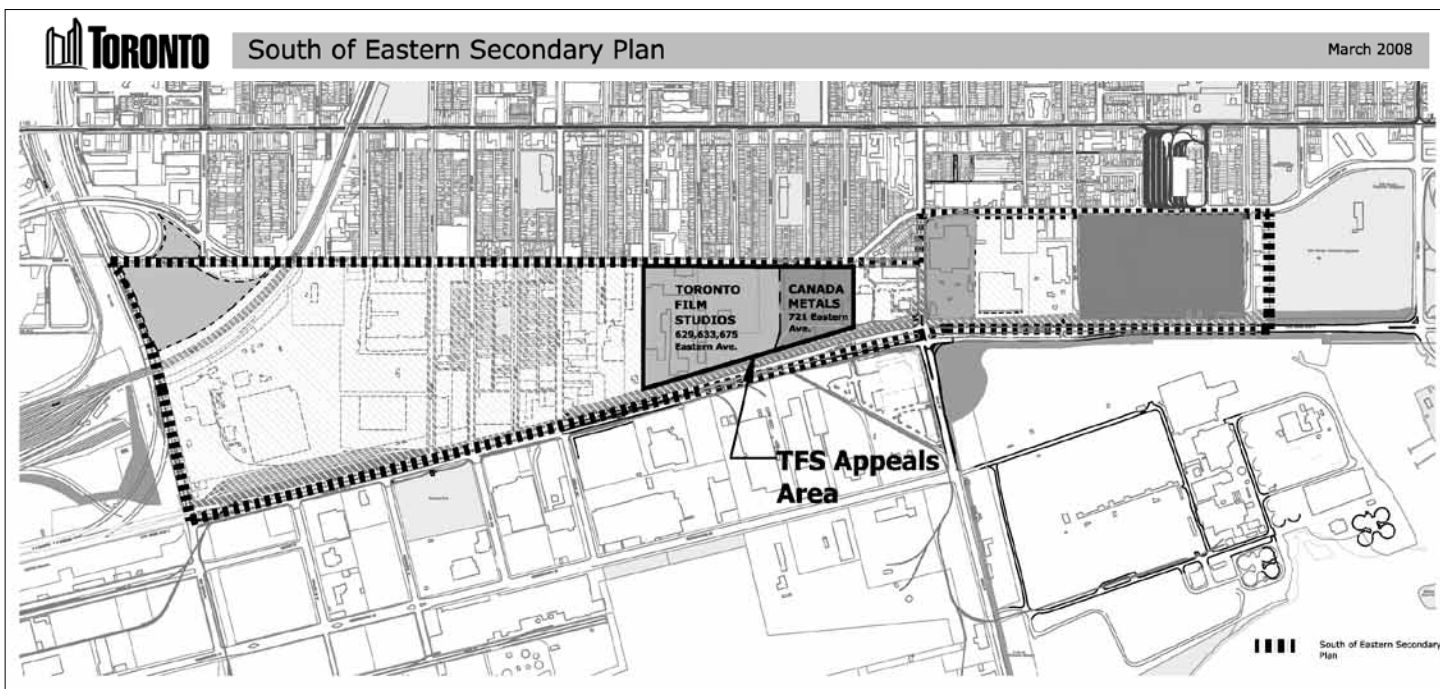
Retaining employment uses

Though the decision describes land uses within the South of Eastern Employment District as "less uniform than other employment districts in the city," the Board agreed that the district's employment uses need to be retained. McKenzie also noted that "the applications do not have regard for the impact they would visit upon the surrounding (industrial, now employment) lands that would not be redesignated."

The Board also sought to "discourage an immediate pursuit of a similar development scheme under the current 2002 official plan. That would decidedly not be in the public interest."

The Smart Centres proposal

Despite the OMB's endorsement of city policy, Smart Centres still has options. The developer can request a rehearing within 30 days of the decision being issued or seek leave



The City's plan for the area

to appeal the decision to divisional court within 15 days.

The 7.5-hectare site is currently occupied by the Toronto Film Studios buildings, with a total of 240,000 sq. ft. of space, situated one block west of an existing retail node that includes two large grocery stores and two fast-food restaurants. Toronto Film Studios sought the redesignation of the site when it determined that it would be moving operations to the new Filmport studio in the Portlands. Smart Centres later purchased a 50-percent ownership stake in the site for \$14 million and took on the appeals initiated by Toronto Film Studios.

The proposal would have seen the retail buildings fronting Eastern Avenue and Lake Shore Boulevard East, with the parking located in the middle of the site, something for which the Board praised the developer. It called for 700,000 sq. ft. of space, much of it retail, with the largest single unit being 180,000 sq. ft. The plan would also have included 1,737 parking spaces.

"In terms of its built form, the proposed development scheme is responsive to its context and represents the evolution of retail building design in an urban setting," McKenzie wrote. "It eschews the heretofore conventional suburban model of siting a 'big box' at the edge of a sea of parking that generally covers a large site."

However, while the applications requested official plan and zoning by-law amendments to permit the retail centre, a site plan application was never submitted. A plan was presented to the city, but the broad nature of the amendments meant that without a site plan application, the lands could be developed in numerous different ways.

Smart Centres also estimated that its proposed development would result in revenues from property taxes of \$3.4 million for the city and \$3 million for province, \$3.2 million in development charges and \$910,000 in building permit fees. Smart Centres also took the position that the employment district is underutilized and in need of revitalization.

However, the city noted that almost all the commercial sites in the district currently have tenants and that any redevelopment of the site would bring in such revenues.

Arguing over job creation

In the hearing's opening arguments, the jobs that Smart Centres' project would create took centre stage. "There will be 1,609 jobs and I call those real jobs," Smart Centres' counsel Dennis Wood (Wood Bull) told the Board in his opening statement on May 22, 2008. Wood added that an additional 322 jobs would be created as an indirect result of the development and that Smart Centres' plan is concrete.

"They're real jobs in the sense that they're actually going to occur. They're not hoped-for jobs. Zero per cent of a good job is not a job."

"The industry that is displaced by that power centre will relocate outside the City of Toronto," O'Callaghan argued, resulting in "no net loss in retail, but a net loss in industry and jobs."

"It is not just the quantity of jobs, but the quality of those jobs that we as a community . . . need to consider," asserted solicitor Eric Gillespie (Cunningham & Gillespie) in his opening statement. Gillespie represented the East Toronto Community Coalition, a community group opposed to the retail development. "Good jobs mean good wages."

In an interview following release of the Board's decision, Gillespie told *Novae Res Urbis* that the decision is "a big vindication for the coalition and the community as a whole. Clearly the Board recognized the Smart Centres application was simply not good land use planning." The coalition also raised traffic impact issues.

"The city needs to maintain all of its employment lands that it currently has just to meet the more relaxed employment target numbers in the Growth Plan," O'Callaghan said. "If we are going to get to the city's own numbers in the official plan, which are actually higher, then we are going to have to find either more land to designate for employment uses, or we're going to have to increase the densities within our employment districts."

A landmark case

The case was considered so important that it compelled Mayor David Miller to send a letter to provincial Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Jim Watson, stating that the province would further its planning and economic development objectives by "declaring a provincial interest in the appeals of [Smart Centres] before the Ontario Municipal Board and take any other action necessary to support the steps the city is taking to protect and enhance the South of Eastern Employment District." Ultimately, the province did not declare an interest in the case.

An e-mail from Smart Centres recently stated: "All the voices have been heard, and we lost. While disappointed, we respect the process and the decision of the Board. At this time, we have no immediate plans for other development or use of the property and will assess all available options to us."

Mark Ostler is a reporter for Novae Res Urbis, a weekly newsletter published by NRU Publishing Inc. This abridged article is reproduced with permission from the publisher, Ian Graham, MCIP, RPP.

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Pier Giorgio on the Poetics of Place

Anne McIlroy

ANNE MCILROY, founding chair of the Urban Design Working Group, met with Toronto's poet laureate, Pier Giorgio, to learn how the creative impulses of a poet can inform urban design and planning. This article is the first in a series of occasional interviews with individuals who have an influence on the quality of the public realm.

AM: In your poem, "Creative City," you wrote:

*to look, and not avert one's gaze;
that is where all the art is, the passion
and the city. people who do not look,
cannot see canvas, or poems or
notes for
happiness
art does not begin with art,
but in the eyes. the eyes are everything; . . .*

Can you explain this human connection to the Creative City and why the eyes, specifically?

PG: Art as "destination point" doesn't work. You don't construct museums and galleries and art installations in the hope that this will create vibrant places. Vibrant places are done by people who then build as a reflection of what they feel between each other—hopefully, loyalty, shared delight, wonder, curiosity, an unabashed impulse to find the city as a place of unexpected (and welcome) intimacies. Art does not begin with art. It begins in the ability to see art in the happenstance, the civic encounter, the ensembles of conversations, the various choreographies of being simply human on the streets.

But I mention the eyes in that poem because the eyes champion the other senses in our culture. We treat vision as sacred. Eyes are the windows of the soul, as Petrarch said. It is mainly how we recognize the inter-civic. To look first is to invite the other senses to

collaborate in the expedition of meeting others, especially in a place like Toronto, or in any place that has a tradition of keeping "custody of the senses." Perhaps it is an Augustinian tradition to relish modesty at the expense of celebration of contact. Cities have their "theology," after all.

AM: What is your favourite place in the city?

PG: My favourite place in the city is any place where people are convivially at home, having made that locale a place that consecrates their affection towards each other. It can be an elegant place, a brownfield, an intersection, a café. We who revitalize think we are bringing places to life, but the life has to already be there and sometimes people will make it come alive, no matter what it looks like.

I suppose that's the paradox of good planning and architecture. You may catalyze inter-



Pier Giorgio, Nathan Phillips Laureate

action and humanization by built form, or built form might only serve to bring out the resources of communality already extant. That magic is guesswork and there are principles conducive to enlivening the public realm. But, you know, people have to like each other to begin with—this is a matter of social capital. When people like each other, they design as a gift an expression of that

gratefulness. When they don't like each other, they create monuments and temples of mere amenity and expedience.

That said, I go to places where people are evident and alchemically charged in the public realm, where you can see that their private dramas are ushered unabashedly to a shared experience. I spend much time by the waterfront, not the gentrified waterfront of boutiques and condos, but the orphaned waterfront that stray citizens love to adopt. People are always seeking the adoption of the undeveloped or the unassuming.

AM: How can a public place generate success?

PG: I think a public place generates success because it is unassuming; it is commensurate to human desire and human physical scale; big endeavours can wow the visitor to location, but to win the affection of the citizen is a different matter.

AM: What conditions help people to interact?

PG: First, a lenience of protocol and proceduralism in the municipal governance (not to inflict bylaws, but to be prudently aware of when a citizenry wants to play). Second, budgets should be set aside for signage and public art strategies that "soften" the civic mood

rather than always exhorting it to task and order and the purposive. Third, the amount of time people spend in front of "screens" severely limits the capacity for civic interaction. Connectivity, after all, is not the same as intimacy. There are those who will argue that virtual civil encounter is as good as the physical. This defines the public realm away from the notion of built form.

AM: What is the greatest city you've visited?

PG: Let me preface this by quoting the American poet, Walt Whitman. "The greatest city is

that city that has the greatest men and women. Even if it be a few shacks, it is still the greatest city in the world." So every city has greatness or parts of greatness depending on the rise and fall of the people's ability to be extraordinary and act authentically. Take Greenwich Village in New York, or any place that was once authentic and now is a mere icon or an overdressed simulation of what

inspired it. Many bohemias are like that. They contained greatness, but once gentrified and clichéd, the motions of greatness are all that's left. So the greatest city happens in many places at different times.

AM: *If that city were a person, what would it look like?*

PG: It would have the face of any stranger eager to be convivial and giving out the signal of benevolence and surprise. The places we go back to are those places where people are glad to see each other and to make new friends, on the assumption that another urban companion might hold the key to a deeper meaning in one's life. Social capital, you see, is where cities begin and end for me. Cities that are becoming [only] a place of business are boring.

AM: *When and where do you do your best work?*

PG: I do my best work where I am made to feel at home. It could be driving in a car along Lakeshore Boulevard where the Princes' Gate looks out to the lake. My work is to think, and people inspire me to do that and places inspire me, so that I carry my digital audio recorder with me always, and transcribe the highlights and ideas that people give me. Sure, I live on the Oak Ridges Moraine and it is nice to recollect in tranquillity, and to harvest the ideas that a peopled environment has given me, but my more vibrant ideas come from any place where people are "at home with each other."

AM: *Is there a culture outside your own that influences you?*

PG: My own culture flows from the municipal square in medieval towns such as Siena, Arezzo (where I was born) and Lucca. The town square is the living room of the town.

The private dramas flow like tributaries to the public sanction of those dramas. That is true city life: the balance of public and private, where nothing is entirely private, or entirely public. The citizen seeks density, and retreats from it. Carthusian monasteries are ideal like that—a convergence of public and private, a segregated abode for the monk, but also with a near gathering place where the active and contemplative meet. I think the city dweller also seeks a balance of the active and contemplative, the public and the private.

My Mediterranean bent is demonstrative, communal. My North American experience is individualistic. Again, the city identity



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should be both aggregate and singular. That's my vision of the civic.

AM: *Do you have advice for improving the planning and design profession?*

PG: If I were to have any tips for planning and design professionals, whom I hold in esteem for their valiant struggle with the forces of convention, big business and the partisan in the municipal, I would say a furthering of the art of Kevin Lynch is in order. Planners and architects generally have an instinct for the coherent, and it is disrupted by transportation concerns, stakeholder concerns, the business appetite. But it seems to me that Lynch was always arguing for a city of vistas, the way a street or a perspective looks, the visuals of the place, the way citizens visualize their town, not just in terms of nodes and pathways, but the manifestation of those visuals as they walk down a boulevard or drive on a by-road.

The city must look variously, as invitation, as respite, as curiosity, as sojourn, as homecoming. Entire streets should weave that choreography so that distances are visibly attractive. The trouble with densification now is that it only looks good from the air. That is not the perspective of the dweller. The dweller moves laterally through rooms of architectural moods and geometric confluences, and that is lacking in contemporary city planning.

AM: *What plans do you have for the coming year?*

PG: Apart from books and creating the Toronto Museum Project and furthering the scope of my Municipal Mind Consultancy, I want to help design strategies for seducing the citizen to the public realm. Civil encounter is crucial for our time, and curiosity about the next citizen is waning in the wake of distrust and perplexing diversity. Signage, public art, marshalling community management—any scheme for rehabilitating urban citizenship—speaking to policy groups and municipal bodies about the forces that resist a humane urban existence. On many fronts, I hope to help restore the public realm to a place of unexpected intimacies.

Pier Giorgio Di Cicco is Toronto's Nathan Phillips Laureate. Learn more about his work at www.municipalmind.com. Anne McLroy, MCIP, RPP, is a principal with Brooke McLroy Inc, and founding chair of the Urban Design Working Group.

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The New Economy re-interpreted

An important addition to a planner's bookshelf

The Flight of the Creative Class: The New Global Competition for Talent

Author: Dr. Richard Florida
 Publisher: HarperCollins
 Date of Pub: 2005

Reviewed by: Michael Sullivan

TALENT, tolerance and technology . . . remember these words, because they form the central theme of Dr. Richard Florida's *The Flight of the Creative Class*. Florida uses the 3Ts to form his view on the rise and subsequent fall of the United States as the leader of the "creative economy," also known as the Information Age. His hypothesis is that the search for creative talent will be a global phenomenon in the 21st century.

The book begins by explaining, in some

detail, what the creative class is and how the United States developed into one of the world leaders as a result. Florida describes how the United States developed leading colleges and universities, which nurtured talent using advanced technology and tolerance, since many of the creative minds belonged to immigrants. These schools gained international celebrity for the quality of their graduates during the second half of the 20th century.

Larger U.S. cities, such as San Francisco, New York, Seattle, Los Angeles, and others developed their economies to lure this talent, using the arts, livable family communities, access to good health care, excellent schools and other amenities.

These culturally diverse communities were further diversified through then-open U.S. immigration policies that attracted the best

and brightest to the country's educational and employment opportunities. Once a pool of talented people became available, the creative cities offered graduates exciting and rewarding employment and lifestyles. Cities that displayed tolerance for multiculturalism and diverse religions found themselves benefiting in many ways.

All of this changed after September 11, 2001. The Bush administration created the Department of Homeland Security, which built a virtual wall around the United States, based on the fear of terrorism. Immediate impacts included delays in processing work visas for visiting academics and cancellations of internationally focused conferences as a result of heightened security over visas.

Florida suggests that conservative policies sounded alarm bells throughout the United

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States. Ultimately, this fear resulted in frustration for members of the creative class who wished to participate in events in the United States. Immigration became more difficult during the “war on terror,” and the creative class began to seek out opportunities for academic and professional growth elsewhere—in Canada, Australia, England, Europe and beyond. The once-powerful United States, Florida hypothesizes, began to witness the end of its heyday.

In protecting itself from the outside world, Florida suggests that the United States has cut itself off globally, as the those

in the creative class have chosen to study and find employment elsewhere. Members of the creative class now have more choice in where they live, work and play. Technology has made the world a smaller place, and it is shrinking for creative professionals like engineers, doctors and scientists who have mobile talents. Talent is fully mobilized and has choices beyond those traditionally found in the United States. While this is troubling for the American economy—and to Canada because of our strong links to our neighbour to the south—the world has become synchronized

both economically and creatively.

The Flight of the Creative Class foretells of the potentially troubling side effects of our synchronized economies by suggesting that an economic downturn, much like the one we are facing today, would have far-reaching effects, dealing a blow globally rather than stopping at a country's borders. Written well before the current economic crisis, Florida's case is compelling. His prescription is for the United States to re-focus on its creative class by opening up immigration policies, re-discovering tolerance, and using technology for growth, rather than fearing it.

The Flight of the Creative Class opened my eyes to long-term changes in the U.S. economy and indeed that of the world as a whole.

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