

ONTARIO Planning JOURNAL

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IN PRAISE OF TEAMWORK

Waterloo students jump start their careers

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ONTARIO PLANNING JOURNAL

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For more information about events, check the OPPI web site at www.ontarioplanners.on.ca, and the latest issue of Members Update, sent to you by e-mail

NATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION Inspires High Quality Submissions

Unique competition engages students

Michael Katz

Anational university student design competition held in 2008 by a Saskatchewan developer for a site called Clear Vistas Community attracted six submissions of excellent quality. Unable to decide between the two finalists, the panel of professional judges and the developer awarded two first-place prizes of \$10,000 each to the teams from McGill University and Waterloo University.

The challenge

Clear Vistas Community will be built on roughly 750 acres immediately beside Regina's premiere suburb, the twin villages of White City and Emerald Park, just five minutes along the Trans-Canada Highway east of Regina.

The land represents an iconic prairie landscape—quite flat (less than one percent slope across much of the property), wind-swept, clay-silt ground, disrupted by one striking natural feature—a dry creek that cuts roughly east-west through the land in a gash as deep as six metres, with a shallow tributary feeding the creek, which runs roughly north-south. Most of the land has been cultivated for over 100 years by succeeding generations of the same family, earning the official provincial distinction of a Century Farm.

From most points on Clear Vistas, the prairie lands and skies stretch out 30 or more kilometres in a vast open bowl. Twenty kilometres to the west, the towers of downtown Regina are clearly visible.

The design competition was held to seek a range of ideas for the community from senior planning students guided by academic advisors. While Clear Vistas has also retained the services of leading planning and landscape architecture firms, the submissions from the student design teams offered ideas and perspectives—and generated thinking and discussion—that the developer could not have obtained from single-source contracts.

The Terms of Reference were developed with input from lead-



The team. From left: Regina Li, Josh Reis, Karen Hammond (advisor), Evan Truong, Simone Adomeit, and Christy Fong. Missing is Rosa Bustamante, pictured in the centre of the cover photo

ing academics and professionals. They were structured to present the widest possible challenge to the student teams and the full range of difficult trade-offs that development confronts. The objective was to force the student teams to explicitly develop their plans to address the competing imperatives. These included:

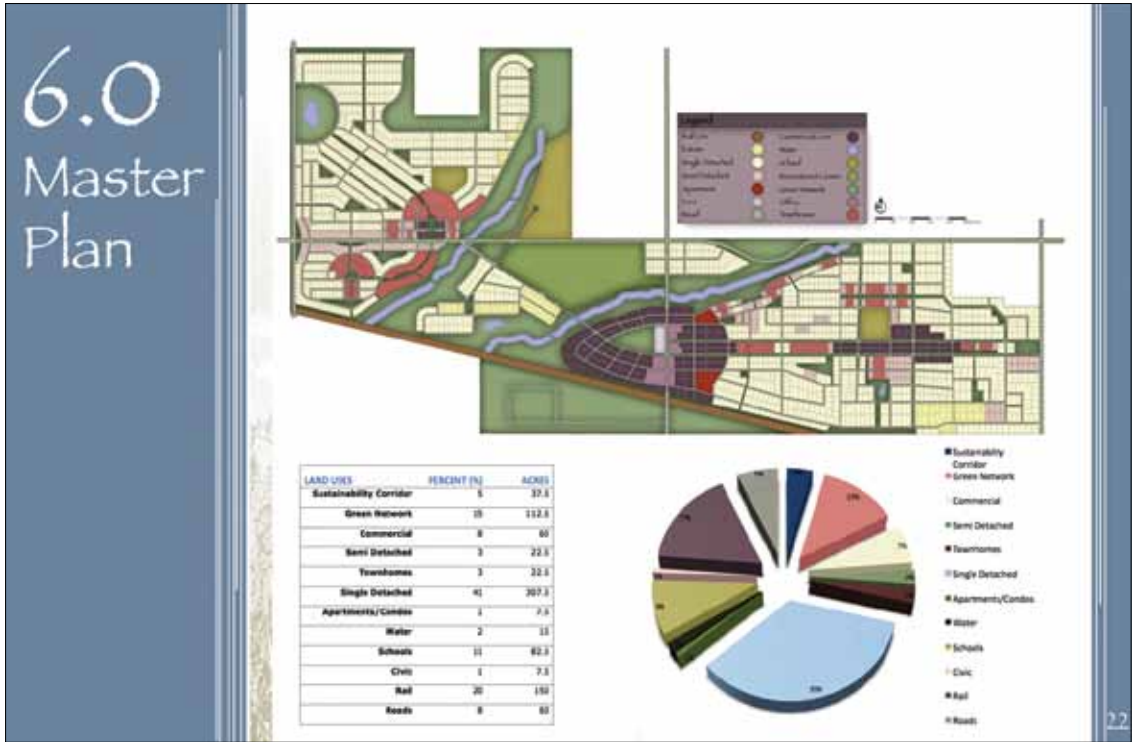
- the need for development to preserve and enhance environmental features, including the two creeks, while fulfilling the requirement to site lots to deliver an ample selection of open, green-linked properties to homebuyers;
- the importance of accessibility and walkability, with an extensive working network of roads and paths and green spaces, while allowing for reliance on large vehicles in light of Saskatchewan's extremely cold winters and the concentration of shopping and services at considerable distances;
- effective integration of green space to ensure that the urban character of the community does not preclude the sense of country living that characterizes the suburbs of Emerald Park and White City, while setting a soft target of 3,500 homes to ensure financial success;
- the importance of integrating sustainable practices and technologies into the design of Clear Vistas, such as wind power and water conservation, while constraining costs;
- the need to preserve and enhance the upscale character of Emerald Park and White City in Clear Vistas, while providing some affordable housing to include young adults and empty-nesters who are not currently represented in Emerald Park and White City;
- the requirement to provide for an upscale town centre offering commercial, retail and housing options on roughly 40 acres within the site.

The Terms of Reference were posted on the Clear Vistas website, along with about 200 photos of the land, both aerial and ground; and half a dozen maps of various levels and impacts on

the lands. These photos and maps can still be viewed on the Clear Vistas website at http://www.clearvistas.ca/design_proposals.html.

How the competition was organized
Setting up the competition required extensive communications between the developer and every planning school in Canada. The competition was integrated into the syllabus of the fall term. All submissions were made before the end of November 2008.

Each team submitted a set of drawings on posters 24" x 36", as well as a written report exploring the team's thinking and design. The posters were displayed in the White City Community Centre in early December. The six-person jury of professional and business judges gathered in Regina to identify the top two finalists. They were:



The winning master plan

- Blake Hudema, President of CIP and Vice-President of Genstar Development Company;
- David Amborski, President of the Canadian Association of University Planning Programs and a professor at Ryerson University;
- Ken Linnen, a principal at Stantec Consulting;
- Cecil Snyder, Deputy Mayor of White City;
- Ken Lagasse, President and CEO of Clear Vistas Community;
- Michael Katz, Project Manager of Clear Vistas Community.

The finalists flew into Regina on December 17, 2008, to present their submissions. John Wolfenberg, Planning Consultant and former Director of Community Planning for Saskatchewan, joined the judges for the second round of judging, to identify the winner



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and the runner-up based on the presentations of the finalists.

The presentations were held at the Hotel Saskatchewan: followed by a banquet at which the certificates and awards were distributed. CTV covered the event on the evening news and the noon news the following day. All six submissions, as well as the winning PowerPoints of the two finalists, can be found on the Clear Vistas website at http://www.clearvistas.ca/design_proposals.html.

The two winning teams were the “Plan to Better” Team from Waterloo University, comprising Simone Adomeit, Christy Fong, Rosa Bustamante, Regina Li, Josh Reis, and Evan Truong; and the “Elements” Team from McGill University, made up of Lauren Chewter, Julia Delrieu, Jennifer Gibbons, Andrew Hill, and Matt Hagg.

The McGill submission was characterized by an exceptional market analysis underlying their lot development strategy; an excellent sense of the regional context and the consequent design structures; and a focus on sustainable technologies. The Waterloo submission was characterized by exceptional mapping of the different contexts and characteristics of the lands; an innovative design approach to the creeks to foster community use of the creeks; and strong thinking regarding architectural guidelines.

The McGill team proposed the use of “woonerfs,” or living laneways—a Dutch concept for an area, usually residential, where motorists and other users share the street without boundaries such as lanes and curbs. In a woonerf, people on bikes and on foot have access to the whole street, not just sidewalks. Moreover, the street functions as a public living room, where adults gather and children play safely because vehicle speed is kept to a minimum. The McGill team is now assisting Clear Vistas to incorporate woonerfs into the Clear Vistas design.

Although no other prize was anticipated, the judges and the developer were so impressed by the work of the “GreenOrange” team from the University of Calgary, that the developer, Ken Lagasse, decided to offer a third prize of \$2,500 to that team, made up of Brier Ferguson, Braden Reid and Nandoor Gortva. The other participating universities were the University of Saskatchewan and Ryerson University.

Michael Katz is the project manager for Clear Vistas. He can be reached at mkatz@clearvistas.ca.

IN PRAISE OF TEAMWORK

How a group of planning students combined their talents to pull off a major upset

WHEN WAS THE LAST TIME you heard about a developer sponsoring a design competition to engage student planners? That’s what took place last fall when Clear Vistas Development invited planning students from across Canada to submit design concepts for an upscale housing development in Saskatchewan. Michael Katz, the project manager with Clear Vistas responsible for managing the process, decided that the best way to inject fresh thinking into his project was to organize a formal competition, complete with terms of reference, professional judging and significant prize money. The results were of a sufficiently high standard that the developer opted to present two first prizes worth \$10,000 each to both the University of Waterloo and McGill University.

For the UW team, coming first was a pleasant surprise. “We didn’t expect to win,” Rosa Bustamante confessed. “We thought that the team from the University of Saskatchewan was likely to win because of their ability to conduct site visits and their familiarity with the local context.” In the end, the Waterloo students not only scooped first prize, but shared the honour with a team of graduate students from McGill.

The transition from student to work has already begun for two members of the team. Rosa is working with the City of Cambridge, and Josh Reis is working at the Region of York. Although the intense collaboration necessary to prepare their submission was obviously beneficial, Rosa credits Waterloo’s approach to planning education, including the use of studios, with developing and honing their sense of professionalism. “In my opinion, the ability to communicate is a planner’s most important tool. You should believe 100% in everything you say or write, or you shouldn’t say it.”

Relying only on mapping and photographs, the team immersed itself in the project; what ultimately helped convince the judges was their passion for the sustainability of the project. How high could the densities be driven while still being attractive to the local market? How best could the natural features be integrated into the scheme? Finding the right balance was a genuinely difficult challenge.

Because the competition had to fit within the academic schedule, when the team learned that their submission had been short listed, the decision about who should go to Regina to make the presentation proved to be anything but straightforward. Although the competition organizers provided funds for one person to travel to Saskatchewan, the team felt that Simone Adomeit, and Regina Li should both go—and agreed to fund the extra cost out of any winnings. This generosity of spirit was amply rewarded when the developer agreed to cover the expense.

Replicating real-world conditions, the competition was judged in two stages. The first was based on the written report and support materials. The other was the quality and effectiveness of the presentation. Although meeting the deadline for the report was difficult enough, finding the time to prepare for the presentation was another obstacle to overcome, as was replicating “real-world” working conditions where colleagues help refine a project. The role of urban design professor (and member of the Urban Design Working Group) Karen Hammond proved to be instrumental at this stage. Having already worked bureaucratic magic to integrate the competition into available studio courses, Karen arranged for other professors, local planning professionals and other specialists from the GTA to offer critiques and advice both on content and approach.

One of the under-appreciated resources is the pool of talent engaged in teaching the next generation of planners. This unique project highlighted this, to the benefit of all concerned.

The Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card

We need to raise the bar

Michele Brownrigg, Dan Leeming, Diane Riley, and Rachel Colley



The Need for Active Healthy Kids Canada

AS ADULTS, we are concerned about many pressing issues that pose barriers to a healthy and sustainable future. Our children and grandchildren will face an even greater test in overcoming the environmental and health challenges on the horizon. As the cheap energy era draws to an end, younger generations will have to turn “alternative energy” into the primary source of energy. As global warming increases with rising CO² emissions, today’s kids will have to shift to a more frugal lifestyle to reduce the impact of climate change.

As our population ages over the next 25 years, today’s youth will have to determine how to support a health care system that employs fewer workers while still managing to support a growing population of older Canadians. To compound these challenges, the lifestyle habits of today’s youth puts them at increased risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, heart disease and asthma; these diseases will be a heavy burden as they attempt to tackle the complex environmental and health issues of the future.

The Brundtland report spoke of sustainable development that would not compromise the needs of future generations. But that report

was written 20 years ago: the future it spoke of is now and those future generations are our children and grandchildren.

A charitable organization called Active Healthy Kids Canada was established in 1994 to address the physical activity needs of Canadian children. Its mission is to inspire the nation to engage all children and youth in physical activity. It provides strategic leadership by advancing knowledge, evidence-informed communication, and advocacy strategies to influence stakeholders who affect physical activity opportunities for children and youth.

The primary target audiences for Active Healthy Kids Canada are government depart-

ments and non-governmental organizations whose work in policy, public awareness and programming influences physical activity opportunities for children and youth. Active Healthy Kids Canada also works to influence stakeholders in education, family services, community design, and municipal affairs.

The Active Healthy Kids Canada Report Card

The primary means by which the organization’s core business is conducted is the annual Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth. The Report Card provides insight each year on how, as a country, we are performing in providing physical activity opportunities for children and youth.

First released in 2005 and with a fifth anniversary release scheduled for June 2, 2009, each annual Report Card has reflected on lessons, progress and recommendations from previous years. The first step in the development of the Report Card involved a National Physical Activity Symposium in 2004 that engaged leading research experts on physical activity for children and youth. This symposium developed indicators for the Report Card and examined the practical and policy issues related to the spheres of influence on physical activity for children and youth: family, school, and community.

Data from nation-wide surveys, peer-reviewed research studies and related literature are used to inform the Report Card “grades.” An advisory panel of research experts assigns the grades each



TV slows kids down

year using evidence from previous years in combination with emerging data and research. Key considerations include: Canadian activity prevalence levels, international comparisons, trends over time, dispari-

ties (for example, age, sex, geography, ethnicity, socioeconomic status), and newly emerging research and initiatives.

The Report Cards published between 2005 and 2007 demonstrated that physical activity opportunities and behaviours of children and youth remained unsatisfactory, and provided recommendations for action on how to improve the grade. In 2008, the Report Card specifically focused on excessive sedentary screen-time use by children and youth, as this was an indicator for which the grade declined from the period of 2005-2008.

The Report Card has been extensively covered by the media and has served as a model for other countries: the United States (State of Louisiana), South Africa, and Mexico.

In 2007 and 2008 the grade for physical activity was "F". This grade indicates that still as a nation we are still not supporting physical activity opportunities for young people at the level required. Effort by all sectors and jurisdictions is needed in order to demonstrate measurable change at the individual, community and policy level.

Making the connection to community design

The role of community design has emerged as a critical component in helping to

"improve the grade" in the future. Since the release of the first Report Card in 2005, community design, built form and elements of the



Hours spent before the tube are not active hours

built environment have been highlighted as key areas for healthy active living among children and youth. They have also been

some of the most difficult areas to assess, as trends and information in this area are not monitored consistently. Due to the incomplete nature of the information, these areas have historically been graded as "incomplete." However, their inclusion in the Report Card each year is an effective way of highlighting data gaps and drawing attention to this increasingly important factor affecting physical activity in children and youth.

The Community and Built Environment indicators and grades from the 2005-2008 Report Cards are presented in Table 1 (pg. 8).

Some of the key findings relating to the Community and Built Environment indicators for the 2008 Report Card included:

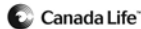
1. Over 90% of parents report that they have good access to programs and facilities, yet only 23% of parents report actually using facilities and programs.¹
2. Over 90% of parents report having access to parks and playgrounds, yet only 34% of parents report actually using parks and outdoor spaces in their community.¹
3. A survey of municipalities indicated that 96% reported at least one by-law that would prohibit physical activity in children in youth (such as bans on road hockey in residential streets).²

Recognizing Contributions to Heritage Conservation

The Ontario Heritage Trust's annual Young Heritage Leaders, Heritage Community Recognition and Community Leadership programs, as well as the Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Awards, celebrate achievements in preserving, protecting and promoting heritage.

To learn more about how to nominate an individual, group or community, visit www.heritagetrust.on.ca or e-mail reception@heritagetrust.on.ca.

The nomination deadline for this year's programs is July 17, 2009.



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4. Over 80% of schools report school-community partnerships with municipalities, but 75% of schools charge fees for community access and only half of schools report access to community centres to support their programming.³
5. Only 10% of students walk to cycle to school.⁴

How planners can improve the grade

The health of children and youth is unquestionably a priority for planners, but increasing the physical activity grade from “F” to “A” requires a comprehensive and sustained approach. As we continue to rethink our approaches to community design and put a new emphasis on diversity, compact form, pedestrian- and transit-supportive environments and high-quality public spaces, we can address matters of sustainability and public health for people of all ages.

New programs, such as LEED for Neighbourhood Development, take a holistic approach to community design, both urban and suburban. The most recent draft of the LEED-ND Rating System issued by the U.S. Green Building Council (October 31, 2008) refers specifically to the link between health, physical activity, and built form. Several prerequisites and credits make this link in the “Intent” section of the Rating System. One example is the Neighbourhood Pattern and Design prerequisite: “Walkable Streets,” which is intended to “promote walking and bicycling by providing safe, appealing, and



Traditional outside play needs a safe setting

comfortable street environments, thus reducing the risk of obesity, heart disease and hypertension by encouraging daily physical activity, promote transportation efficiency, including reduced Vehicle Miles Traveled.”

Municipalities can support these goals

through a combination of official plan policies, appropriate zoning, and draft plan and site plan reviews that are guided by sustainability guidelines. Health care professionals must be involved in the decision-making process through forums and workshops at which

Table 1
Community and Built Environment indicators and grades from Report Cards, 2005-2008

2005	2006	2007	2008
Access to and Quality of Community Programs—C	Access to and Quality of Community Programs—C	Community Facilities and Programs: Access and Use—C	Access to Facilities and Programs—B
Community Infrastructure—INC	Built Environment—INC	Community Parks and Outdoor Spaces: Access and Use—C+	Use of Facilities and Programs—D
	Proximity to Parks and Playgrounds—B-		Proximity to Parks & Playgrounds—B
	Active Transportation—D		Use of Parks and Playgrounds—D
	Neighbourhood Safety & Support—B		Municipal Regulations—D
			Active Transportation to/from School—D
			School-Community Assets and Engagement—C



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key guiding principles are translated into community plans and supportive policies.

Conclusions

The Report Card serves as an accountability index, a means of monitoring progress, a policy driver, and an advocacy tool for leaders and organizations. The Report Cards indicate areas for further research and provide recommendations for action to "improve the grade." It is in this area that planners, engineers, public works, and policy makers that oversee community design can play a key role.

The Report Cards have been a wake-up call. It is no longer simply a question of

knowing what we need to do, but of finding the motivation and means to "improve the grade," and ensure that there is indeed a healthy future for our children.

Rachel Colley is a Junior Research Scientist with the Healthy Active Living and Obesity Research Group at the Children's Hospital of Eastern Ontario in Ottawa, Ontario. She is currently the lead writer of Canada's Report Card on Physical Activity for Children and Youth (2008, 2009). Michelle Brownrigg is the Chief Executive Officer for Active Healthy Kids Canada. Her graduate education is in community health and exercise sci-

ence and she has an array of professional experience in the area of health and social development, with a particular focus on healthy development for children, youth and families. Dan Leeming, MCIP, RPP, is a partner with Planning Partnership in Toronto and a frequent contributor to the Ontario Planning Journal. Diane Riley has a PhD in psychophysiology and works in the areas of public and international health. She has collaborated with Dan on a number of articles for this magazine.

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- (2) Active Healthy Kids Canada. Canadian Municipalities Survey (Internal Report), 2008.
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- (4) New Brunswick Student Wellness Survey and Web Survey of Physical Activity and Nutrition, 2007.

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An article about the OPPI Call to Action on this topic appeared in the March/April issue of the Ontario Planning Journal. The full text can be found on the website (ontarioplanners.on.ca)

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THE NEED FOR CITIES to reinvent themselves, often multiple times, has reshaped the economies and geographies of our urban regions. Today, with the recession dominating the headlines, the media is filled with stories and editorials about urban reinvention.

The focus is often on hard-hit manufacturing centres like Detroit and Flint, Michigan, as well as cities closer to home, such as Windsor and Hamilton, where US Steel has temporarily shut down its operations. For places like Hamilton and Windsor, this may be an excellent time to accelerate the process of reinvention.

Reinvention is most effective when a city first re-examines its role within regional and national contexts. It is driven by investment in infrastructure, economic development and other initiatives that define a new role for the city.

This article is the first of two in which I will look at cities that have redefined and reinvented themselves in different ways, each generating new regional and national identities: Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, and Portland, Oregon.

Pittsburgh has focused on erasing its industrial scars and using infrastructure to revitalize its downtown, while Portland has focused on transportation systems and environmental sustainability to attract creative workers. I recently had the opportunity to visit both of these cities and to talk to planners, economic development staff, businesspeople and politicians.

Pittsburgh—no longer a steel town

A few years ago, visitors to Pittsburgh would have instantly known that they were in one of the world's predominant heavy manufacturing centres. Yet today, without knowing its history, a visitor would be hard pressed to identify it as a steel town. The steel mills that once lined the shores of two converging rivers have now mostly vanished. Through a series of strategic investments in infrastructure and the public realm by government, the private sector, and local foundations, Pittsburgh has transformed itself. Even the "US Steel" tower, as it is still known, now sports the initials of its new tenant: UPMC (University of Pittsburgh Medical Centre).

Since the height of its steel manufacturing

days in the 1970s, Pittsburgh has lost 146,000 manufacturing jobs and close to 300,000 residents, but it has generated as many as 168,000 new jobs in education, medicine and finance, and has halted its population losses.

Pittsburgh's recent transformation has been driven by the City's desire to redefine its regional identity and become known as a centre for health services and the bio-sciences, drawing on its two largest academic assets: UPMC and Carnegie Mellon University.

Pittsburgh faced roadblocks on its way to halting decline. These included vast tracts of contaminated brownfields, a sense among the public that investing in steel mills would be more valuable than investing in developing a knowledge economy, and a major league baseball team ready to leave a city that already had low self esteem.

Removing the industrial scars of the past

Under the leadership of former mayor Tom Murphy, the city saw its most significant transformations. Before Murphy's election in 1993, the city's regeneration efforts had lacked a coherent long-term strategy. By the early 1990s, the city recognized that to keep



Pittsburgh market value analysis

its existing residents and attract new ones, it would need to create new neighbourhoods and retail destinations within the city limits and restore its polluted natural areas.

Together with the Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA), Pittsburgh's economic and land development agency, the city launched a process to identify areas that would provide the greatest benefits in both assessment value

and social value—a technique the city still uses.

This process involves using GIS to identify the market value of various different housing markets within the city. Areas with depressed land values that are close to areas of significantly higher value are targeted for public investment. In some communities, those investments have included community infra-

structure like new library facilities; in other areas remediation of contaminated soil was the leading issue.

These principles have led to a range of coordinated projects in Pittsburgh. The South Side Works community, for example, is built on the site of one of the city's largest former steel mills. Today it is home to 330,000 square feet of retail, restaurants, condominiums, a hotel, training facilities for the NFL and university football teams, a sports medicine centre, and almost 700,000 square feet of new Class "A" office space. The URA led the process and worked with the city to coordinate financing and partnerships to make the \$300-million project work with only \$60 million in public funding (excluding funds from tax increment financing, the URA and city contributed \$23 million; the remainder came from higher orders of government).

Another successful brownfield redevelopment is the community of Somerset at Freck Park, close to Squirrel Hill, one of the city's most affluent neighbourhoods. In the 1920s, the steel mills used Freck Park to dump slag. In 1995, the URA bought the 200-acre slag heap and put together a remediation and redevelopment plan. The URA and the city undertook an ambitious plan to redevelop the site for residential use (mainly single family and semi-detached homes).

To build the \$269-million, 730-unit project, the city invested in studies, remediation, re-grading and the installation of liners and retaining walls to capture the alkaline seep



Somewhere here is a baseball stadium

from the slag. With the help of the Army Corps of Engineers, the Nine Mile Run River at the base of the Freck Park hill has also been remediated and a recreational trail system constructed, linking the community to a riverfront trail system that extends to Washington, D.C.

Before the recession, the average cost of one of these new homes in Summerset exceeded the city's expectations by as much as \$50,000 a unit. Over the long term, the city expects a good return on its investments in real estate alone, excluding the value gained by helping to remove the stigma associated with being a city of brownfields.

Downtown investments have redefined Pittsburgh

While brownfield regeneration projects have helped spur new development and change Pittsburgh's image, the biggest boost came 10 years ago, when the newly elected mayor got a call from the chairman of Pittsburgh's baseball team, informing him that the Pittsburgh Pirates were to be sold and would likely leave the city. Murphy himself was no sports fan, but he was concerned about the economic and psychological impact of the loss of the Pirates. His actions led to the Regional Destination Financing Plan, and ultimately to an investment of more than \$1 billion in infrastructure spending in the downtown over an eight-year period.

The impact of baseball on everything from economics to pedestrian activity is roughly 10 times that of football, largely because so many more games are played each season, mainly on weeknights. Because of this difference, baseball has the unique ability to capture downtown pedestrian traffic—catering to the after-work crowd—which contributes to the downtown economy. (Football, on the other hand, attracts a limited number of weekend visits from suburban patrons.) An additional challenge facing Pittsburgh was that major league baseball insisted on a new stadium as a condition of allowing the team to stay, replacing the cavernous multi-purpose stadium in use at the time. Meanwhile, the city had already decided to build a new convention centre and the Steelers football team had begun to lobby for a new stadium.

The city developed the following criteria to determine where to locate each facility:

- Are there viable commercial ventures in the vicinity of the proposed facilities?
- Is there room for additional commercial and or residential anchors to ensure a balanced, year-round clientele for businesses in the area?

- What is the potential for enhancing pedestrian traffic in the vicinity of the facilities?

The result was a set of strategic decisions. A potential stadium site served by light rail was reserved for office development (used by a major bank that had threatened to leave). The new baseball stadium was located across the river from downtown. Provisions were made to close the adjacent bridge to vehicles on game nights to ensure access for pedestrians. Parking lots near the stadium that will support midrise office development in the long term were developed with the help of TIF funds and high-quality urban design. PNC Park, which opened in 2001, is considered one of the best ball fields in North America. An interesting design feature is that you can walk around the stadium and not know what it is until you look up to see its floodlights.

The new convention centre was constructed on the south shore within walking distance of both the stadium and the downtown. It is a LEED Gold building offering more than 300,000 square feet of space. Additional investments by arts foundations have helped create an arts and culture cluster between the stadium and convention centre, through what was once the city's red-light district. A new school has also been added. The city also upgraded its water and wastewater treatment plants, separated storm and sanitary sewers, built a new waterfront park, and added a large parking garage and Greyhound bus terminal.

Today, the convention space is attracting new employers and generates tourism within the city's newly regenerated downtown. The ballpark has been a great success with local businesses. Employees walk across the 6th Street Bridge on weeknights, through the new park system, to restaurants on the North Shore and into the stadium.

The city has even attracted new condominium development to its downtown, something unheard-of in its history. In addition, the brownfield projects have created new vibrant neighbourhoods within the city limits and have helped to erase the city's industrial scars.

What can Ontario cities learn from Pittsburgh?

Here are the important lessons.

1. Pittsburgh developed a new vision to redefine its role in the region and the eastern United States. Infrastructure

investments were focused only on projects that would advance this new role.

2. Brownfield regeneration was used to develop new communities that attract knowledge workers.
3. The benefits of every infrastructure investment were carefully evaluated and compared to determine how each investment might affect another.
4. The model used by the URA can be applied in any jurisdiction that has market-value based property tax systems.
5. The city was prepared to take on risk, work cooperatively with developers and landowners, and take bold steps to ensure that projects moved ahead.
6. The use of a development corporation equipped with executive powers was beneficial.

Perhaps the principles described in this article can be applied here in Ontario.

Iain Myrans is a senior planner with the Canadian Urban Institute in Toronto. Iain is a graduate of both Ryerson University and the University of Toronto. He has made many contributions to the Ontario Planning Journal, primarily with his photographs. This is his second full-length article.



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Integrated Land Planning Technologies Program (ILPT)

A different kind of education

Ben Billings

THE INTEGRATED LAND PLANNING Technologies (ILPT) program is a four-year Bachelor of Applied Arts degree first introduced at Fanshawe College in fall 2004.

The skills emphasized in the program include research, communications, design and technology. Courses in landscape design,

.....
The ILPT is an exciting
program that will continue
to evolve to meet the
needs of the planning and
design industry
.....

urban design, community planning, research and communications are complemented by courses in Geographic Information Systems (GIS) and AutoCAD (Computer Aided Design) to ensure that graduates have the essential technical skills required by employers in both the public and private sectors.

The program provides students with both in-class technical training and on-the-job training through co-op placements. The program is unique in it bridges the gap between

“theory and practice” that has been identified by the planning and design industry over the years.

To graduate from the program, students must complete a fourth-year group research project known as the Capstone Project. In completing the Capstone Project, students must demonstrate competence in all the skills covered by the program.

During the summer semester of 2008, 12 student groups completed their Capstone Projects. The projects included preparing urban design guidelines, measuring urban sprawl, developing location criteria for seniors housing, drawing up green technology guidelines and creating a design for a New Urbanist community. Many projects contained a significant GIS component that was effective in graphically communicating research and design solutions.

In November 2008, the ILPT program graduated its first group of 28 students from the program. Many of the graduates have found jobs in community planning, landscape design, urban design and GIS technology for public- and private-sector organizations.

The program will continue to evolve to meet the needs of the planning and design industry. Fanshawe will monitor graduate employment and take a proactive approach to curriculum design. As the world population continues to urbanize, there will be a growing need for planning and design professionals who possess the unique combination of skills offered by the ILPT program.



Ben Billings

Ben Billings, MCIP, RPP, is a Professor in the ILPT program at Fanshawe College at the London, Ontario, campus. He teaches in the urban stream of the program and has an extensive background in urban planning at the municipal government level. He can be reached at benjamin.billings@sympatico.ca or at 519-434-1820.

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Toronto

Remembering Toronto's Urban History at the York University Planning Alumni Event

Jane McFarlane

York University's fifth annual planning social, to be held Thursday June 25, 2009, builds on the tradition of exploring Toronto's unique urban landscape. Based on the success of last year's event, the MES York Planning Alumni Committee invites members to join over 200 professionals from the public, private, academic and non-profit sectors to gather at the Berkeley Church Heritage Event Venue at 315 Queen Street East.

Built in 1871, the Berkeley Church was a Wesleyan Methodist chapel for over a century before being transformed into one of Toronto's most original event venues. The church has maintained its historic atmosphere with original architectural details.

The field house, the venue's newest addition, was previously a lumberyard and hardware store. Much of the structure has been built with re-used materials, including the floor, which is made out of lumber skids. The field house has large windows overlooking an outdoor space where our guests are invited to socialize as they explore the gorgeous gardens complete with fireplaces, a gazebo, a fountain and original exposed brick.

The York University planning program continues to lead discussions around urban growth, adaptive re-use, heritage preservation and urban ecology. This year's event welcomes attendees to explore history and natural environment in the city while networking and reconnecting with planning and development professionals, colleagues and friends. For more information please visit <http://www.yorku.ca/mypac/>

Jane McFarlane is a second-year planning student and OPPI representative.



Jane McFarlane

Department of "Placemaking" Succeeds by Uttering Five-Letter Word

Janette Sadik-Khan, Commissioner, Department of Transportation, New York City, took Toronto by storm in April when she provided the keynote speech at a CUI Urban Leadership session co-organized with Walk and Bike for Life.

Providing dozens of examples of how her department is shifting its focus from a mission devoted to cars and sprawl to "celebrating streets," Janette demonstrated the power of the pilot—her favourite five-letter word. By designating change as a pilot, Sadik-Khan avoids time-consuming approvals that might otherwise forestall an initiative. By the time the "pilot" reaches its anniversary, the public, businesspeople and taxi drivers (to name just some of her constituents) typically have accepted the changes. Conversely, if something doesn't work, no harm done.

In a remarkably short time, cycling has become mainstream in New York City, aided and abetted by "temporary" improvements relying on paint, bollards and signage. The notoriously hazardous intersections between Broadway and the street grid have been overcome by "taking Broadway out of the vehicular mix"—turning over the space to pedestrians. Cyclists have new-found encouragement to cohabit the streets, with

generous lanes separated from through traffic by parked cars.

Referring to herself as New York's largest real estate developer (apologies to Donald Trump), Sadik-Khan has successfully "changed the DNA of how we do business" by reclaiming acres of land for the benefit of cyclists and pedestrians—while keeping the public on-side. Accountable to Mayor Bloomberg, she has used "complete streets legislation" to begin a remarkable transformation. Not unreasonably, she considers her department is in charge of placemaking.

Lakeland

Giving Back to the Community in Lakelands

Nancy Farrer

Over the past several years, the Lakelands Central Program Committee has managed to run a number of its events at a small profit, such as the popular annual Christmas party known as Festivus, held each year at Georgian Downs. The Program Committee has chosen to invest our surplus back into the communities where our members reside.

This year, the Program Committee donated \$500 to the Town of Orangeville's second annual Earth Day planting, which took place on April 25, 2009. Approximately 80 volunteers came out to plant 500 trees and shrubs provided by Credit Valley Conservation and Trout Unlimited and to collect garbage along



Earth Day in Orangeville

a stretch of Mill Creek, a tributary of the Credit River. It was a wonderful community day, with people of all ages and walks of life coming together to enhance the environment.

This was the second year that Lakelands District Program Committee has made a financial contribution to Orangeville's Earth Day celebrations. A sign has been posted recognizing our support at Maywood Parkette.

The OPPI Lakelands Central Program Committee has also donated \$500 to Stepping Stones Co-operative Nursery's tree planting program, which took place on Earth Day in Barrie. Pre-schoolers planted trees on public lands along Barrie's waterfront.

The Committee has also donated \$500 to the Collingwood Environment Network's build a rain barrel workshop. The workshop, which was held on May 9, 2009, provided attendees with a barrel to take home and place in their backyard.

These organizations were very appreciative of OPPI's donations and Lakelands Program Committee was happy to be able to improve the local environment in some small way.

Nancy Farrer, MCIP, RPP, is a Senior Planner with the Town of Collingwood. She can be reached at 705-445-1290, ext. 3284, or nfarrer@collingwood.ca.

Western Lake Ontario

Western Lake Ontario Lunch and Learn: Community Health and Open Space

Meghan House

In response to the OPPI Policy Paper, *Healthy Communities, Sustainable Communities*, the Western Lake Ontario District held a Lunch and Learn on "Community Health and Open Space." The event was held at the Royal Botanical Gardens in Burlington on April 16, 2009, and featured three speakers on topics that explored various linkages between community health and open space.

The first speaker was Barbara McKean, Head of Education at the Royal Botanical Gardens, who has been involved in outdoor education and interpretation since 1982. Barbara spoke about the importance of nature to mental and physical health, particularly children's health, noting growing evidence that many children suffer from "nature deficit disorder."

Citing the work of Richard Louv and Frances Kuo, and the recent introduction in the United States Senate of the *No Child Left Inside Act*, Barbara spoke of rising rates of childhood health issues, such as obesity, Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder, anxiety and depression that may be related to sedentary, indoor lifestyles. In addition, children's free time tends to involve programmed activities and organized sports that often occur outside their neighbourhoods and in artificial environments. These factors may limit a child's understanding of his or her community and the environment, which are important first steps to fostering environmentalism and enabling the child to function in real-world situations.

The possible solutions Barbara suggested were providing positive environmental education and experiences through free-play and natural playgrounds, participation in community or school gardening projects, going on walking excursions, or turning off the in-car DVD player and engaging the child in the experience of travelling through the community.

The second speaker, Karen Burson from Hamilton Eat Local, is a chef and local food activist. She explained how local food systems support local economies, combat global

warming, and promote peace and prosperity through food security and equal access. For example, Hamilton has a poverty rate of 20% and the food given to Food Banks is often insufficient and of low quality. Urban agricultural opportunities, such as community gardens, and education on food production and preparation could improve accessibility to high-quality food.

There is a strong movement in many communities to support local food systems and several useful guides are available, such as the *Buy Local! Buy Fresh!* maps (available for several communities), *Edible Toronto* magazine, *My Local Greenbelt* guides and others. Planners have a role in promoting local and urban agriculture in various ways, including supporting the use of vacant or underutilized land for gardens, encouraging residential developments with an agricultural component, or improving transportation and access to local networks. Karen has created a Facebook Group "Planning to Eat?" for planning professionals interested in learning about and discussing issues of urban food security.

Finally, Stewart Chisholm, MCIP, RPP, a planner working for the national not-for-profit organization Evergreen, talked about greening urban spaces. Stewart listed the health and social benefits of green space as promoting physical activity, improving quality of life, fostering community cohesion and providing access to healthy, fresh food. Evergreen has three program streams, including Learning Grounds (schools), Common Grounds (public) and Home Grounds (residential), which provide assistance with planning, funding and implementing community naturalization projects.

Stewart presented several Evergreen projects as case studies, including the Fort York Community Garden, Habitat for Humanity landscaping projects, and Take BAC 13 program in City of Toronto Priority Neighbourhoods. The case studies illustrated common characteristics, such as community participation and education, the use of a variety of landscapes (not just parks), creative programming to maximize the variety of uses and users, and partnerships between diverse groups.

Each speaker encouraged investment in the community and health through maximizing the availability and use of open space. The



PHOTO BY EVERGREEN

Common Grounds



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speakers also demonstrated how opportunities to affect global issues reside at the local level and that the aggregation of individual actions can further sustainability.

The Western Lake Ontario District would like to thank the sponsors, presenters and organizers for a successful event.

Meghan House is a cultural heritage planner with the City of Hamilton. She can be reached at Meghan.House@hamilton.ca.

People

Don May to Head Parks and Recreation Ontario

Don May, MCIP, RPP, has been elected as President of the Board of Directors for Parks and Recreation Ontario for 2009-2010. Don served as President of OPPI from 2003-2005.

Don has been on the PRO Board for two years and during that time has shared his expertise in non-profit governance and his passion for physical activity and healthy living. As a professional planner, Don believes that parks and recreation are critical to our

health and wellbeing and the survival of our society. "If we don't get active, we are putting our health at risk," Don says, "and our environment—both built and natural—is crucial. People must have access to spaces for recreation—healthy spaces where they can be active with friends and family. Together, we can make Ontario the healthiest province in the country."

PRO, representing more than 1,500 leaders in parks and recreation across the province, has collaborated with OPPI on training and continues to work with OPPI on several coalitions aimed at improving the health of Ontarians. Planners and parks and recreation professionals share many of the same goals



Don May

and visions for our communities, and PRO looks forward to continuing to build a strong relationship between our sectors. For more information about PRO, visit their website at www.prontario.org.

Over the next year, Don and the

PRO Board will remain committed to developing partnerships that promote healthy lifestyles—through programs and initiatives that support chronic disease prevention, help combat childhood obesity and promote healthy environments.

"We can't afford to work in isolation now," Don says. "We're at a tipping point and I'm very excited to be working with others who are equally dedicated to improving health through physical activity."

Antoine Belaieff, MCIP, RPP, a graduate of the University of Toronto planning program and a past contributor to the Ontario Planning Journal, has left Metrolinx to work with the Clinton Foundation. He is based at Toronto City Hall and will be working on local projects relating to climate change. Antoine can be reached at 416-338-7137 or abelaieff@clintonfoundation.org.

Benjamin Puzanov, district editor for Southwest district, has left Storey Samways to take on a new role as planner with the Municipality of Middlesex Centre. His new contact information is 519-666-0190 ext. 231 or puzanov@middlesexcentre.on.ca.

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Beyond 2010—we are now on our way!

Dana Anderson

MANY OF YOU HAVE HEARD about the initiatives to raise the bar of the planning profession and set new national standards for planning. You may have also recently participated in an OPPI survey (December 2008) which asked for your thoughts on new standards and proposed changes to our membership, through the Membership Continuous Improvement Project. The project is led by the Canadian Institute of Planners.

What has happened to date? Three committees were formed to bring together representatives of all the provincial affiliates of CIP to analyze and make recommendations on (1) ethical standards, (2) required competencies (skills and knowledge) and (3) certification standards. The project also involved consultation with planning schools and with stakeholders who use the services of planners, as well as with practising planners.

At a recent CIP Council meeting in Ottawa in April 2009, all affiliates endorsed the recommendations from the three reports and agreed to continue to work towards the implementation of the new standards and membership process. This is a significant step forward.

OPPI Council supports the recommendations in the Task Force reports. OPPI recognizes that planners across Canada need to ensure that the training and certification processes for becoming a planner remain relevant and that planners are adequately prepared to meet new demands. Planners are also more mobile. Those trained in Ontario may end up working elsewhere, while planners from other provinces or countries may come to work in Ontario communities. National standards are needed that allow planners to work in all provinces and to represent Canadian planning values abroad. The recognition of planning as a profession by the public and by decision makers means that planners must be seen to uphold the highest standards and that those who carry a professional designation have a clearly specified set of skills, knowledge, and experience.

All members need to know what is happening with the Membership Continuous Improvement Project and what the next steps are.

There is still work to be done. Representatives from the Affiliates will now be working on implementing the recommended changes from the Task Force reports. Implementation will mean changes to our membership process. Issues relating to tim-

ing, administrative and operations for OPPI will need to be carefully addressed and any changes to our by-laws to implement the new standards will go to a vote of our members.

While all OPPI members will be affected by the changes, those most affected will be planners who enter the profession after the new requirements are in place, since the new approach will affect their training and the process of becoming an RPP. Postsecondary institutions will also be affected by any changes required as part of the accreditation of planning schools. Planners who currently hold an RPP designation will be expected to comply with any changes to current codes of practice, ethical standards, and lifelong learning requirements.

Planners who participate in the membership process as examiners, mentors, or sponsors, and those who provide continuous professional learning will also need to understand the new requirements and new opportunities.

OPPI wants to keep you informed at every step in this process. We will seek your input on proposed changes through surveys, workshops, information sessions, e-mail, OPPI publications, and online programs.

Currently, the CIP website is the main source of information on this initiative, at <http://www.cip-icu.ca/>. You will need your password to view the information, which is on the members' side of the CIP website.

Dana Anderson, MCIP, RPP, is OPPI's Director of Membership Services and Manager of Planning Services with the Oakville Planning Department.



Dana Anderson



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Western Lake Ontario District gears up for fall conference

Rosalind Minaji

IN 2009, THE EFFORTS of Western Lake Ontario District are focused on our joint OPPI/CIP conference in Niagara Falls. We are excited to be hosting planners from all



Rosalind Minaji

over Canada and the USA at this conference from September 30 to October 3 at the Sheraton on the Falls Hotel.

Conference Committee members have organized a well-rounded program full of practical solutions and insights into issues such as cultural development, climate change and infrastructure, sustainable agriculture, and socially responsible economics. Mobile workshops have been planned to explore Niagara Region's history, green buildings, power generation projects, farm operations and waste management facilities. An interactive media

café is being arranged to showcase new ways of planning, including video, podcasts, digital modelling, and media arts. The full social program includes events for family members. We are also working with our APA counterparts in Buffalo to arrange architectural and open space tours across the border. This will be an outstanding conference, worthy of its spectacular location overlooking the Falls.

While we prepare for the conference, the Western Lake Ontario District has also organized professional practice and networking activities for the spring. In response to the Healthy Communities initiative, a Lunch and Learn event with the theme of "Community Health and Open Space" took place on April 16, and featured three informative speakers (see District report by Meghan House).

In keeping with our healthy communities focus, WLO District is proud to announce our support for trail development in a brand-new 73-hectare conservation area in Hamilton. A donation has been made to the Eramosa Karst Conservation Area to help with the construction of a multi-use trail connecting the new conservation lands with 155 hectares of additional parkland and open space in this rapidly urbanizing part of the District.

Our second annual Golf Tournament (9 holes plus dinner) is being organized for June 11, 2009, at Hamilton's Knollwood Golf Course. At \$60 per person, this affordable event is booking up fast. We are encouraging new and novice golfers to borrow a set of clubs and come out

for a fun afternoon. No scorekeeping. No pressure. Just a chance to have fun and then enjoy an Italian buffet dinner with your fellow planners.

Congratulations to WLO resident Don May, the newly elected President of Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO). At our Healthy Communities Breakfast last year, Don discussed PRO initiatives and how the built form of our communities can provide opportunities for people to be active throughout their lives.

The WLO District will continue to offer opportunities for networking, professional development, professional collaboration, and furthering our profession. Many thanks to our hard-working District executive and volunteers for all their efforts on our behalf.

Rosalind Minaji, MCIP, RPP, works with the City of Burlington's planning department. She can be reached at minajir@burlington.ca.

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Connecting with Fellow Students

Adam Zendel

I AM VERY EXCITED about taking over the reins as the 2009-2010 Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) Student Delegate.



Adam Zendel

Currently, I am a Master's student in the Faculty of Environmental Studies Planning Program at York University. My area of concentration is the planning of retail spaces and I am looking at how we can better integrate retail uses into the communities and how we can make

these spaces more sustainable.

This past year I had the pleasure of serving as the First-Year OPPI Student Representative for York University. In this position, I learned a great deal about how OPPI operates and I am looking forward to building on OPPI's past successes to make it an even better organization for students.

During my term as Student Delegate, I hope to build on the work that the outgoing Student Delegate, Jennifer Burnett, has done, including looking into how to make OPPI student membership even more valuable to students. I look forward to developing stronger connections between the students at each of our six planning programs across Ontario. We are the next generation of planners and it is important to start building strong connections among ourselves.

As well, I hope to work towards developing more opportunities for planning students from across Ontario, to network with practising planners and to attend student-focused development seminars and workshops that will build on the theoretical education that students are gaining in their planning programs. These sessions will provide students with networking opportunities and additional opportunities to hone their practical skills.

I look forward to representing students' interests across the Institute and I welcome your ideas and suggestions on how to continue to make OPPI student membership the best and most valued membership.

Adam Zendel can be reached at zendel@yorku.ca.

Student Scholarships Awarded

Mark Paoli

ONE OF THE MEMBERSHIP OUTREACH committee's most important and enjoyable tasks is to award the student scholarships each year. All the applicants this year were impressive, with high levels of academic achievement, community service and commitment to the planning profession across the board.



Mark Paoli

We are pleased to announce that the Gerald Carrothers Graduate Scholarship recipient is Katie Temple, a Master's student at the University of

Guelph. Katie Temple is originally from Newfoundland, where she established her passion for rural sustainability issues, which translated into both community involvement and a research focus in local food security.

The OPPI Undergraduate Scholarship recipient is Meghan O'Donnell, who is completing her Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning degree at Ryerson where her leadership as an OPPI Student Representative is just one example of her extensive involvement in

both her school community and the wider Toronto planning community.

In addition to the \$1,000 award, the recipients will receive free registration to the upcoming joint OPPI-CIP Conference in Niagara Falls, where they will be honoured along with Excellence in Planning Award winners.

Our thanks to all of the student members who applied, for demonstrating that OPPI continues to attract the brightest and the best.

Mark Paoli, MCIP, RPP, is Director of Membership Outreach and is Senior Policy Planner at the County of Wellington.

JOIN YOUR COLLEAGUES in Niagara Falls, Ontario, and listen to the best of the best on the environment, economy, culture, and society. Hear expert panellists on the issues planners need to confront, participate with your questions and feedback, and listen to your colleagues as they showcase their innovations and experiences.

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Editorial

Regeneration efforts need to be twinned with preventing next generation of brownfield sites

Glenn Miller

THE CLOSING OF THE GM TRUCK PLANT in Oshawa in May is the latest indication that Ontario's once-thriving auto sector is struggling for survival. The future of GM plants in St Catharines and Windsor is also in doubt. In addition, the company announced the closure of hundreds of dealerships, cutting the network by 50% throughout Canada. Chrysler is also closing dealerships and, in many smaller communities throughout Southern Ontario, auto parts companies—often the major employer—have shuttered their doors.

In St Thomas, the casualty list continues to grow. Ford has been consolidating its operations there for some time, reducing the St Thomas plant to one shift. Three parts plants and the Stirling truck plant (part of the Daimler Chrysler family) have announced closure, leaving hundreds of residents without jobs.

Nor have the closures been confined to the auto sector. In Smith Falls, less than an hour's drive from the nation's capital, corporate cutbacks have put the town on economic life support, with three of the largest employers closed or leaving. Comparable cutbacks in the resource industries have left their mark in Northern Ontario, emphasizing the retrenchment of a sector that once led the way for Ontario.

Beyond the painful economic impact on dozens of communities and the obvious challenges facing the thousands who have lost their jobs, however, municipal planners across Ontario may be about to see the emergence of another unwanted, unforeseen problem. In the wake of bankruptcies and plant closures, the inventory of brownfield sites is likely to skyrocket, as companies abandon buildings and real-estate brokers search in vain for replacement industries.

A turning point?

On a more positive note, from Oshawa to St Catharines, to Welland and St Thomas, planners have been working hard to spark

downtown revitalization, often by targeting brownfield sites as part of a deliberate strategy to reintegrate underutilized but well-located lands back into urban fabric. But when economic challenges are so widespread, is this enough?

Over the last decade—arguably one of the most sustained periods of economic expansion since the Second World War—planners in the public, private and non-profit sectors have been focusing on how to clean up and redevelop brownfield properties created over many years of cyclical boom, bust and resurgence. Although progress has been made in making brownfield redevelopment a mainstream activity, in light of the current spate of closures, have we made enough progress in preventing creation of a new generation of brownfields? The challenge is that regulations for preventative measures (that is, stopping contamination before it occurs) are scattered through a myriad provincial and federal statutes, beyond the reach of zoning by-laws.

Even in a period when staff resources are stretched, there is still time for the planning profession to match revitalization efforts with outreach to other orders of government and the private sector for advice on how to address these complex issues. This is a time when planners in every sector have an opportunity to make a difference by adapting their skills to help renew the Ontario economy.

Glenn R. Miller, FCIP, RPP, is editor of the Ontario Planning Journal. He is also vice president, education and research, with the Canadian Urban Institute. As a director of the Canadian Brownfields Network, he will be leading a discussion of these issues in a panel to be held at Canadian Brownfields 2009, in Vancouver this fall. Glenn can be reached at editor@ontarioplanning.com.

Letters

Power the point of the rant

I LOVED THIS ARTICLE [The Unbearable Dreariness of PowerPoint]! How refreshing! I particularly enjoyed Philippa Campsie's article (January/February issue) because I spent the entire next day sitting through one PowerPoint presentation after another (many of the slides had tiny print and WAY too much material). I couldn't help thinking that we needed Philippa Campsie in the room...

—Sue Heffernan, Sudbury

Kafka-esque procedures

I APPRECIATED Wayne Caldwell's message in a recent issue and the notes on discipline. Here is a perspective on the procedures affecting

retired members. OPPI/CIP recently sent me a nine-page-long "Annual Membership Invoice and Data Form" to fill out in order to maintain my retirement status for another year. At the top of the form, it correctly identified me as a currently retired member. So I signed it and enclosed my check. It came back, with an additional page, specifically requesting that I sign paragraph 2B which is an "Application for Retired Status by Full Member." It also asked for a brief explanation of my "change" in status. Nowhere in the pages can a retired member apply for an extension of their existing retired status. Nevertheless, I did sign this incorrect statement, as requested, and sent it back to the OPPI office. This time, the Post Office required an additional 44 cents for postage.

Most of us choose to stay as "retired members" for sentimental reasons. We still wish to

belong. We still like to read the Ontario Planning Journal. Retired members should be invited and welcomed in the OPPI/CIP and—when the opportunity arises—used as a resource.

Wayne Caldwell and most of us would like to see the planner as a Visionary, Strategist, Creator and Innovator. I wonder if this can ever be possible without divine intervention.

—Vladimir Matus is a retired planner living in Toronto.

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

Sustain Ontario: The Alliance for Healthy Food and Farming

Lauren Baker



PHOTO: COURTESY ZACK TAYLOR

Interest in local food has skyrocketed

OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS, the issue of healthy, local, sustainable food and farming has galvanized public interest. Farmers' markets have proliferated across the province, regional "buy local" initiatives have been launched, and many people are working to put local sustainable food on the table. In fact, the proposed theme of the 2010 OPPI symposium is local food.

Despite this interest in the local food economy, many farmers are still struggling to make a living. At the other end of the food chain, food-related illness is on the rise. Obesity and diabetes levels are increasing. Food bank use has increased in Ontario, and

hunger is exacerbated by the current economic crisis.

In order to address the policy-related aspects of these complex issues, Sustain Ontario: The Alliance for Healthy Food and Farming, was recently formed. Sustain Ontario is a province-wide, cross-sectoral alliance that promotes healthy food and farming. We are taking a collaborative approach to research, policy development and action by addressing the intersecting issues related to healthy food and local sustainable agriculture, and working towards a food system that is accessible, ecological and equitable.

Sustain Ontario is the outcome of a two-

year process that brought together diverse groups and organizations working on food and agriculture issues in Ontario, representing the health, community, farming, and environment sectors. A conference is being planned for winter 2010 to bring together everyone interested in food and agriculture issues in the province.

Several research and advocacy priorities have emerged from discussions with people across the province. First is the need for a province-wide food strategy to bring together people from different government ministries that affect food and agriculture to talk about healthy, local and sustainable food and farming issues.

The second emerging priority is developing appropriate infrastructure to support regional food systems. This infrastructure includes procurement policies, appropriately scaled processing plants and distribution channels.

A third priority is linking low-income communities with locally grown food.

You are invited to join Sustain Ontario. Membership is free, and open to non-profit groups and organizations, food enterprises (businesses and farms), and public-sector agencies. As a member, you will support Sustain Ontario's mission and guiding principles. You will be able to participate on Sustain Ontario's steering committee, chosen each year at an annual membership meeting (to be held in winter 2010). You will be invited to actively support Sustain Ontario's advocacy campaigns. Even if you do not wish to actively support these campaigns, you are still welcome to be a member of Sustain Ontario. Members of the public are also welcome to be members of Sustain Ontario, but will not have voting privileges. To become a member of Sustain Ontario and engage with provincial food policy issues, go to www.sustainontario.com.

Lauren Baker is the Director of Sustain Ontario. She can be reached at info@sustainontario.com. She is also a member of the Toronto Food Policy Council. Next year's OPPI symposium will focus on these issues.

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Planning Futures

Metrolinx Moves to the Next Level— Gains Control Over Operations, Assets and Implementation

Paul J. Bedford

ON MARCH 30, 2009, Jim Bradley, the Minister of Transportation, introduced the *Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area Transit Implementation Act* in the Ontario Legislature. The act establishes a new Transition Advisory Board of Directors for both Metrolinx and GO Transit, consisting solely of non-elected members. I was invited by the Minister to sit on the new Board, along with 11 others.

A few days later, Premier Dalton McGuinty announced that the government would commit \$9 billion to fund light rail transit lines on Eglinton and Finch Avenues, construct 37 kilometres of dedicated centre median for the VIVA bus rapid transit system on Highway 7 and Yonge Street, and fund studies for both east-west and north-south transit lines in Hamilton. Additional announcements are expected in the coming weeks for other transit initiatives.

These bold steps demonstrate the resolve of the province regarding transit implementation in the Great Toronto and Hamilton area (GTHA).

What are the key features of the new legislation? What was the rationale for creating a board with no political representation? What powers will the new board have and how might they be used? Perhaps most important, how will future revenue be generated to build, operate and maintain the \$50-billion transit network envisioned in the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP) adopted by Metrolinx in November 2008?

New Powers Delegated to the Board
Removing elected politicians from both the former Metrolinx and GO Transit Boards is

an important change. The Minister is empowered to appoint a Transition Advisory Board for up to one year with a maximum of 15 non-elected members with professional and corporate experience in such areas as finance, project management and planning. The new

The legislation contains several new powers that could influence the future growth of the GTHA. First, it gives the Minister the authority to issue transportation planning policy statements requiring conformity with the Regional Transportation Plan (RTP). It

also directs municipalities to prepare transportation master plans that must be consistent with the Minister's policy statements. It further requires the RTP to conform to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Places to Grow).

Second, the legislation allows Metrolinx to own and operate new transit infrastructure and amortize those owned assets. This move could help make transit implementation more achievable, given the lengthy periods needed to amortize large capital costs.

Third, the legislation allows Metrolinx to own and operate a greater share of higher-order transit in the GTHA in the future. It defines the regional transit system to include GO Transit and other passenger transportation systems prescribed by the Minister. This will no doubt be a controversial provision, given previous suggestions about Metrolinx possibly assuming responsibility for heavy rail within the region.

There is a fundamental difference between a strong core subway system with frequent stops that serves the daily transportation needs of 475 million annual riders and the GO system with limited stops serving approximately 55 million annual commuters. Each system serves a different market and function, yet both are critically important to the future health of our region.



Merging of GO with Metrolinx a current priority

board will include representation from the former Metrolinx and GO Boards in addition to new members. It will be responsible for integrating both the Metrolinx and GO Transit organizations into one regional body with a project delivery focus.

Land use powers expanded

The new board will have the power to acquire, hold, lease, or dispose of real property. It will be able to enter into commercial arrangements with municipalities or others and to delegate powers to a subsidiary corporation with certain provisos. With respect to sustainable revenue generation, the new board must prepare an Investment Strategy on or before June 1, 2013.

Depending on whom you talk to, these changes are either long overdue or a big mistake. Similar changes were made a few years ago to Translink, the Greater Vancouver Transportation Authority. My sense is that any model can work if the will is there to make it work. I found the old Metrolinx Board worked quite well with elected members making a special effort to think on a regional scale while representing a local perspective. Collectively, they managed to unanimously develop and adopt the RTP in a very short period.

However, the integration of Metrolinx and GO Transit under one board should not be a surprise to anyone, as the original 2006 legislation contemplated the eventual merger. This was held in abeyance while Metrolinx developed the RTP over the past two years, with the focus now turning to implementation.

The Core Challenges and My Priorities

The task before the new board is enormous, given the poor record of building transit over the past 25 years. It is essential to build a strong core transit network within the City of Toronto while transforming the GO commuter network into an integrated regional system that serves the transportation needs of the GTHA. Both transit systems need continuous strategic investment over time.

I will bring three main priorities to the new Transition Advisory Board: funding the vision, city and region building, and a commitment to public transit ownership. These will all be guided by the integration of land use and transportation planning at every opportunity.

Revenue

The biggest single challenge confronting the GTHA has always been the lack of secure and sustainable funding. Since the province has already committed \$9 billion of the total \$11.5 billion first announced by the Premier as part of Move 2020, other revenue sources

and mechanisms will be required to build out the \$50-billion RTP over the next 25 years. After all, health care alone now accounts for about 42% of the annual \$100 billion provincial budget. So it is essential to start a regional conversation this year about other funding options, as it will take some time to figure out the most appropriate revenue tools. All ideas should be on the table, including road pricing, parking fees, vehicle registration fees, sales tax, value capture and fuel tax, provided they are all on a GTHA-wide basis. It is also essential to document proposed leading-edge

7% fewer kilometres travelled during peak traffic periods and to change driving behaviour through pricing and value-added incentives, including car insurance.

Hong Kong uses a value-capture mechanism that takes a percentage of development revenue from private-sector developers who build mixed-use projects on MTR land adjacent to existing and future Metropolitan Transit Railway stations. This approach accounts for 15% to 20% of annual MTR revenues. The MTR makes a yearly profit and is jointly owned by the government and private shareholders with a ratio of 77% public to 23% private. It is listed on the Hong Kong Stock Exchange.

The use of public-private partnerships to finance and build transit is another revenue tool. Government reluctance to tax and the long-standing underinvestment in transit has created an opportunity for private-sector investment. If private investment funds are willing to finance large-scale transit infrastructure, it may help to expedite the construction of much-needed transit lines. However, it is essential to look at the entire lifecycle cost, including maintenance costs, in addition to the



revenue-generation methods in the United States, the Netherlands and Hong Kong.

Perhaps the most relevant study to be closely monitored in the report of the U. S. National Surface Transportation Infrastructure Financing Commission called "Paying Our Way," released in February 2009. The comprehensive 234-page study spells out a new framework for transportation finance in the United States. In essence, it foresees a major reduction in fuel tax revenue as a dependable source of transportation funding for the Highway Trust Fund, as people drive less and make a gradual shift to green energy sources. It recommends the adoption of a vehicle-miles-travelled road pricing fee as the primary source of sustainable funding and as a mechanism to influence future transportation and land use behaviour. The goal is to implement a national vehicle-miles-travelled fee by 2020.

The Netherlands Parliament made a commitment to adopt a vehicle-kilometres-travelled road pricing model in 2007. In 2010, the concept will be tested on a voluntary pilot basis by major private companies with 60,000 users. Real road pricing for trucks starts in 2011 and the timetable for all cars is 2012 to 2016. The goal is to achieve up to

risks to governments if the private-sector partner runs into trouble. While much attention was devoted to this model in London, Vancouver and other cities, the poor track record and documented collapse of private-sector investment in London Transport gives one cause for concern. As such, any P3 proposals brought before the Metrolinx board will require very close scrutiny and rigorous evaluation.

City and Region Building

One of the most attractive features of the legislation is that it actually puts teeth into the Regional Transportation Plan in linking land use and transit. The new provisions related to conformity requirements for municipalities are critical in helping the RTP and the Growth Plan put the brakes on regional sprawl. The province has demonstrated that it is serious about making municipalities think and act differently. Without that clout, and without strong ongoing provincial leadership, successful implementation of the RTP would be in doubt.

My own priorities include advancing the Downtown Relief line within the next 15 years, to launch a comprehensive network-

wide study of electrification requirements for GO transit, and to ensure that the proposed Union-Pearson airport rail link forms part of that electrified system. These matters must be addressed in the short term and not put off to another generation. After all, the Downtown relief Line was first proposed in 1910! It is a vital piece of the core transit network that, along with the Eglinton Avenue line, would take the pressure off Yonge and Bloor station, especially with the contemplated extension of the Yonge line north to Highway 7.

Finally, it is important to ensure that the mixed-use development potential of strategic

The Netherlands Parliament made a commitment to adopt a vehicle-kilometres-travelled road pricing model in 2007. In 2010, the concept will be tested on a voluntary pilot basis by major private companies with 60,000 users.

GO transit stations is not precluded by the demand for more surface parking surrounding these stations. Parking must be incorporated into new mixed-use development and demand reduced through more dependable and frequent local transit service to the station.

Urban Mindset

The new board will quickly discover that inserting massive new transit infrastructure into a dense and well-established urban environment is a delicate operation, requiring sensitivity, continuous community liaison and good city-building practices. Changes to existing bridges, road patterns and grade separations will affect adjacent communities. These changes must be addressed in a positive manner that advances city-building, since the infrastructure we build today will be in place for the next 100 or more years. We have an opportunity to correct past city-building mistakes but at the same time, we must not create new problems.

One example is the Strachan Avenue overpass over the widened rail corridor now being discussed. In my view, the proposed solution would destroy the urban fabric of an established and emerging residential and

commercial neighbourhood, because the proposed high-level bridge overpass would be built right in front of existing townhouses and office buildings on Strachan Avenue north of the rail corridor. The bridge would also alter the grid pattern of local streets and create access problems for large trucks serving a major employer. The new board needs to work with the city and community to identify an alternative solution that responds to the transportation needs of Metrolinx and the adjacent community. Fortunately, several preferred alternatives have been already studied and reported on by the city. This is only one example of the challenges of working within a dense urban environment. There will be many more.

A Public Perspective

I appreciate being given the opportunity to serve on the Transition Advisory Board and will devote my heart and soul to the work. The board will bring its expertise to bear as we grapple with difficult choices, but I will be guided by my strong belief that public transit must remain public. Under the proposed legislation, new transit lines built must be owned by Metrolinx, but could be operated by the respective local transit agency.

We should remember the rationale for the

creation of the TTC in the early 1920s. Numerous private transit operators serving Toronto provided such sporadic service that the TTC was born. Public transit is the common glue that holds the City of Toronto and the region together, and is an essential component of the public realm that helps to make a civilized society possible.

I will not arrive at decisions without asking a lot of questions and doing my homework. We cannot afford to fail and must constantly remember that we will be making decisions that will serve future generations. On my fifth anniversary of retirement from the City of Toronto in April, I look forward to bringing a lifetime of planning and city-building experience to the implementation task of the new Metrolinx Board.

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 Board of Metrolinx, 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.

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The importance of volunteering

Don May



Bronte Creek

ON MARCH 31, 2009, I became President of Parks and Recreation Ontario (PRO). PRO represents a broad membership that includes municipalities, not-for-profit recreation providers such as YMCAs and Boys and Girls Clubs, as well as commercial suppliers and sport organizations. PRO advances important issues facing the sector—infrastructure, affordable access to recreation and prevention of chronic disease through increased activity.

My volunteerism began some 15 years ago when I was asked to join the Board of the Burlington Art Centre. In 1996, I became President of the BAC Board. In

1998, I joined OPPI Council because I wanted to give back to my profession. My passion to advance professional practice led me to be the first Director of Professional Practice and Development from 2000 to 2002.

As President-Elect, I was OPPI representative on CIP Council. Eight years on OPPI Council culminated in a term as President from 2003 to 2005. While I consider myself a “good soldier” within the profession, it was a privilege to represent Ontario’s talented Registered Professional Planners. It was a humbling experience to witness first-hand the commitment of members and the dedicated professional staff that make the OPPI the envy of many organizations.

We all have a responsibility to give back to our communities. Healthy and creative communities are defined by level of engagement. Professional planners have much to offer, given the nature of our training and experience. My personal commitment has evolved from the arts to my profession—to a realization that our health and well-being are dependent on our values.

Eight years ago, I was diagnosed with diabetes. I have been able to control this disease with exercise and good diet. This experience changed my outlook on life and fostered a need to encourage others to be more active. Based on my volunteerism over the last 15 years I would like to end this article with two messages:

1. Through our collective membership and commitment to OPPI, we have created an important and relevant professional organization. Be proud of a profession that provides valued expertise to our communities and society as a whole.
2. Consider community service to advance the recognition of our profession. The issues facing society are multi-faceted and complex—planners embrace collaboration and cooperation naturally.

Volunteerism is only one part of my life. No matter where I go or what I do, I remain proud of the professionalism fostered through OPPI and grateful to be considered part of a profession with so many talented and dedicated professionals. There is a part of me that needs to give back, given my good fortune. We must try and make a difference where we can contribute.

Don May, MCIP, RPP, is the principal of Almost There, a consultancy based in Burlington. He can be reached at donmay@almostthere.ca.

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An American regional planning experience from a Canadian planner

André Darmanin

IN OCTOBER 2006, I was hired by the Southern California Association of Governments (SCAG) as a regional transportation planner on the transit side. A new country. A new way of life. A new approach to transit. Coming from the Canadian Urban Transit Association (CUTA) as a technical services assistant, I was in for the shock of my life. Here's my story.

Leaving Canada was difficult, and not only from a family perspective. For those who haven't experienced working in the United States, it's a different world. I needed to apply for a TN visa. This is a temporary visa for those who are involved in a specific list of professions, which include urban planning. You need a copy of your degree, and a letter written by your employer outlining that their search for candidates locally was not successful, how much you will be paid and that the position is for one year only. Oh, and don't forget your passport!

SCAG is a metropolitan planning organization (MPO) that covers six counties in Southern California—Los Angeles, Ventura,

Imperial, San Bernardino, Riverside and Orange. MPOs were developed in the 1960s out of the regional planning movement. The laws governing MPOs come from the federal Department of Transportation and its divi-

.....
**Coming from the Canadian
Urban Transit Association
(CUTA) as a technical services
assistant, I was in for the
shock of my life**
.....

sions—Federal Transit Administration and the Federal Highway Administration.

SCAG is responsible for developing a long-range regional transportation plan and a transportation improvement plan every four years. I was involved in developing the transit section of the regional plan. My responsibility

was to review the regionally significant big-ticket projects from each of the counties, such as subway, commuter rail, light rail transit, and bus rapid transit.

One of SCAG's other roles was funding for planning, infrastructure and environmental impact reports, but not construction. Funding, the sole responsibility of the local and county governments. Acting as a project manager with such projects as the Gold Line Extension Feasibility Study, Commuter Rail Station Needs Assessment Study and Quechan Tribe Rural Transportation Study, I got to see the expansive region in a different way.

Working for SCAG, professional input is solely on an advisory basis. Therefore there was a lot of committee work involved. The Transit Technical Advisory Committee was the key discussion group amongst our local and county partners. Also I was involved in other advisory committees such as the Transportation Professionals Advisory Committee with Access Services—Los Angeles' version of Wheel-Trans.

Finally, what I probably will miss the most is the political engagement that was involved. I provided technical assistance on such legislation as the California's Transit Oriented Development Housing Program and input on our suggestions for SAFETEA-LU Reauthorization, expected to occur later this year. I worked with the legislative staff who liaise with elected officials. This was an experience like no other.

In closing, some say MPOs are lame-duck agencies and regional planning is dead. In my view, regional planning is still alive. I will cherish this experience and bring it forward to my career, wherever that leads.

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Caution to Planners Giving Evidence as Experts

Stanley Stein

A RECENT RULING by Justice Ellen Macdonald of the Ontario Superior Court of Justice is relevant to land use planners called upon to give “expert evidence” at Ontario Municipal Board hearings or other proceedings involving oral or written testimony (for example, in affidavits for OMB or Court motions).

The Role of the Expert

Consideration of the role of an expert witness came up in a mid-trial ruling in a case in the Superior Court of Justice—Ontario (*Alfano et al v. Piersanti et al*, ruling dated March 18, 2009). The ruling involves admissibility into evidence of reports prepared by a forensic accountant and his associate.

The consultants were acknowledged to be very experienced, and were qualified to give opinions in matters such as those at issue in

the case. However, the plaintiffs’ counsel challenged the impartiality and independence of two reports, and alleged that the consultants had assumed the role of advocates for the defendants. Justice Macdonald accepted the following statement of Bellamy J. in *Eastern Power Ltd. v. Ontario Electrical Financial Corp.* 2008 Carswell Ont. 5635 (S.C.J.): “The purpose of expert evidence is to assist the trier of fact to understand evidence outside of his or her range of experience so that a correct conclusion can be reached: *R. v. D. (D.)* [2000] 2 S.C.C. It is commonly recognized that, in order to be of assistance to the trier of fact, experts must remain objective...”

In her ruling, Justice Macdonald went on to say: “I accept this as a correct statement of the role of an expert. The court expects objectivity on the part of an expert. In other words, he or she cannot ‘buy into’ the theory of one side of the case to the exclusion of the other side. To do so, poses the danger that could taint the court’s understanding of the issues that must be decided with impartiality and fairness to both sides. The fundamental principle in cases involving qualifications of experts is that the expert, although retained by the clients, assists the court. If it becomes apparent that an expert has adhered to and promoted the theory of the case being advocated by either Plaintiffs or Defendants, he or she becomes less reliable and is not an expert

in the way that the role has been defined in the recent and well known jurisprudence.”

Further, Justice Macdonald quoted the decision of Justice Farley in *Bank of Montreal v. Citak*, 104 A.C.W.S. (3d) 100 where he said the following: “Experts must be neutral and objective; to the extent that they are not, they are not properly qualified to give expert opinions... To the extent that Mr. Hill has merely used the view of Mr. Citak as to the state of affairs and based his opinion on these views, Mr. Hill is building on a foundation of sand, not rock.”

In the case at hand, the plaintiffs’ counsel took the position that the two reports were “replete on every page with not only findings of fact, findings of credibility, but conclusions as to what the evidence is literally and what legal conclusions should be, not just factual conclusions.” The Court agreed and found that the evidence of the consultant was “committed to advancing the theory of the case of his client” and this affected the reliability of his evidence.

Analysis of the role of an expert has also taken place in other cases. For example, in another case, the Court expressed concern that expert witnesses should not become “hired guns” for their clients.

Admission of Expert’s Reports (and testimony) into Evidence

The next question addressed by the Court was how to proceed where a party was seeking admission of evidence contrary to the principles outlined above. The issue boils down to whether the offending expert evidence should be admitted as evidence at the hearing, and then allowing the Court to compensate for any of its weaknesses by attaching less weight to the opinion.

The Court relied upon decisions of the

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Supreme Court of Canada, which found that this approach was an abdication of the proper functioning of a trial judge. The Supreme Court of Canada stated that: "The court has emphasized that the trial judge should take seriously the role of 'gatekeeper.' The admissibility of the expert evidence should be scrutinized at the time it is proffered, and not allowed too easily an entry on the basis that all of the frailties could go at the end of the day to weight rather than admissibility."

The courts have thus identified a tension between efforts by a defendant's counsel to build a complete evidentiary record, while struggling against efforts by opposing counsel to ensure a careful and consistent application of the rules of evidence and exclusion of evidence that should not be admitted.

Weight of Evidence

Even if the objectionable aspects are cut back to simply being a matter of "weight," the lessons from the Ontario Superior Court are relevant to ensuring admissibility, credibility, and respect for the professionalism of the expert witness.

Justice Macdonald stated: "An expert should exercise extreme caution on analyzing the facts that support his or her client's position. ...It was very apparent that Mr. A. was committed to advancing the theory of the case of his client, thereby assuming the role of an advocate...Mr. A. became a spokesperson for [the Plaintiffs] and, in doing so, did not complete independent verification of key issues in accordance with the standards that are expected of an expert. The key issues, crucial to the determination of this case, if determined on the basis of Mr. A's reports would be tainted by the lack of impartiality that is clearly apparent from the content of e-mails [with the Plaintiffs]."

In the result, Justice Macdonald determined that the expert was not independent and impartial, and disqualified him as an expert.

Experts at the OMB

The OMB has made similar comments on the role of expert witnesses. In *The Matter of Alfa Aggregates et al*, (Board file Z900257 et al), the Board had the following comments on the conduct of a witness called to give expert evidence: "Always, it is expected that any witness giving opinion evidence provides his or her best, most well thought out and truthful evidence. Thus, there should be no fear that a witness before the Board or a consultant advising client and



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public before a hearing who is truly ethical and professional in outlook, will give different opinions suited for different occasions and clients. It is the responsibility of any professional person in the consulting field to ensure that this is the case....And were it otherwise, the entire matter of opinion evidence offered to the Board by a host of witnesses would be a mockery; the consultant would be reduced to a mere hired gun.’ ”*

However, the rules on admissibility of evidence appear to be more relaxed. Specifically, section 15 of the *Statutory Powers Procedure Act* allows the tribunal to admit “any oral testimony” and “any document or other thing.” This wide scope of admissibility is subject to exclusion of testimony or documents that would offend the rules related to “privilege” under the law of evidence or that are otherwise not admissible under a particular statute. In other words, the act seems to authorize some relaxation of the “gatekeeper” role of the Board and relies on attaching less weight to the opinions of the witness who advances or supports tainted evidence.

An obvious difficulty is that once evidence is admitted, it is difficult for an adjudicator to distil the weak evidence and apply a notional discount to its value while preparing the decision.

The admission into evidence of challenged reports or tainted testimony may help the tribunal avoid uncomfortable arguments about the independence of the witness and the quality or reliability of the work. However, once admitted, this evidence sits under a cloud of uncertainty and may lead to increasingly difficult situations as the hearing unfolds. This will be of particular concern if subsequent witnesses rely upon that evidence, without knowing that its value has already been crushed into the sands referred to by Justice Farley, unable to support the rest of the case.

What should we conclude?

The conclusion from this decision in the Superior Court is that experts should strive to meet high standards of objectivity, and thereby avoid any allegations that they have become advocates for their clients and that their evidence is therefore tainted.

Stan Stein is a partner with Osler Hoskin Harcourt LLP. He is an occasional contributor to the Ontario Planning Journal, providing readers with links between court decisions and the OMB.

* Another relevant case on the same point is *Re City of London OPA 162, 163, and 164*, 39 O.M.B.R. 500 at page 507.

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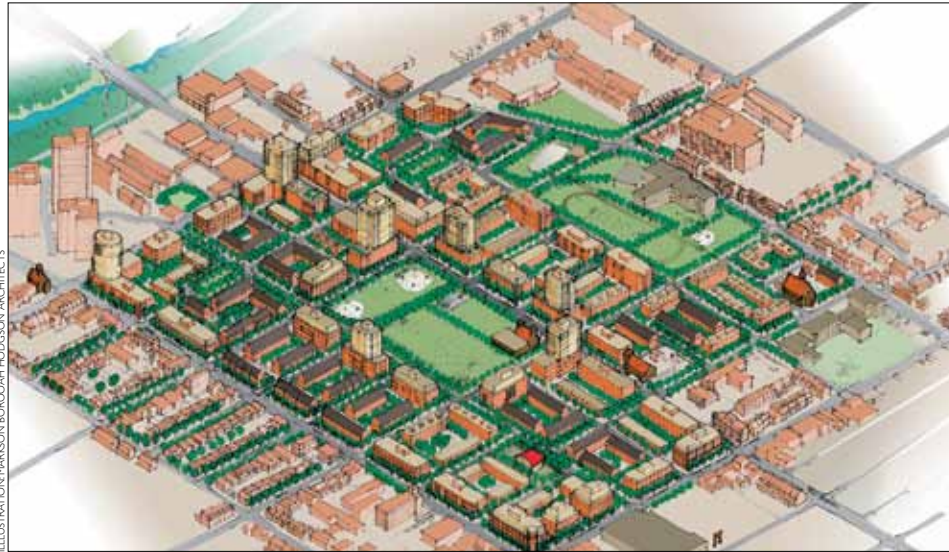
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Measuring Sustainable and Healthy Development: LEED-ND in Canada

Gabe Charles



Regent Park built to high environmental standards

THE OPPI Urban Design Working Group recently held a session on LEED-ND (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design—Neighbourhood Development) in Toronto. The session continued the discussion which began at the Urban Design workshop held at the 2006 OPPI Symposium, as well as through the OPPI Policy Paper on Healthy Communities.

Alex Taranu (City of Brampton, UDWG chair) provided context on LEED-ND. As more attention is focused on climate change, rising energy costs, an aging population and public health, the cause for good urbanism is being championed. The overarching theme of the discussion was using urbanism to help achieve healthy lifestyles and a more sustainable future.

Urban design can help shape urban form, including the planning and design of communities for walkability and reduced car dependency; access to facilities, nature, clean air and water, healthy food; and urban forms that promote social balance and mental health. LEED-ND promotes an intense, compact urban form which preserves the natural environment, rather than conventional suburban subdivision design.

Dan Leeming (The Planning Partnership, Co-Chair of LEED Canada) gave an overview of the U.S. Green Buildings Council and LEED Canada. The latter organization works to effect change on a sustainable level. Issues include reducing water and energy demand, addressing waste management, reducing greenhouse gas emissions and increasing the proximity of housing to jobs. It is not solely about green buildings, but actually getting the whole community correct; and adding these elements to good urban design starts to change the implementation.

The USGBC started LEED-ND as a pilot project two years ago. It included 248 projects, 23 of them in Canada, including North Oakville (as a suburban example) and the Don Lands (as an urban area). The pilot program involves a voluntary rating system which strikes a balance between established and emerging concepts. LEED-ND has four categories (certified, silver, gold, platinum) with credit evaluation broken into subcategories including location and linkages, neighbourhood pattern and design, green construction and technology, innovation and design process. Credits are based on the integration of transit, walkable streets, reduced heat island effects, quality architecture, and side-

walks on both sides of the street, among other elements.

Mark Guslits (Toronto Community Housing Corporation) identified how the redevelopment of Regent Park is using the same principles as LEED-ND, even though the project is not part of the pilot program. Regent Park was originally built based on what proved to be disastrous planning theories. The idea now is to revitalize the area using principles of good urban design and promoting community health with pedestrian-friendly streets, parks and open spaces and diverse architecture. With a total investment of over \$1 billion, the project includes \$100 million to replace housing and \$40 million for infrastructure to rebuild the area for up to 12,500 people, with more than 5,100 units, including 3,300 market housing units.

A layer of sustainability is built into the project, with one of the goals being to reduce energy use by 50%. The project uses district energy and all buildings will qualify for at least LEED Gold certification. The proposed buildings are urban buildings without curtain walls, and use geothermal and solar systems. The project will reduce water use, stormwater runoff, and waste. As well, there will be commercial land uses along the street edge, and commercial businesses are required to participate in the LEED program and employ people from the development.

David de Groot (Town of Oakville) described the North Oakville Plan, which is part of the LEED-ND pilot program.

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Although it is a greenfield development, the master plan (originally conceived through a charrette with Andres Duany) is premised on a natural heritage system addressing long-term sustainable practices. The plan is based on five-minute walk principles and transit is integrated into the initial development of the community. The plan also provides for neighbourhood centres and a hierarchy of parks, and is built on the principles of creating narrower street cross-sections that can fit trees and infrastructure.

Other municipalities in the GTA are employing similar sustainability programs,

although not necessarily LEED-ND, including the Town of Markham and the City of Pickering. Ronji Borooah (Town of Markham) gave an overview of Markham's initiatives, including the creation of performance measures that include a Smart Growth Checklist. These principles were updated to correlate with LEED. In addition, the Sustainable Development Standard & Guidelines were created, in which LEED Silver will be the minimum required standard for new medium- and high-density residential development. Issues remain such as how to address walkability, stormwater management,

transit-oriented development, urban heat island effects, and greenhouse gas emissions reductions for developments outside planned communities.

LEED-ND holds promise for communities looking to achieve greater sustainability, but drawbacks remain. For example, LEED-ND, like LEED buildings, is a voluntary program and cannot be imposed on the development industry. Municipalities have limited powers in the *Planning Act* to push for higher standards. As well, achieving LEED certification is expensive.

Some municipalities are considering using LEED as guidance for creating in-house programs as well as devising incentives (such as development charge credits) for achieving LEED, or LEED-level, development.

Although there are drawbacks with LEED-ND, the discussion indicated that there are far more positives.

Gabe Charles, MCIP, RPP, is an urban designer with the Town of Oakville and a member of the Urban Design Working Group.

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