

ONTARIO PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS INSTITUTE

# ONTARIO Planning JOURNAL

JULY/AUGUST 2009, VOL. 24, NO. 4

ONTARIO PLANNERS: VISION • LEADERSHIP • GREAT COMMUNITIES

## GUELPH'S PRINCIPLES OF GOOD URBAN DESIGN



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## ONTARIO PLANNING JOURNAL

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rosa.ruffolo@york.ca

Wendy Kaufman, *Northern*

wendy\_kaufman@yahoo.com

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See OPPI & CIP websites for more information

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# NO LITTLE PLANS FOR MID-SIZED GUELPH

Leadership evident in Guelph's progress

*Tim Smith*

**Y**ou know Guelph. You've been there a few times, maybe for the wonderful Hillside Festival. If you have, the magnificent Church of Our Lady and the many other limestone buildings downtown would have made an impression. You might remember that Guelph was one of the first cities in North America to initiate a curbside recycling program and later, municipal composting. Nestled in the countryside

between the Greater Toronto Area and the Region of Waterloo, Guelph has long championed environmental stewardship. But a strong green attitude didn't stop the city from sprawling as it grew, like so many mid-sized cities (and big ones, too).

Attitudes about Guelph's built environment are changing rapidly, thanks in part to the Province's Growth Plan. The city of 120,000 is planning to add 54,000 more residents and 32,000 jobs by 2031. About half of the population growth is expected to be accommodated through intensification. And there is more than growth on the City's mind. It wants to reinforce the historic downtown as the city's civic, cultural and commercial heart and turn outlying retail plazas into sustainable, urbane community hubs. Recognizing the need for a renewed focus on good urban design, the City commissioned and recently adopted a comprehensive Urban Design Action Plan.

## Don't forget the trees

The two-part Action Plan covers five elements of the City's role in achieving good urban design in everything from buildings and streets to trees and trails:

- adopting policies, standards and guidelines;
- preparing detailed plans;
- implementing capital projects;
- conducting effective review processes;
- promoting design excellence.

The plan focuses on strategic areas for change in the city and identifies policy and capital initiatives intended to guide intensifi-



PHOTO: TIM SMITH, URBAN STRATEGIES INC.

Guelph's Urban Design Action Plan builds on the city's remarkable natural, cultural and architectural assets

cation and place-making. Recommended policies for nodes, corridors, new communities and employment areas are appended.

As an Urban Growth Centre expected to accommodate more than 7,000 new residents by 2031, the city's downtown gets its own chapter. The City is charging ahead with several public realm

initiatives, among them a civic square and outdoor skating rink (next to the brand-new City Hall), a multi-modal transit terminal, a civic museum, a new library and extensive streetscape improvements. The Action Plan adds another cultural destination, a riverfront master plan and an incentives-based community improvement plan.

## The path to future urban villages

For the most part, the urban design objectives for Downtown Guelph are self-evident and broadly supported. The city's suburban shopping centres are another story. Like cities everywhere, Guelph has struggled with making the concept of mixed-use urban villages real in low-density contexts (a decade-long battle over a Wal-Mart site did not end well). Mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented developments are selling in Mississauga and Markham, but mid-sized and small cities need to work harder to achieve compact nodes outside their downtowns.

The Action Plan recognizes that stronger urban design policies are not enough to alter market forces—the public sector must take an active role in creating true mixed-use nodes. It recommends the City integrate civic open spaces, community facilities and transit hubs with nodal and corridor development and adopt community improvement plans to create incentives for transit-supportive uses. More and more municipalities will need to do the same to “level the playing field” and bring about the suburban intensification we're all counting on.

## Urban design involves everyone

Urban design is both a specialized discipline and a collective

project. Cities committed to building attractive and sustainable communities are heightening the role of urban designers in planning processes while reorganizing to ensure all municipal departments are working together to achieve city-building objectives.

Part 2 of the Guelph Urban Design Action Plan, on strengthening institutions, seeks to further Guelph's shift to more integrated decision-making. Multidisciplinary planning teams will meet regularly to review development proposals, capital projects and active planning studies. A more rigorous pre-application process will help prevent developer-neighbourhood battles. For all involved, digital models will clarify how major projects fit into and enhance their surroundings. In the next few years, the City plans to establish an advisory design review panel. Not surprising, the development community is apprehensive about many of these changes, but the City is proceeding (gradually), knowing such efforts have been effective elsewhere.

Guelph's Urban Design Action Plan will be monitored and updated annually, but it is nevertheless a milestone document, setting the stage for a more design-oriented official plan and reinforcing a culture of urban design within City Hall. Several of the 20 priority actions to be initiated over the next two years are in progress.

If you haven't checked out Guelph lately, plan a trip—if not to the city itself then to its website, to learn more about the many progressive initiatives supporting its motto, "Making a Difference."

*Tim Smith, MCIP, RPP, is a Senior Associate with Urban Strategies Inc. He was the Project Manager for the Guelph Urban Design Action Plan and is currently working on a downtown plan for the city. He can be reached at 416-340-9004, ext. 278, or tsmith@urbanstrategies.com.*

## Basic Principles of Good Urban Design (from the Guelph Urban Design Action Plan)

- Create communities where there are diverse opportunities for living, working, learning and playing.
- Build compact communities that use land, energy, water and infrastructure efficiently and encourage walking.
- Showcase natural attributes as defining features of the city's character by making them highly visible and accessible.
- Focus on "place-making"—developing infrastructure, spaces and buildings that are permanent and enduring, memorable and beautiful, adaptable and flexible, and ultimately valued.
- Conserve and celebrate the city's cultural and architectural heritage and reuse heritage assets.
- Create a diversity of inviting and accessible gathering places that promote civic engagement and a full range of social, cultural and economic interaction.
- Provide and balance choices for mobility—walking, driving, cycling and taking transit.
- Establish a pattern of interconnected streets and pedestrian networks in which buildings frame and address public spaces.
- Allow for a range of architectural styles and expressions that bring interest and diversity while responding appropriately to the scale and materiality of the local context.
- Provide a setting for a variety of lifestyles and rich experiences.

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# Planning for Age-Friendly Communities: A Call to Action

Avoiding surprises is Job One



Suburban areas present problems for an aging population

**A**t OPPI's bi-annual Symposium in September 2008, *The Grey Tsunami: Aging Communities and Planning*, members heard from experts from a broad range of disciplines about what to expect as the Baby Boomer generation begins to retire, including predictions that many communities will see profound changes in demand for social services, housing, transportation, and health care.

Flowing from discussions at its 2008 Symposium, OPPI has prepared a position paper highlighting some of the key concerns to be addressed, so that Ontario's planners and communities can respond more effectively to the challenges posed by an aging population. The full paper is available on the OPPI website; this article contains the highlights.

Planners should be well aware of the trends.

- The Canadian population as a whole is aging and is doing so more quickly than at any time in the past.
- People are living longer, yet the population is experiencing high levels of chronic diseases, such as diabetes and obesity.
- Household composition is changing; soon households with families will comprise a small minority of our communities.

- Different Ontario communities will face different demographic challenges.
- As Ontario becomes increasingly ethnically diverse, so will its aging population.
- Housing options remain limited and many seniors are opting to age in place in single-family housing.
- Mobility becomes more limited and movement patterns change as we age.
- The workforce is aging.

At the same time, the provisions of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, passed in 2005, affects all sectors—public, private, and non-profit—and its standards will become legally enforceable. Of particular note is the broad definition of disability, which includes conditions such as arthritis and heart disease. There is, however, no additional funding available to support compliance with the standards. Organizations will simply have more time to implement the more onerous requirements, such as those affecting the built environment.

Standards are being developed in five areas: customer service (the deadline for compliance is 2010), employment, communications, built environment, and transportation. The final four sets of standards are being

developed and will be posted for comment on the website of the Ministry of Community and Social Services ([www.mcscs.gov.on.ca](http://www.mcscs.gov.on.ca)).

## Learning from Best Practices

Many communities of all sizes across Ontario have initiated planning processes for age-friendly communities. For example, the County of Brant and City of Brantford have recently released "A Master Aging Plan" for the delivery of a comprehensive and coordinated set of community services to older adults, and the Cities of Mississauga and Kitchener have undertaken focused planning studies to review the implications of an aging population.

## OPPI's Position

The year 2011, when the first of the baby boomers turn 65, has been identified as the turning point for this demographic change—a mere two years away. Planners have a pivotal role to play in engaging their communities about necessary changes in the planning, design and program delivery process, including:

- **Promoting the role of local hubs.** Municipalities need to consider creating local hubs that bring together in a single location public services from all levels of government—e.g. a place to pay taxes, buy stamps, get government forms, renew licences, sign up for municipal programs and health services with a range of housing, daily shopping needs, transit service and opportunities for community gathering.
- **Increasing housing options.** A greater range of housing options needs to be offered, both in terms of house form and lifecycle housing models. There is a need for more community-based options—for example, common or shared living models that allow older homeowners to remain in their single-family houses while offering potentially affordable and manageable livable housing options to companion seniors. The implementation of flexible and inclusionary zoning may help with keeping seniors in the community. Enhanced community supports should be explored for

seniors who can care for themselves, but who need help looking after their homes. In residential development, the concept of Universal Design or Design for Visitability, whereby improvements aimed at one group within the population end up benefiting everyone, should be encouraged.

- **Designing for healthy communities.** OPPI's Healthy Communities, Sustainable Communities position paper identifies the elements of planning for healthy communities. More specifically, leisure and learning opportunities for seniors should be enhanced, including coordination with conservation authorities and municipal parks staff to ensure accessibility and programming. Finally, community-based total health (both mental and physical) models need to be advanced to support not only seniors aging in place but the health of their caregivers as well.
- **Promoting integration of uses and adaptive reuse.** Planning for places and facilities that combine programs, uses and functions in an integrated manner is an important concept in creating age-friendly communities. Models which intentionally integrate rather than segregate age-specific programs such as seniors' services and child care have been implemented with great success in the Netherlands, Scandinavia and Europe. The opportunity to adaptively reuse underutilized public facilities, such as former schools, for recreation, training and skills, ethno-cultural exchange and creative and arts programs is already being implemented in some communities.
- **Prioritizing mobility alternatives.** Planners recognize the implications for healthy and age-friendly communities created by auto-dependent forms of development. The re-emergence of a focus on walkable communities as a design principle can address some of these impacts. Further, planners need to rethink transit service for seniors—not only routing and accessibility of facilities, but alternative models. These could include, for example, transport that combines the low fares of transit with the personalized services of a taxi, or the innovative model in the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake, which offers subsidized, on-demand taxi/transit service for anyone without a driver's licence.
- **Establishing a meaningful voice: elder councils.** Many municipalities such as Waterloo, Vaughan and London have established Youth Councils or Cabinets

to ensure the voice of youth is heard and considered. Elder Councils could not only ensure the voice of seniors is part of decision-making processes, but also be a means of leveraging the skills, experience and community history resource of seniors.

- **Rethinking the way municipalities function and operate.** Two studies on the effects of older adults in Ontario communities—one in Kitchener, the other in Mississauga—found that changes will be needed in all municipal functions: emergency services, parks and recreation, social and community services, libraries, public transit, finance, engineering, and so on. These municipalities found that there was widespread support for ability-to-pay models, where those who can pay for special services do so, while those who cannot, are subsidized. Generally, there is a need to use the demographics of individual communities—particularly demographic pyramids rather than straight-line forecasts and aggregated population numbers—in preparing official plans.
- **Building on successful models.** Many good examples of age-friendly initiatives exist in our communities. Compiling information on best practices from large and small, urban and rural, and northern and southern Ontario communities will allow for sharing and learning from these successes.



As life expectancy increases so does desire to enjoy retirement years

## The Way Forward

To get started on addressing the significant challenges ahead, this Call to Action recommends that all communities kick-start an Age-Friendly Community Plan process, which could involve the following:

- preparing an age-friendly community audit of municipal plans, operations and services that reviews community elements such as housing, community services and health care, streetscape design, mobility options, and leisure and learning opportunities;
- establishing baseline data to understand the place-specific community composition;
- identifying priority issues and responses related to the changing demographics and utilization of these priorities to establish a place to get started or action plan;
- creating monitoring mechanisms on a five-year increment basis (synchronized with Census Canada data releases) to review and manage demographic change and impacts;
- creating a toolkit and success story manual that community partners and agencies can use to bring about change in their operations;
- exploring new partnerships or better integration of services between agencies and non-governmental organizations to provide for an age-friendly community.

There appears to be consensus that most of Ontario's communities are not yet ready for the so-called "grey tsunami." Accessibility legislation will force some changes, but planning needs to start now. The key first step is to define what the challenge will mean for each community and to get started with top priority issues for that community. Not all communities will be equally affected. Many smaller centres and communities in northern Ontario are aging more rapidly than bigger cities in Ontario. Moreover, not all seniors have identical needs, nor are their needs identical to those of previous generations.

Since there is a lag between the time when needs are identified and the time services are delivered, planners need to act quickly. At the same time, planners need to do what they can to reduce this time lag. Planning for age-friendly communities needs to be sufficiently proactive and involve many stakeholders, agencies and disciplines that all have a critical role to play in creating healthy, livable communities for all ages.

See the OPPI website for the full report ([www.ontarioplannersw.on.ca](http://www.ontarioplannersw.on.ca)).

# Coordinated Community Transportation: Aging at Home in Huron and Perth Counties

Dennis A. Kar

In August 2007, the Ontario government announced the Aging at Home Strategy to help seniors live healthy, independent lives in their own homes. The strategy has a strong focus on innovation and prevention. Recent estimates project that the seniors' population in Ontario will double in the next 16 years, putting a strain on health services in the province. As such, it is imperative that seniors remain in their homes for as long as possible, both for their well-being and to reduce pressure on hospitals and long-term care facilities.

Next to affordable housing, transportation is among the top three weaknesses cited in surveys of the seniors population. One method to enhance their quality of life, promoted in the Local Health Integration Network's (LHIN) Aging at Home Strategy, is through coordinated transportation.

Coordinated transportation links individual service providers and develops frameworks to stretch scarce resources and improve overall level of service by coordinating functions and processes between agencies. This could be as dramatic as amalgamating several individual providers into one central agency or developing a culture of cooperation among individual independent service providers.

Despite the complexities inherent in the process, the goal of Aging at Home is clear: ensure that seniors across communities have easy, continuous and equitable access to transportation services.

In urban areas, paratransit services and accessible conventional transit services provide mobility for seniors in need. They provide access to medical appointments, shopping, work and friends and family within the boundaries of their service area. However, in much of rural Ontario, access to transportation for seniors is limited and local private and non-profit agencies have taken on the role of transportation service provision. These agencies may have their own vehicles, or act as brokers, or rely on volunteers. Many face strains in delivering adequate service to a growing population group with limited funding.

The South West Local Health Integration Network (SW LHIN) recognized the increasing demand for transportation services and approved funding to develop a coordinated

transportation network among seven rural transportation providers/community support agencies in Huron and Perth Counties:

- Stratford Meals on Wheels and Neighbourly Services
- Midwestern Adult Day Services
- Mitchell & Area Community Outreach
- Community Outreach & Perth East Transportation
- St Marys & Area Home Support and Mobility Services
- Town and Country Support Services
- VON Perth Huron



Flexible transport solutions in development

These agencies have responded to local need and built on local community strengths by leveraging volunteer and financial resources. They offer volunteer and accessible transportation for people who do not have the means to transport themselves. In addition, they provide programs targeted to seniors, including Meals on Wheels, exercise classes, shopping services and social outings.

While each agency provided services to its local community, many trips were being made to adjacent communities. Since transporta-

tion resources are often limited, local residents were left without access to transportation when a vehicle was being used for an out-of-town trip.

The seven agencies embarked on a process of coordination in 2008. Their goal: increase the cost effectiveness of service delivery and increase capacity for a growing clientele by standardizing processes, sharing resources and distributing them geographically in a more effective manner.

One of the challenges of coordination was that each agency differed in its clientele, eligibility, funding sources, fare structures and method of service delivery. While opportunities for coordination existed, certain processes needed to remain localized. Identifying the needs, issues and opportunities faced by each agency in a large geographic was a difficult and complex task.

(Cont. on page 28)

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# Farmers' Markets as a Tool for Downtown Revitalization

A case study of the Kitchener market (first of two parts)

Gregory R.A. Richardson



Farmers markets are focusing on local food

**T**owns and cities across North America have enthusiastically supported the growing consumer trend to shop at farmers' markets by investing millions of dollars in downtown market structures. One commonly stated rationale for opening the public purse is a market's ability to catalyze the recovery of declining urban districts by attracting shoppers and providing a convivial social atmosphere. A literature search, however, reveals no studies have been published to substantiate this claim. So...do farmers markets really help to revitalize declining downtown districts? Or is this just wishful thinking by project planners and politicians?

## The decline and rise of farmers' markets

Following the Second World War, cities across North America began to decentralize and suburbanize. At this time, many downtowns as well as their central markets went into decline. However, while cities continued to sprawl, in the last 20 years farmers' markets have rebounded. In the United States, where data are available, the number of markets grew from 1,775 in 1994 to 4,685 in 2006. In Ontario, sales at farmers' markets were estimated to range from \$430 to \$640

million in 2008, with a 7% annual compound growth over a ten-year period. This rapid growth has been attributed to a consumer backlash against mass-produced food, and increased demand for locally grown, fresh, healthy, and environmentally friendly produce.

Medium-sized cities across Ontario, including London, Kitchener and Hamilton, have invested millions of dollars in downtown farmers' market structures. Municipal leaders have rationalized these investments by focusing on the potential economic, health and social benefits for residents, as well as a market's ability to help revitalize declining downtowns. I undertook to develop and test an evaluative methodology for measuring the revitalization impact of a market on its surrounding retail district in a case study of the Kitchener market in Ontario.

## Testing a market's impact as a revitalization catalyst

Local and national property market fluctuations, public- and private-sector investments in downtowns, and government policies and regulations all combine to affect the pace of downtown redevelopment. Given the number

of variables, how is it possible to separate out and measure the impact of a farmers' market on its surrounding neighbourhood?

In this study I used the following:

- the reuse of existing buildings or spaces;
- new commercial construction;
- the emergence of a market district which specializes in the sale of food.

Next, I developed a three-part technique for measuring and evaluating the indicators for the Kitchener market case study. First, I documented the baseline physical condition of the neighbourhood surrounding the market building before its construction. I collected this information from newspaper clippings, books and interviews. Second, through an in-person survey of the 50 retail businesses in a one-block radius around the Kitchener market, I determined the present-day physical condition of the surrounding neighbourhood. Finally, based on an analysis of the retail surveys I determined to what extent the Kitchener market is responsible for changes in the surrounding neighbourhood since it first opened in 2004.

## Kitchener's historic downtown marketplace

The Kitchener market is a good example of the evolution of a downtown public market in a mid-sized city. Like many North American cities, Kitchener suffered a dramatic decline in downtown vitality during the latter half of the 20th century. In the last 10 years, however, there has been a considerable municipal-led effort to revitalize the downtown. The opening of a new Kitchener market hall in 2004 is one of many large public projects in the City.

The Kitchener market has been in existence for more than 150 years. At various times it has been the subject of heated local public debates. In the 1970s, for example, the historic red brick market building and the adjacent stone-clad City Hall were demolished to make way for a downtown shopping mall. In 1974 the market moved to its new home in the basement of the mall's parking garage, where it stayed until a purpose-built facility was constructed in 2004.



The idea to give the market a new home was first raised in the 1990s by a group of volunteers who were part of the Downtown Taskforce. In 1999 the City expropriated two downtown city blocks which were considered notorious for prostitution and drug-related activity. One of these blocks would later be chosen by the Market Option Study Team as the site of the new Kitchener market. Public consultations in 2001 strongly supported the idea of the market as a catalyst for revitalizing the surrounding district.

In 2001 the City created an Advisory Committee of local volunteers—including architects, market vendors, retailers, and downtown community leaders—to study and review market features and designs. However, without warning, in December 2001, the City announced a partnership with a private developer, Barrel Works. In doing so the City undermined the work of the Advisory Committee, which soon after disbanded, ending community participation in the project and independent oversight over the planning and design process. The local newspaper reported, “There was no request for proposals, and no design competition. There were some public meetings, minor changes to the design, but the process essentially left city councillors with one choice.”

In 2002, after two years of planning by the City and Barrel Works, city councillors voted unanimously to spend \$18 million on the new market and parking garage. As part of the contract to design and build the market, Barrel Works contributed \$12.4 million of its own funds to construct a 68-unit condominium building and two mixed use retail/office buildings on the market block.

*The second article will address the role of farmers' markets as catalysts for development. Greg Richardson is currently studying at McGill's School of Urban Planning.*

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# Redefining & Reinventing A City: The Case of Portland

The Pearl is a Jewel

Iain Myrans

*This is the second of two articles examining how American cities have redefined and reinvented themselves following the collapse of their local economies. As with my previous article on Pittsburgh, research for this piece comes from on-the-ground observations as well as interviews with key individuals in planning, economic development, business and politics.*

## A brief background

Portland's economy was built on the state's substantial timber industry, an industry that declined in the 1980s and 1990s as a result of increasingly stringent state environmental laws as well as foreign competition. Today, Portland is a growing city of about 600,000 people, with about 2 million in its urban region. It is a city that, perhaps like no other, has managed to adapt its economy not only to avoid collapse, but also to thrive by focusing on the provision of public amenities that offer a high quality of life. Redefining its role on the U.S. west coast in a way that would allow it to compete for creative and educated



PHOTO: PORTLAND DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION

The Pearl District, a former brownfield, has been redeveloped by putting the principles of urban design first with great success

talent against Seattle and San Francisco (and even Vancouver, B.C.) has been no small undertaking.

## Prosperity vs. Wealth: Two approaches to developing successful cities

In an interview with the Mayor of Portland, Sam Adams, I asked what it was that attracted so many people to the city despite its substantially lower median income relative to San Francisco and Seattle. In response he said "Simple. In a mobile talent world, Portland specializes in 'quality of life.' If you want to be rich, go to Seattle or San Francisco. If you want to be prosperous you come here."

As a planner I find this distinction between financial wealth and prosperity to be quite valuable—prosperity, unlike wealth, is driven by quality of life, which is based in part on the availability of public and commu-

nity infrastructure, as well as the amenities and services available in a community. In Portland the emphasis is on public transit and cycling (rather than the automobile), on design-led communities (rather than engineering-dictated design), on arts and culture (Portland is becoming the west-coast hub for graphic design), and on environmentally sustainable development. These things have made it one of the most attractive destinations for 25-35 year olds over the last decade.

Portland has redefined itself through investments in green infrastructure, demonstrating to energy firms such as Vestas, WindTech or SolarWind that Portland is the place to open shop. Established firms such as Intel maintain operations in Portland in part because of the available work force and their commitment to the principles of corporate social and environmental responsibility.

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## The Mobility City: Transit & Cycling

Cities such as Portland and Pittsburgh can overcome severe challenges through a combination of strategic bold moves tied to a set of quick wins that create momentum. Perhaps two of the boldest moves affecting Portland came as early as 1973. First, the state adopted a law creating a growth boundary to protect its forests and agricultural land from suburbanization. Second, the municipality successfully lobbied the federal government to prevent the construction of a riverfront interstate highway.

The move to stop the Mt. Hood highway created the opportunity to take advantage of a federal program to use allotted highway funds for existing road upgrades or transit. Ultimately, the decision to reject the highway led to the redevelopment of the city's waterfront and the construction of the first light rail line in the U.S. in modern times (which opened in 1986).

Today Portland's transit system includes three Metropolitan Area Express (MAX) LRT lines, a growing number of local streetcar lines and, and a brand new aerialTram. The MAX operates as a long-haul transit system in the suburbs through dedicated rights of way, but transforms into a different entity in the downtown, where the MAX stops every block or so in Fareless Square, a district where riders can board transit for free. Downtown, the MAX operates in both dedicated rights of way and in dedicated lanes at grade alongside cars.

While the MAX is operated by the regional government, the City began investing in its own streetcar system by creating a non-profit corporation which, in addition to the fare box, seeks donations and sponsorships to operate. Across the city the idea of moving people by transit is growing and slowly the city's grid of one-way streets is being converted into transit rights of way, as cars take a back seat to more efficient modes of travel.

Cycling has also been increasing. The city has developed its cycling network and worked to create a bike-friendly culture where taking bicycles on public transit or into office buildings is acceptable. A series of "quick wins" helped Portland grow its cycling network, including clearly identifiable bicycle lanes and markings at intersections that allow cyclists to make turns safely in advance of automobiles. Today, people are complaining about congestion on the city's cycling network—a rather unusual congestion problem.

## The LEED City

On a walk through the city's Pearl District, a former brownfield site transformed into one

of the most popular communities in Portland, one notices numerous LEED-certified buildings. The Pearl is one of the most successful districts in Portland, and with its blend of new, green, buildings and historic architecture, it has become a hotspot destination for retail, the arts, graphic and industrial design firms and new migrants. The Pearl is the home of the world's only LEED Platinum condominium building, a project made possible when the city's development corporation took on the responsibility of building the parking component. This enabled the developer to invest in more green technology—a major win for both the city's image and tax base.

The Portland Development Commission (PDC), which is also the city's TIF agency, has been largely responsible for coupling land use initiatives and brownfield redevelopment with transit initiatives. Built form, zoning, and transit all work together effectively in this way. The growth boundary has required intensification over the past 30 years, which has made it possible for the commission to get involved in large-scale projects like the Pearl. (For those interested in green development I suggest Googling "Gerding Theater," a historic armoury that is now a two-stage LEED Platinum Theatre complex).

## Final Thoughts

Portland's clearly defined goal to be among the greenest cities in the USA, coupled with its strategic investments in infrastructure and community assets, have driven the reinvention of the city. At a time when all cities are talking "green," Portland is leading the pack, because it has demonstrated to the private sector and the public that it is prepared to make substantial investments to achieve its goals. Transit, TIF funds and tax credits to help offset costs of LEED buildings, a comprehensive cycling network, and other innovative transportation solutions like the aerialTram serve as marketing tools. These programs and projects are seen as investments capable of generating substantial returns, rather than as expenses.

Making use of a range of financial tools and working with developers to leverage tax credits, the city's development corporation plays a crucial role in ensuring that zoning, development, and transit are all coordinated—an approach that could serve Ontario's municipalities well.

While the current recession has slowed employment growth and unemployment has risen as people continue to move to Portland, the city faces new short-term challenges; however, it is well positioned to recover fully after the recession. The city continues to be

forward-thinking as it looks to develop a high-speed rail link to Vancouver, B.C, a proposition that will make it an even more desirable city for residents and employers alike.

*Iain Myrans is a senior planner with the Canadian Urban Institute in Toronto. He can be reached at [imyrans@canurb.com](mailto:imyrans@canurb.com). The City of Portland will receive a special CUI Brownie Award at the Canadian Brownfields conference in Vancouver this fall.*

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Oak Ridges

## Hamilton Prepares to Recognize Excellence in Urban Design

*Khaldoon Ahmad*

The City of Hamilton has instituted Urban Design and Architecture Awards to celebrate excellence in design. A high quality urban environment creates a sense of pride, improves the image of the City and is integral to developing a vibrant and sustainable community with a high quality of life.

Building on the success of the 2005 and 2007 City of Hamilton Urban Design and Architecture Awards, the Planning and Economic Development Department, Community Planning and Design Section is organizing the 2009 awards program to recognize and celebrate those members of the urban design industry who have made signifi-

cant contributions to improving the quality of Hamilton's public spaces. The awards will recognize built and unbuilt projects, as well as student work.

A reception at the Art Gallery of Hamilton will be held on November 12th, 2009, in honour of World Town Planning Day and to recognize the award winners and celebrate good urban design and architecture in Hamilton.

*OPPI members are invited to visit the awards website for more information [www.hamilton.ca/designawards](http://www.hamilton.ca/designawards) or to contact Khaldoon Ahmad, Urban Designer, at [khaldoon.ahmad@hamilton.ca](mailto:khaldoon.ahmad@hamilton.ca).*

Southwest

## Green Energy, Green Economy, Big Questions

*Benjamin Puzanov*

On May 14, 2009, 50 or so OPPI members gathered at Rossini's Restaurant in Chatham to discuss the land use planning implications of Bill 150, the *Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009*. Bill 150 was introduced in the Ontario Legislature on February 23, 2009, and its goals include boosting investment into renewable energy sources and the creation of green energy jobs for Ontario's manufacturing sector.

While the objectives of Bill 150 espouse values championed by land use planners throughout the province, the bill has been criticized for shifting the approval authority away from local municipalities and towards the jurisdiction of the Ministry of the Environment (MOE). The Southwest District event included presentations by Tom Storey and William Pol. Tom Storey has been a land use planner in Southwestern Ontario for more than 30 years and the president and principal planner of Storey Samways Planning in Chatham since 1989. William Pol is an Associate at IBI Group in London and has over 25 years of land use planning experience in both the public and private sectors. He has also taught urban and regional planning at both the University of Western Ontario and Fanshawe College.

Storey and Pol began by noting that Bill 150 received its third and final reading that same day and would soon become law. The

legislation would achieve three things: create feed-in tariffs; grant green energy suppliers the right to connect to the grid and sell power; and streamline the approvals process for renewable energy projects throughout the province.

### Feed-in tariffs

The feed-in tariff program in Ontario, as it relates to renewable sources of energy, is designed to standardize energy generation contracts throughout the province and, more specifically, the prices paid to suppliers for different types of energy. This program encourages both private developers and individual property owners to participate in energy production by guaranteeing the prices that each type of energy will fetch, depending on the size of the project, and ensuring that there is a reasonable rate of return for investors.

### Connecting to the grid

The feed-in tariff program will be accompanied by the right to connect to the power grid. The system uses a cost-sharing approach that allows private developers and individual landowners to connect to the grid for a fee that is derived from the size of their project. Because of the start-up costs associated with renewable energy ventures, it is fair to assume that most of the small-scale projects proposed by individual property owners and small businesses will use rooftop solar energy rather than wind or biomass power. According to the Ontario Power Authority, an average single-detached home can handle a 3 kW rooftop system on approximately 220 square feet of space. Such a system currently retails for approximately \$30,000 and can generate the homeowner 80.2 cents per kilowatt hour, the highest feed-in tariff rate available, paid only to projects of less than 10 kW. These higher rates are intended to encourage individual property owners and small businesses to invest in solar energy by offering attractive rates of return for their initial start-up capital and grid connection fees.

### Streamlining the development approvals process

While the benefits of Bill 150 are obvious, the means that the legislation will use to achieve them, specifically the new streamlined approach, are being questioned by planners, municipal administrators and local public officials.

Pol and Storey reviewed Schedule K of Bill 150, the section of the legislation that

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amends the *Planning Act*. Schedule K states that the Provincial Policy Statement (2005) and other provincial plans do not apply to renewable energy projects. Part IV (Community Improvement) and Part VI (Subdivision of Land) of the *Planning Act* will continue to apply to these projects.

In addition, Schedule K of Bill 150 states that Official Plans, Zoning By-laws and Site Plan Control do not affect renewable energy projects and that holding provisions and interim control and temporary by-laws do not apply to them either. Development permits, minor variances and consents to sever for a maximum of 50 years will also no longer be necessary to facilitate green energy proposals.

Pol and Storey reviewed OPPI's response to the legislation. As readers of this journal know, OPPI maintains that the legislation will not speed up approval times. In fact, this type of approach to development approval, one that will be partly controlled by MOE and partly controlled by municipalities, will likely slow the process down. While MOE is a large agency, OPPI's position is that it will likely lack the resources and land use planning professionals to deal with an increase for demand in approval.

Not surprisingly, the Canadian Wind Energy Association (CanWEA), a non-profit group that supports the development of renewable energy projects, supports Bill 150 and believes that its passing will stimulate economic development throughout Ontario and by 2025 help generate 20% of Canada's electrical power from wind energy.

#### Additional provisions

During their presentation, Storey and Pol reviewed several amendments that were made to the legislation by the MOE, including the addition of a new section to promote community consultation; the introduction of a permanent working group made up of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, MOE, Ministry of Natural Resources and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario; the creation of a program through which municipalities can recover some of the costs that would otherwise be collected locally via development approval fees; and the addition of a clause through which the MOE will establish an academic research chair to continuously analyze and provide updates on the health effects of renewable energy projects.

#### Outstanding questions

The presenters also posed some questions that they would like the MOE to address. Most dealt with the expected timelines for the approvals and appeals processes as well as how the ministry plans to mitigate the health

effects of projects. The speakers were also interested in finding out what land use planning approaches would be used in locating these projects and what their effects would be on public infrastructure and other services that are managed and maintained at the local level.

Following the presentation, Storey and Pol organized a forum for discussing four important questions regarding Bill 150.

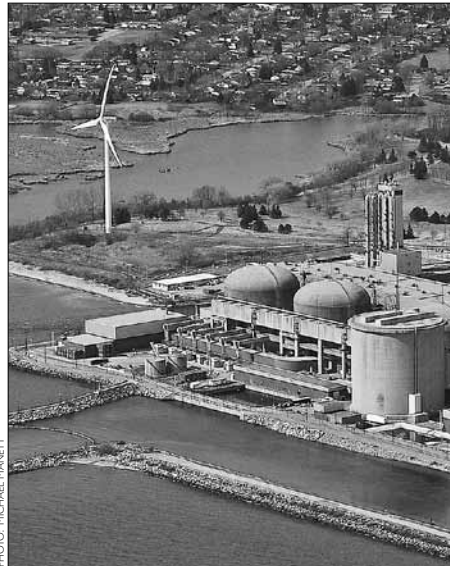


PHOTO: MICHAEL MANNET

Ontario needs more renewables

1. What form of approval process will be effective and reduce timelines?
2. What land use planning criteria should be used for decision making?
3. What is an acceptable level of land use impact?
4. Who should be consulted and what should the consultation process look like?

The attendees of the forum were split up into groups of four and the following sections summarize their responses.

#### Form of Approval Process

- Establish a pre-consultation team with various stakeholders from the province and municipalities, to identify issues and establish a set of criteria prior to proceeding with the application.
- Combine the requirements of the *Planning Act* and the *Environmental Assessment Act* within an approval timeline of 180 days.

#### Land Use Planning Criteria

- Compatibility with surrounding land uses
- Maximum height for infrastructure
- Noise limits
- Setback requirements

- Natural and environmental heritage protection
- Maximum density of renewable energy projects
- Viewscapes

#### Ensuring an Acceptable Level of Land Use Impact

- The potential impact should be reversible.
- Acknowledge that other resources may be impacted by the project, such as aggregates, prime agriculture areas and environmentally significant areas.
- Ensure a proper decommissioning plan for renewable energy projects.
- Establish minimum and maximum standards for renewable energy projects on an area-wide basis similar to the Building Code.
- Develop a measurement for fairness and equity related to potential impacts and benefits.
- Develop a licensing program for renewable energy similar to the aggregates licensing approach.
- Set minimum production levels to keep a licence; lose the licence for falling below the threshold.
- Evaluate the sterilization of agricultural lands.
- Create potential clusters of renewable energy uses in a specific location.
- Build on the policies, programs and approvals of other European nations with respect to renewable energy production and development.

#### Who Should Be Consulted and How

- Government agencies, MTO, MOE, MNR, OMAFRA, Ministry of Culture and Citizenship
- Municipal governments: upper- and lower-tier and adjacent upper- and lower-tier governments
- Interest groups related to agricultural associations, heritage groups
- Utility companies and private utility companies such as gas, cable, etc.
- Residents, landowners and abutting landowners within 120 metres, or within an even larger radius, considering the large structural scale of some renewable projects
- National organizations such as Wildlife Canada and federal government agencies for bird studies

On the question of consultation, the group also suggested using the existing *Planning Act* process regarding standards of notice. Municipalities normally have a complete list of agencies to notify. The process should include direct mail notice to people living

within the project area; signs on the site of the project area and media notice for the project. It was further suggested that applications be made to the municipality, processed by the municipality and decisions be made by the Ministry of the Environment.

It will be important for the Ministry to manage public expectation and have a serious consideration for the health risks associated with renewable energy.

Although Bill 150 has received its third reading, many questions still need to be answered and many issues addressed before the approvals process for renewable energy projects is shifted to the MOE. Many of the attendees agreed that the province and local municipalities should work together to ensure that the needs of Ontario's residents and communities are met and their interests represented throughout the renewable energy development approval process.

Pol and Storey have submitted a summary of the proceedings to OPPI's Policy Development Committee and hope that the data gathered will help shape the implementation of Bill 150.

*Benjamin Puzanov is a planner with the Municipality of Middlesex Centre. He can be reached at [puzanov@middlesexcentre.on.ca](mailto:puzanov@middlesexcentre.on.ca).*

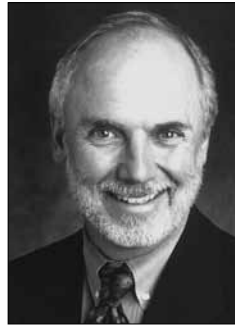
## People

### New Fellows From Ontario

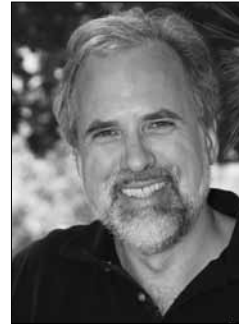
The College of Fellows has announced two new Fellows from Ontario. Among the new inductees who will be honoured at the CIP/OPPI conference in September are **Dan Leeming** and **Mark Seasons**. More details in the next issue.

The Order of Canada list published on Canada Day by the Governor General included **Jeanne M. Wolfe**, FCIP, appointed as a Member of the Order of Canada "for her contribution as a leading scholar and mentor in the field of urban planning in Canada and abroad."

**Ron Clarke**, who works with Delcan in Ottawa, has been promoted to Senior Principal in recognition of his leadership qualities, strong technical skills and contributions to the corporation's growth and success. Ron is a graduate of the



Dan Leeming



Mark Seasons



Jeanne Wolfe

University of Waterloo with 20 years' experience in urban, environmental and regional planning. He is a past Council member and Eastern District Chair and a member of the Ontario Association for Impact Assessment.

Guelph area architect and planner **Charles Simon** recently received the OAC Volunteer Recognition Award. The Award is made annually by the Ontario Agricultural College "in recognition of the dedication and hard work of volunteers whose contributions have enhanced their communities." Charles is also the co-founder of the ambitious "Eden Mills Going Carbon Neutral" project. This community, in which he lives, is aiming to become the first carbon-neutral village in North America.



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## Planners, the Public and OPPI

Wayne Caldwell

It was the planner's first substantive experience in public participation. Fresh out of university, he was asked to take the lead in developing a new official plan for a small rural municipality. Prior to his employment, the planning department had held kitchen-table meetings throughout the township, meeting with small groups of residents to discuss planning issues. As he began his employment, the process was moving into a more formal stage that involved seven major, municipal-wide workshops. These workshops dealt with a variety of topics, from agriculture to urban development to the environment. On average, 80 to 100 people attended the meetings.

At each meeting, one particular person stood out. He was a big, burly farmer who liked to stand at the back of the room and ask tough questions that constantly challenged the young planner. Each meeting seemed to get more difficult. Finally, the seven workshops were completed, and the planner moved on to the next stage. He began to work with the council, build on the input from the meetings, and develop the new plan.

The final stage of the process involved one last public meeting where the new plan would be presented and discussed. As in the past, the big, burly farmer stood at the back of the room. On behalf of the council, the young planner presented the plan and then did his best to respond to a myriad of questions. Increasingly, he realized that the "farmer at the back" wasn't saying anything; he was not even heckling. The planner couldn't help but wonder what he was thinking.

Finally, towards the end of the meeting, the farmer stepped forward and in his commanding way said, "This is a good plan. You listened to what we had to say."

The young planner was astounded. He couldn't help but ask himself what was it that brought this positive result, and how it could be captured in future work. Even though he was still trying to comprehend what had happened, he knew that he had received a lesson that would stay with him throughout his career.

As planners, we are in a unique position to work with communities. Whether it be a local neighbourhood issue or a province-wide scheme or legislative initiative, planners design and deliver programs that engage the public. These initiatives help community members to participate in shaping their own lives

and futures. The success of the approaches we champion reflect many factors ranging from volunteer participation to the political support we receive to our own philosophical perspective.

Successful approaches to public participation yield planning results that are the product of a constructive community dialogue, provide all voices with an opportunity to be heard and fundamentally contribute to "good" planning outcomes.

We can also look to our institute and consider the role that OPPI plays as our professional body in helping us prepare for these opportunities to work with and meaningfully engage the public. While we might not initially make a connection between the

Institute and our professional role in public processes, there is a strong relationship to be recognized and understood.

First, OPPI and CIP ensure consistency in the accreditation of university planning programs both within Ontario and across the country. As a profession, we expect that graduating planners will be well versed in processes of public participation.

Second, OPPI offers Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) programs to help ensure that planners have opportunities for training that are practical and relevant. The ongoing success of the Planner as Facilitator training session is an excellent example.

Third, the Institute has embraced a Professional Code of Practice that all of us are required to uphold. This code affirms democratic values that speak to the importance of engaging the community and giving voice to those whose voices are often not heard in public decision-making.

Fourth, our annual conferences and symposiums provide an excellent opportunity to upgrade your skills and hear the latest. The joint conference with CIP in Niagara Falls promises to bring you a wealth of knowledge and skills in this and other important areas.

Just as that young planner at the end of his first



Wayne Caldwell

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successful consultation wondered about the factors that lead to success, we should continue to ask this question of ourselves and our Institute. We should involve ourselves in the discussion, participate in CPL, be familiar with our Code of Practice, attend our annual conference and keep in touch with the university programs from which many of us graduated. Through these actions you can help shape the appropriate role for OPPI in this and other areas in the years ahead.

*Dr. Wayne Caldwell, MCIP, RPP, is President of OPPI. Wayne is a professor in Rural Planning & Development at the University of Guelph. He also has a career-long affiliation with the County of Huron. He can be reached at [waynecaldwell@hurontel.on.ca](mailto:waynecaldwell@hurontel.on.ca).*

# Serving the Public Interest

Marilyn Radman

**F**ifteen years ago this December, the planning profession took a major step forward with the passing of the *OPPI Act*. This step was hailed by planners across Ontario as government recognition of planning as a profession and that those who practice planning as professionals possess certain skills, experience and knowledge. We should celebrate this anniversary by reflecting on the significance of this step and the advances in our profession since that time; and most importantly to recognize that once again, it is time for our profession to consider taking another large step forward by investigating

the feasibility of regulating the planning profession through provincial legislation.

At this point, some readers may be wondering why we need new provincial legislation, since the *OPPI Act* is already established. The powers of the *OPPI Act* are extremely limited. They grant full and retired OPPI members the right to use the designation Registered Professional Planner (RPP and RPP Ret.) and specify that only those that have fulfilled the academic, experience, and examination requirements prescribed by OPPI's by-laws may do so. However, the *OPPI Act* applies only to OPPI members. It does not establish regulations for the planning profession as a whole, nor does it stop non-members from calling themselves professional planners.

The Act distinguishes planners from other professions—in a negative sense. Engineers, lawyers, foresters and accountants, among others, have legislation that regulates their profession and sets standards and controls. Without belonging to their college you can not call yourself an engineer, lawyer, forester, etc. Standards are set for these professions and the public knows that when they hire a professional engineer, that the engineer meets those standards. Sadly, the same can not be said about all professional planners.

It is suspected that this is the reason that planners have been "caught" by the requirements of the *Access to Justice Act*, and why OPPI members specifically (not professional planners) have been given an exemption—albeit temporary—from having to obtain a paralegal licence. Clearly we are not quite there yet as a profession.

We need to ask ourselves how the public interest is being served, and what it will mean to our profession if we are successful in securing a Public Act regulating all professional planners practicing in this province. This investigation must also consider what should be in this legislation and what other legislation, such as the *Planning Act*, should be amended to reflect the new legislation.

OPPI Council created a working group to investigate the feasibility of provincial legislation. With the help of a government relations firm, the working group has begun to answer these questions and others. The timing of this



Marilyn Radman

## The following members have resigned or been removed from the roster

The following Full Members resigned in good standing from OPPI for the 2009 membership year:

Peter C. Boyer  
Helen Bulat  
Brian Carney  
P. Craig Emick  
Arndt W. Guenther  
K. Wendy Johncox  
Donna F. Lue  
James R. McKenzie  
Len R. Miller  
Nancy L. Morand  
Ronald R. Nault  
Allan P. Rezoski

The following Full Members have been removed from the roster for non-payment of membership fees for 2009:

Rima Ammouri  
Robert Blazeovski

James M. Collishaw  
Larry D. Cotton  
Heather L. Hood  
J. David Hulchanski  
Tamara J. Kerbel  
Caroline Kirkpatrick  
Francois Loiselle  
Judith I. McKenzie  
Mark E. Thompson  
Peter J.T. White

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

For questions regarding membership, please contact  
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416-483-1873 Ext. 222,  
1-800-668-1448 Ext. 222 or at  
[membership@ontarioplanners.on.ca](mailto:membership@ontarioplanners.on.ca)



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(Cont. on page 17)



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# Are You Wearing Two Hats?

*By the Professional Development and Practices Committee*

**D**o you belong to more than one professional organization? Are you also a landscape architect, school trustee, engineer, lawyer, board member or member of a Committee of Adjustment? This "dual membership" can give rise to conflicting obligations between professional organizations or associations arising from their differing Codes of Conduct or Practice. You need to consider the following information.

Several years ago, OPPI's Professional Practice and Development Committee began developing Standards of Practice. The purpose of these Standards is to further educate, advise and give direction to our members by expanding on how we should carry out our practice. To date, four Standards of Practice have been approved by Council.

The Discipline Committee has recently realized that Professional Planners may not fully understand how our Code of Practice applies when a member holds standing in two or more organizations. There may be instances where codes of practice differ or conflict. As a result, modifications to the Standards of Practice for Independent Professional Judgement, Disclosure and the Public Interest, and Conflicts of Interest have been prepared and approved by Council. These modifications act as an advisory for the member to consider the planner's responsibility and to resolve conflicts by maintaining compliance with the OPPI code.

The direction for OPPI members of these modifications is to remind the professional planner of his or her obligation to provide excellence in service and observe the primacy of the public interest. As such, an OPPI member is required to observe OPPI's Code of Conduct. When acting in the capacity of a professional planner, an OPPI member is obliged to respect the standards of both

organizations. In the event of a conflict, the professional planner is to meet or exceed the requirements of the OPPI Code.

A planner holding membership in the Institute is subject to complaint and discipline proceedings under the OPPI Professional Code of Practice. To protect the member's interests, he or she must meet or exceed that standard whether or not membership in another organization establishes a different standard.

For example, the OPPI Professional Code of Practice, Section 2.3 states that a planner must "not perform work outside of his/her professional competence." The same planner may be a member of the Professional Engineers of Ontario or other organization with a code of conduct, such as an education, committee of adjustment or hospital board. If any of those organizations establish a standard of educational experience, such as a certificate, in a subject area of practice, the professional planner must consider his or her ability to offer advice or provide services in relation to that subject matter in issue. Requirement of a formal certificate of competency by one

organization does not preclude the planner from acting in his or her professional capacity in respect of that subject matter in the absence of a certificate, unless the work is outside the realm of the members' sphere of the professional competence. The advisory reminds members, in performing functions as a professional planner, to meet or exceed the standard defined by the Institute in the individual's own training and with respect to peer performance levels.

Professional planners are being alerted to the responsibility and accountability they accept in holding membership in organizations with accountable standards. For the professional planner, while another organization may hold a standard higher or lower than that expected by the Institute, the revisions to the Standards of Practice require the planner to meet or exceed the professional Code of Practice of the Institute.

A conflict can occur only where the adherence to one standard negates that of another. The modifications clarify that the Institute's standards apply when a professional planner is engaged in planning matters. The Standards of Practice give further direction as to how to mitigate real and apparent conflicts should they occur. The revised Standards of Practice can be found on the OPPI website.

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## Response to Letter to the Editor from Vladimir Matus

**I**wish to respond to the matter raised by Vladimir Matus regarding the renewal of OPPI/CIP membership for Retired Members. As I have attempted to clarify on several occasions in the past via e-newsletter, the Journal and private correspondence with numerous members, the process for the renewal of membership status by Retired Members resulted from complaints from members of the Institute regarding individuals who had applied for, and been granted, Retired Member status who were actively engaged in the practice of planning.

Our first approach was to speak to the individuals involved personally to request that they take the appropriate steps to resolve the matter. However, as the number of complaints increased, all members applying for the renewal of their Retired and Non-Practicing status were asked to certify by signature that they were not engaged in planning practice. The OPPI By-law is quite clear. Membership in any corporate class must be renewed on an annual basis. It is not automatic.

I appreciate the concerns raised by Mr. Matus and I understand the sense of inconvenience that many feel has resulted from this approach. Please accept that if this was an isolated matter the Institute would have responded by an entirely different means. Our preference certainly would have been to not have to deal with the issue at all.

Ronald M. Keeble, MCIP RPP  
Registrar, OPPI

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### Serving (cont. from page 16)

work is good as OPPI is also participating in a Canada-wide re-examination of what it means to be a planner. Also, the province's interest in planning policy is high at the moment.

A feasibility report on this initiative is scheduled to be tabled at OPPI Council by the spring of 2010.

*Marilyn Radman, MCIP, RPP, is Director of Professional Practice and Development, and Manager, Development Planning, with Niagara Region. She can be reached at [marilyn.radman@niagararegion.ca](mailto:marilyn.radman@niagararegion.ca).*

Editorial

# Mixing it up—policy, process and people— and an open invitation

Glenn Miller

**M**ixing it up—policy, process and people—and an open invitation. Articles in this issue deal extensively with the provisions of the recently adopted *Green Energy and Economy Act*. (See the District pages, Steve Rowe's Environment column, and the Opinion piece below.) For all of the positives, there are lingering concerns that the process for approving renewables will complicate rather than simplify implementation. Waiting in the wings is another important piece of the puzzle—waste. Look for new legislative measures on this file in the fall. Dealing with energy and waste as discrete items reveals that Ontario still has a way to go in terms of integrated thinking.

Also in this issue, Paul Bedford opens up the topic of mixed use—challenging planners to get behind the concept instead of merely lipsynching the words. We therefore challenge readers to send us your most imaginative ideas for mixing it up. See Paul's column for details.

As previously noted in this space, rapid change to the fundamentals of Ontario's economy is challenging politicians, policy makers and investors to find the balance between protecting what we have and investing in a different future. For those responsible for infrastructure, renewal remains an urgent priority, but no less so than investing wisely

in the assets that support development—not necessarily growth—of the economy. For cities losing touch with the economic mainstream, serious questions remain. An article in this issue cites positive results from Portland, just as we are getting reports from the UK suggesting that revitalization efforts banking on “the creative economy” may be going down a blind alley.

Finally, Philippa Campsie's column sets out the terms of engagement—and, we hope, endearment—for what the Ontario Planning Journal means to our readers—members in all categories, as well as the many non-OPPI members and CIP members from across Canada who subscribe. This is your magazine to express yourselves as professionals. Let us know what is on your mind.

*Glenn Miller, FCIP, RPP, is editor of the Ontario Planning Journal and vice president, education and research with the Canadian Urban Institute in Toronto. He is also a director of the Canadian Brownfields Network—the 10th annual Canadian Brownfields conference is in Vancouver in October. He can be reached at [editor@ontarioplanning.com](mailto:editor@ontarioplanning.com). This editorial has been shrunk in the interests of saving space.*

Opinion

## Ontario Should Streamline Approvals for Municipal Class EA Infrastructure Projects

Andy Manahan

**I**nfrastucture investment as a way to jumpstart the economy and bolster city-building efforts has been widely touted by many countries around the globe. In Canada, for example, the C.D. Howe Institute assessed the fiscal sustainability and effectiveness of the 2009 federal budget and concluded that of all the measures in the two-year, \$40-billion stimulus package, one of the most likely to have a lasting positive impact on economic growth is public infrastructure investment.

Although Ottawa and Queen's Park have made several infrastructure announcements, there remain many regulatory hurdles to getting shovels in the ground. Municipal leaders across Canada recently met in Whistler, B.C., and agreed that red tape hindered the delivery of infrastructure projects when they are needed the most. Ways must be found to streamline approval processes and get funding allotments released faster. Consultants for the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance

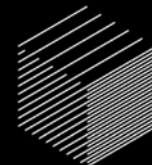
of Ontario (RCCAO) offer potential solutions in a report titled “Environmental Assessment Reform – A Tool for Economic Recovery.”

The Premier's office hosted a multi-ministry briefing in April at which RCCAO presented the case for EA reform. The top rec-

ommendation presented was that the Province should adopt a “Priority Infrastructure Projects” regulation. Any infrastructure project that would normally fall under the Municipal Class EA or the GO Transit Class EA would be eligible to follow this new streamlined process regulation if the

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project could be demonstrated to be in conformity with the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe and/or an Official Plan that is in conformity with the Growth Plan and the Provincial Policy Statement. Projects eligible for streamlining would not include controversial ones such as nuclear plants.

The following type of projects could be reclassified under the Municipal Class EA:

- Streetscaping with a value of \$2.2 million or greater
- Construction of localized operational improvements at intersections
- Installation of traffic control devices such as signage or signalization
- Establishment of a roadside park or picnic area
- Reconstruction of a water crossing where it is not for the same purpose, use of capacity or at the same location (greater than \$2.2 million)
- Establishment of new patrol yards or maintenance facilities (greater than \$2.2 million)
- Construction of a new sewage holding tank
- Replacement of a water intake pipe for a surface water source
- Construction of new shoreline works, such as off-shore breakwaters, shore-connected breakwaters, groynes or sea walls
- Construction of localized transit operational improvements.

The streamlined process would be as follows:

The project would be exempt from evaluating "Alternative Solutions," since the planning process that a municipality went through to bring its plans into conformity with the PPS and the Growth Plan would be deemed to have fulfilled that requirement.

The proponents would be required to assess the negative impacts of the infrastructure project, identify appropriate mitigation measures and undertake consultation. Proponents would also be required to make available any information or documentation done for any pre-planning work undertaken which led them to select the infrastructure project.

Proponents would be required to complete an Environmental Project Report (EPR) to document the results of the assessment and consultation process within a regulated timeline of six months.

The same rights of objection and Ministerial review process as the transit process would apply.

At this stage, only municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe fall under the PTG legislation, but this region requires considerable capital work to deal with future growth projections.

RCCAO's report includes several other recommendations. First, eliminate duplicative federal and provincial EA processes. Projects that satisfy provincial EA requirements often have to be "reassessed" under the federal Act, with no apparent benefit to the environment or taxpayers. The goal should be to have one approval process for one project. Work has begun on this initiative.

Second, require greater coordination between EA and land use planning processes. Environmental issues are better integrated into current municipal land use planning documents. Over the past few years, the Province has introduced a much stronger system of growth and environmental planning through legislation such as Places to Grow and the Greenbelt. Municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe are now required to conform by updating their Official Plans or risk having infrastructure funding held back. Thus, where a piece of infrastructure is shown in a provincial growth management plan, recognition should be given to the broader planning exercises already undertaken by the Province or Metrolinx.

Third, reduce unnecessary delays. Provincial legislation requires the Minister of the Environment to decide whether a Municipal Class EA project (such as transportation, water, or sewer projects) should be

bumped up to a full EA. Although the Minister rarely grants these requests, the process results in delays for many projects. MOE's Director should be given the power to dismiss requests for projects that have already gone through extensive public consultations.

The report has been presented to Energy and Infrastructure Minister George Smitherman. RCCAO believes that Province should either adopt a special regulation or issue a Declaration Order for stimulus projects, comparable to the regulation approved in 2008 imposing a six-month window for the approvals process for transit projects. Ontario needs to mandate a time limit on approvals for all economic stimulus projects. Dealing with Municipal Class EA projects in the manner described would represent progress in achieving a more streamlined and rational process.

*Andy Manahan is Executive Director for the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario. Go to [www.rccao.com](http://www.rccao.com) to download the report.*

#### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

If you have any comments, send your letters to:  
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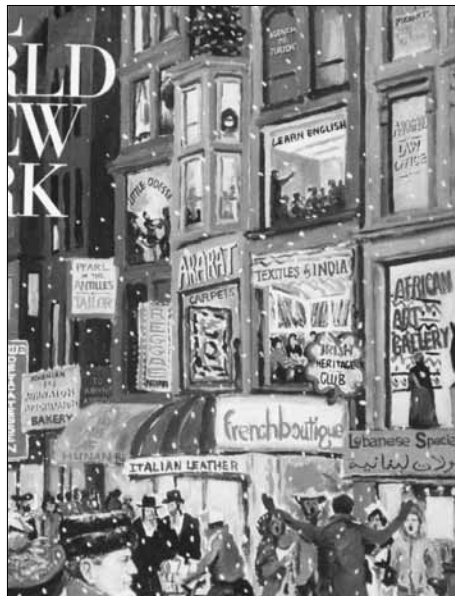
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Planning Futures

# All About Mixed Use

Paul J. Bedford



The ultimate mixed use?

I recently had the pleasure of hearing Danish architect Jan Gehl speak about public spaces and public life. He admonished planners for not being more interested in people and public spaces, but one of his underlying messages was the need to embrace mixed use in city building. He traced how the separation of land uses dominated planning philosophy and practice from the 1930s to the 1990s, noting that it has taken about 60 years for the idea of mixed use to be truly rediscovered.

So what does mixed use really mean? Why is it such a vital component in successful city building? How might we advance a mixed use mindset in our planning? The answers are important if we are serious about achieving sustainable development.

## Defining Mixed Use

Mixed use takes on many forms. Most communities contain a mix of residential, commercial, educational and recreational land uses; however, the mix is really still based on the separation of uses rather than integrated within the same block or building.

In my own Toronto neighbourhood I am fortunate to experience many combinations.

These include the condo building I live in that has underground parking, retail at grade, nine floors of offices, topped with 10 floors of apartments. This ratio of uses results in huge savings in monthly condo maintenance fees, which are about 50% less than similar buildings in the neighbourhood because the commercial users pay for the bulk of monthly expenses.

Other integrated mixed use examples in Toronto include combining housing with schools in the St. Lawrence neighbourhood, building seniors housing on top of the Northern District Library, locating a halfway house for ex-offenders over a post office, and combining housing with churches.

Farther afield, New York has a daycare centre under the road and subway deck of the Manhattan bridge; Tokyo has extensive retail uses under expressways; Vancouver has co-op housing under the Burrard Street bridge and an innovative project on Cambie Street that combines a new Home Depot with a supermarket and housing. Successful cities are all about diversity. It makes sense to encourage land use patterns that mirror the daily life cycle of people who live, work, shop, play in a variety of different settings.

Distinguishing true mixed uses from poor imitations is also important. A recent trend across north America is to demolish malls and replace them with so-called “urban villages.” A local example of this is the newly opened Shops at Don Mills. While it represents a positive step forward, there is much that could be improved. A recent visit revealed an internal compound of local streets, blocks and shops complete with a village square. While it was designed to replicate the feeling of real streets I felt something was missing.

Although there are several proposals for high-rise infill development nearby, an opportunity was lost by not building rental, condo and seniors’ housing over the mostly one-storey shops to animate the streets day and night (and create demand for the retail uses).

Home Depot, Shoppers Drug Mart and Canadian Tire all thinking about and exper-

imenting with integrating housing into new retail outlets. I expect to see more innovative models being developed in the coming years, given the relatively high income levels of urban residents. For example, Home Depot has a store in a mixed use office building one block south of Bloomingdale’s in New York that offers home delivery.

The government talks about sustainable development and the need for intensification and transit-oriented mixed use, but has a long way to go to practise what it preaches. Why don’t we see more housing, daycare, retail and offices at key TTC and GO stations throughout the region? Why don’t we see housing above post offices? Why not mixed use integrated into the fabric of such federal government office precincts such as Confederation Heights and Tunney’s Pasture in Ottawa? Why don’t all new Liquor Control Board stores have three to five floors of housing over them? Who wouldn’t want to live above a liquor store?

## Why Is Mixed Use So Important?

No one makes the case for mixed use better than Jane Jacobs did in *The Death and Life of Great American Cities*. She devoted an entire chapter to the need for mixed

primary uses. Every planner should re-read this chapter at least once a year, as it is so obvious if one takes the time to observe how neighbourhoods and streets are actually used by people at different times of the day and evening.

The impact of mixing residential with employment and retail uses can best be seen in the King-Spadina and King-Parliament neighbourhoods.

My experience in 1995 with the move to develop a totally new planning and urban design framework commonly known as “the Kings” was based on a solid foundation of mixed uses. Traditional density and land use controls were removed from the official plan and zoning by-law, and replaced with an entirely new

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Reinvestment Area (RA) zoning designation that encouraged virtually all types of uses except those that are noxious or hazardous.

This planning experiment was championed by Jane Jacobs and then-Mayor Barbara Hall and was responsible for the revitalization of both these districts. Historic loft buildings have been renovated and occupied with an eclectic mix of small to medium-sized employers, shops of all kinds, restaurants, cultural institutions and entertainment facilities in addition to a tremendous number of new dwelling units. The total number of full-time employees for King-Spadina grew from 22,466 in 1996 to 35,914 in 2008. The population rose from 945 in 1996 to almost 5,000 in 2008, with over 7,000 new units of housing proposed between 2002 and 2008.

Such rapid growth has brought new planning issues to the fore regarding entertainment facilities, the need for more family-sized dwelling units and a study of built form regulations, all of which are appropriate to consider 15 years after the RA zoning was first developed. Nonetheless, the dense mix of residential and employment together generate a unique and more powerful economic impact than single land uses could ever hope to imagine.

#### What are the Barriers?

If mixed use holds so much promise for building sustainable cities, why is so much new growth still based on the separation of uses? The barriers consist largely of myths about the evils of diversity, an overemphasis on conventional regulations and financial policies, and the momentum of fifty years of car-dependent growth.

The first may actually be the most difficult to change. Old myths are hard to dispel. Many people sincerely believe that mixed uses are ugly, create too much traffic and reduce property values. They feel uncomfortable with differences and have a hard time coming to terms with any form of housing that doesn't have a backyard. These myths have long shaped our communities and regions. But given the aging baby boomers, peak oil and the mobility needs of young and older people who do not drive, these myths will be broken down as people make rational housing choices in a changing world.

Many zoning by-laws still contain unnecessary regulations about what uses can be mixed or the ratio of commercial to residential space. Some permit residential only through a rezoning process. The result is often sterile car-dependent places that prevent mixed use from succeeding. Tax policies and financial levies also discourage or even prevent mixed uses. Market value assessment generally rewards low density and single uses instead of



The Rise, Vancouver

providing incentives to encourage mixed-use intensification. In contrast, land value assessment, widely used in Australia and New Zealand, does the opposite by imposing higher property taxes on vacant or low-density uses. This system harnesses the natural power of the market in a positive way to foster intensification.

The traditional municipal financial toolkit of development charges and levies appears to have reached the breaking point. Some municipalities have adopted strategic incentives to encourage intensification, particularly on main streets, by removing all development charges and adopting a special approval process for mixed-use development. This approach should be embraced by more municipalities to ensure that their planning and financial objectives are working in harmony and not at cross-purposes.

Finally, a fifty-year habit is hard to break. Just ask a lifelong smoker. Most planners and politicians have only ever experienced the subdivision, two-car garage, shopping in malls (or, now, power centres) and the daily commute to work. They think major progress is adding a few medium- to high-rise residential buildings around the edge of malls. We can and must do better, by embracing new financial tools and planning policies that offer real incentives to mixed use.

This will require strong conviction, courage and leadership in our profession. I expect our profession to champion the case for mixed use and congratulate those who have already made progress. Jane Jacobs made a convincing case for mixed use 48 years ago.

Why has it taken so long to put common sense into everyday practice? We don't have another 48 years to get this right.

#### The Planner's House

I cannot resist sharing a vision of my own ideal mixed-use development for retired planners called The Planner's House. It would be a multi-storey building with a waterfront location on the inner harbour with a boat dock out front. The ground floor would be occupied with a combined grocery, liquor and beer store with a front porch overlooking the water. (Editor's note: there could also be a bakery-coffee shop, good for early risers, as found at Docksider Green, a waterfront development in Victoria.)

The second floor would contain a gym, sauna, steam room and hot tub to keep aging bodies looking good. The third floor would



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have a library with a classroom and seminar room for teaching urban planning courses to a graduate planning students who would be invited to come to the Planner's House for in-depth conversations with retired planners. Housing would consist of a combination of condo, co-op, rental and extended-care units. A special floor of guest rooms would be available for visiting family and friends, so that resident planners could continue to enjoy the pleasures of social contact. The green roof would have a vegetable and herb garden with a rooftop bar and restaurant.

This may sound crazy, but everyone needs a dream, so why not? All I need to make this a reality is an innovative developer and keen young planners to champion the concept. Now that would be planner heaven!

*Paul Bedford, FCIP, RPP, is the former chief planner for the City of Toronto and is contributing editor for Planning Futures. He holds a number of advisory positions related to urban design and teaches at the universities of Toronto and Ryerson. Paul is also a senior associate with the Canadian Urban Institute.*



Mixed use can incorporate big box

## Urban Design

# Municipal Urban Designers' Roundtable on Sustainability and Going Green

Steven Bell

The fourth meeting of the Municipal Urban Designers' Roundtable in May focused on sustainability and "going green" with presentations and discussion on green policy initiatives and urban design.

Hosted by the Town of Markham, the day

began with a presentation on Markham's Growth Management Strategy and Sustainability Initiatives. This was followed by roundtable introductions and updates by attendees from London, Mississauga, Brampton, Whitby, Toronto, Caledon, Oakville, Vaughan, Ottawa, East Gwillimbury, Kitchener, Oshawa and Clarington. Also, participating for the first time were staff from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Province's Growth Secretariat in the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure.

Representatives from Toronto, Vaughan, Brampton and Oakville discussed their green policies, implementation tools (including the Development Permit System) and other sustainable initiatives. The afternoon continued with a discussion on urban design, including mid-rise building forms, the privatization of open space, achieving true mixed development, policies for secondary suites, parkland

dedication, engaging public health units on walkability, and challenges related to corporate imaging and developments (signage).

The importance of urban design is gaining recognition in many jurisdictions. As a result, the Municipal Urban Designers' Roundtable has expanded with more municipalities and other levels of government expressing interest in the forum. The Roundtable provides an important opportunity for public-sector urban designers to engage in discussion, seek guidance, and exchange ideas and advice among municipalities facing similar issues. A website is also being developed to facilitate communication and information exchange on urban design topics.

Roundtable meetings are held twice a year, with municipalities hosting subsequent sessions on a rotating basis. The next meeting will be hosted by Richmond Hill in the fall. For more information, contact Steve Bell at [steven.bell@mississauga.ca](mailto:steven.bell@mississauga.ca).

*Steven Bell, MCIP, RPP, is an Urban Designer with the City of Mississauga's Development and Design Division, Planning and Building Department, and Coordinator of the Municipal Urban Designers' Roundtable.*

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# Ministry of the Environment Proposes Renewable Energy Approval Process

Steve Rowe

Readers of the March-April 2009 issue may recall reading about Bill 150, the proposed *Green Energy and Green Economy Act, 2009*. The Act has now received third reading, and the Ontario Government is posting proposed regulations and other material that provides a closer look at how the new legislation will affect planning in Ontario.

Postings on the Environmental Bill of Rights (EBR) Registry to date relate to a proposed regulation to remove some solar and ground-source heat pump installations from municipal control (EBR Registry No. 010-6455), a description of requirements under the mandate of the Ministry of Natural Resources (MNR) (010-6708), and proposed regulations and a discussion paper regarding the proposed Renewable Energy Approval process (010-6516). Facilities encompassed by the Renewable Energy Approval process include wind farms, biogas facilities, biomass facilities (including combustion of wood waste), landfill gas facilities, hydroelectric generation and solar voltaic facilities. The definition of renewable energy facilities would include associated road and transmission connections.

There are benefits to be gained from a shift to renewable energy, but some planners and municipalities have expressed concern about the proposed process. The *Green Energy Act* would exempt renewable energy generation from *Planning Act* approvals, so there would be no municipal control over land use decisions permitting these facilities. Also, the screening process prescribed by Regulation 116-01 under the *Environmental Assessment Act* (the Electricity Projects Regulation) would no longer apply. Instead, proponents would follow a process administered by the Ministry of the Environment (MOE) that

incorporates the requirements of the affected agencies. The discussion paper proposes setbacks and other requirements to address land use compatibility and other environmental concerns.

This article summarizes aspects of the process of most significance to planners. Readers are strongly encouraged to review the discussion paper and to comment if they have specific concerns. OPPI will also be commenting on the proposal. The deadline for comments on the EBR posting is July 24, 2009.

## Context

Electricity generation and transmission facilities proposed by Ontario Hydro—now Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One—and approved through EA processes have always been exempt from *Planning Act* approvals. Most renewable energy projects, however, are proposed by private companies.

Proposals for all forms of energy generation—and transmission—have the potential to create opposition in affected communities. New renewable energy projects, particularly wind farms, have been subject to delay and uncertainty over the past few years. The rural municipalities where these facilities were proposed usually did not have the resources, the technical capacity or the policy framework to respond to them, or to address the concerns of their citizens. Wind farm proposals can polarize rural communities, resulting in difficult decisions for local politicians and sometimes shifting the local political landscape. A number of municipalities have expended con-

siderable resources to explore their policy options and to amend their planning documents in relation to wind farms.

While wind farm concerns relate primarily to noise and rural character, different concerns, such as air quality issues, can arise in relation to other renewable energy projects.

There is a degree of duplication between the existing *Planning Act* and electricity project screening processes. While they can run concurrently, there are two avenues of appeal—the OMB under the *Planning Act*, and the request for elevation (to individual EA) under the electricity screening process. The requirement to consult with Aboriginal communities can also cause delays. With the push to increase renewable energy capacity under the *Green Energy Act*, the government's response is to take approvals for these facilities out of municipalities' hands. While the MOE reviewed projects for which elevation requests were submitted under the electricity screening process, it is now proposed that the Ministry will coordinate input from other agencies and issue approvals under the new process.

The history of sector-oriented environmental assessment processes in the Province started with proponent-driven, self-assessment Class EAs, such as the Municipal Class EA (which require examination of alternatives) and the "screening" processes in place for electricity projects and waste projects (which are proponent-driven but project- and site-specific). The recently introduced Transit Project Assessment Process is proponent-driv-

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en, but imposes strict timelines on the planning process and curtails the scope of appeal rights that were available under the Class EA and screening processes.

The proposed Renewable Energy Approval represents a distinct shift since, rather than being proponent-driven, it requires a government review of a "complete submission" with prescribed studies and an approval from the MOE. The process is said to be "streamlined." While the discussion paper does not identify a time limit, it is intended that the approval process take six months. The appeal process would be limited by regulation to a maximum of nine months.

### General Process Requirements

The discussion paper proposes both general and technology-specific requirements for renewable energy applications.

The general requirements include prescribed contents for all approval applications, direction on public notice and consultation, municipal and Aboriginal consultation requirements, and setbacks from natural heritage features.

Proponents would initiate applications by providing public notice within at least 1.5 kilometres of the site, posting newspaper notices and holding community consultation meetings. The proponent would conduct required studies and then hold a further community consultation meeting. The Crown obligation to consult with Aboriginal peoples would be delegated to the proponent.

Some of those who responded to the earlier EBR posting of the *Green Energy Act*, including OPPI and several municipalities, urged the government to consider a greater role for municipalities in optimizing the "fit" between renewable energy facilities and surrounding land uses. The government did not adopt this advice, but is developing a "template" to ensure that the Ministry addresses municipal concerns. Municipal consultation matters listed in the discussion paper relate to the practi-

cilities of implementing the project such as road access, services and landscaping.

The proponent's application would be required to identify known or potential archaeological or heritage resources. To protect natural heritage and hydrological features, the discussion paper proposes "setbacks" similar to the influence areas found in other provincial policy documents. Further study would be required to justify incursions into these setback areas (and the features themselves, where permitted), and the application would include description of features outside these areas.

Specified aspects of provincial plans including requirements relating to natural heritage and hydrological features would apply to applications within the areas covered by those plans. A development permit would be required in the area covered by the Niagara Escarpment Plan.

### Wind Turbines

The only aspect of this proposal to receive wide media attention is the proposed noise setback requirements for wind farms. While these setbacks are based on a noise guideline that came into effect last October, the use of specific distance setbacks is new.

Wind turbine installations of less than 3 kW would not require a Renewable Energy Approval or a Certificate of Approval. A 3-kW turbine would have a turbine diameter of about 4 metres and a tower height of about 40 metres. It would revolve faster than a commercial-scale turbine, which could result in noise concerns. Other small-scale turbine facilities require information to be submitted to the Ministry, and a Renewable Energy Approval.

For wind turbine installations with sound power levels above 102 dBA (about the lower limit of commercial wind turbines) there is an absolute minimum setback from the "Point of Reception" of 550 metres. Setbacks increase with increases in sound output and number of turbines, to a maximum of 1,500 metres for 11 to 25 turbines, although these setbacks can be modified through further study. Wind farms of more than 26 turbines would require a special noise study. These requirements may be compared to a setback between a receptor and a single turbine of about 400 to 475 metres that would have been derived from noise studies under the previous requirements.

The proposed requirements take account of cumulative noise effects by requiring that all existing and proposed turbines within 3 kilometres of a receptor be taken into consideration, and vacant lots of record are also protected. Further requirements relate to trans-

former stations, setbacks from roads, railway lines and property lines, offshore wind turbines and other matters.

The new, more restrictive requirements would constrain the location and scale of future wind turbine installations. In many cases it will reduce the number of potential turbines in a given project (and possibly make it non-viable) or it will necessitate making the project site much bigger—that is, more area would be needed to site the same number of turbines.

### Biogas, Biomass and Landfill Gas

Generally, farm-based biogas and biomass facilities are subject to setbacks of 125 or 250 metres, depending on their scale, type and the level of supporting studies. Farm-based operations using on-farm manure are subject to the *Nutrient Management Act*, rather than these requirements.

Biomass and biogas facilities have not yet been fully defined, but they may utilize organic waste, in which case proponents must provide financial assurances for potential removal.

Non-farm-based biogas and biomass facilities are not subject to technology-specific setbacks, but proponents would be required to provide studies including Emission Summary and Dispersion Modelling (ESDM) and noise to demonstrate no "adverse effect" (a term defined in the EPA) and address other technical issues. The biomass facilities governed by these provisions would include thermal treatment of woodwaste to generate electricity.

Currently, ESDM and other studies submitted in support of Committee of Adjustment applications are required to consider existing receptors, but not land zoned for sensitive uses such as residential, or other proposals that may arise in the future. These applications are based on meeting standards relating to nearby land uses existing at the time of the approval. There is potential for new development in the vicinity of a facility to result in non-compliance with established standards or provisions in a Renewable Energy Approval. While this problem already exists, it is easier to address when both facilities and surrounding land uses can be dealt with in an integrated way (such as under the *Planning Act*) rather than with two parallel approval processes under the mandate of different agencies, with the renewable energy process taking precedence. The discussion paper does not propose a requirement for proponents to consult with municipalities on this type of land use compatibility issue.

Landfill gas facilities would require a Renewable Energy Approval, and an adjacent



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landfill would continue to be subject to the EPA. Proponents are required to complete ESDM and noise studies.

### Hydroelectric Facilities

Non-kinetic hydro power generation facilities with a head of two metres or more require a Renewable Energy Approval, and facilities with a capacity of more than 200MW will continue to require an individual EA. Other requirements relate to water taking and emissions. Many hydroelectric facilities are on Crown Land and would be subject to approvals under the MNR's mandate, separately posted on the EBR Registry.

### Solar Voltaic Facilities

Facilities with a capacity greater than 10 kW require a Renewable Energy Approval. Proponents must submit a decommissioning plan and noise study.

### Transition

The transition provisions in the discussion paper require that if a designated facility is undergoing an approval process (e.g., *Planning Act*, environmental screening) when the new requirement comes into effect, the proponent must reapply for a Renewable Energy Approval.

The EPA approval for a number of existing renewable electricity facilities would include a Basic Comprehensive Committee of Adjustment application, which requires renewal on a five-yearly basis. This provides an opportunity for the government to impose more stringent standards as they evolve. While the discussion paper does not provide for renewal or revision of Renewable Energy Approvals, a Ministry representative has indicated that such matters can be addressed in conditions of approval.

### Review Process and Appeals

Proposals would be posted on the EBR Registry for comment when MOE has determined that an application is complete, and the Ministry would begin its review after the public comment period. The review may include coordination of input from both provincial and federal agencies.

The Ministry would post the Director's decision on the application on the EBR Registry, but the decision would be subject to a new, restricted appeal opportunity with a hearing before the Environmental Review Tribunal, rather than the "leave to appeal" provisions of the EBR. While the *Green Energy Act* requires the process to be conducted using the broad *EA Act* defi-



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nition of the environment, the only available grounds for appeal would be that the approval will cause “serious harm to public health,” or “serious and irreversible harm to plant life, animal life or the natural environment.” If the Tribunal does not make a decision on the application within nine months of a request for a hearing, the Director’s decision is final.

The *Green Energy Act* provides for a “Renewable Energy Facilitator” who would assist proponents in relationships with government.

### Conclusion

The measures in the *Green Energy Act* are intended to result in substantial benefits through displacement of other forms of energy generation, and lead to the reduction of harmful air emissions and greenhouse gases. The extent to which proponents will come forward with renewable energy development proposals will depend on a number of things, including the attractiveness of the proposed “feed-in tariff,” the ability to gain access to the grid, and the requirements to be met through the proposed Renewable Energy Approval process.

The proposed approval requirements represent a radical step, because they remove the approval of a range of generation facilities from municipal control, create a new, parallel approvals process, and change the scope of consultation and appeal rights. There is also potential for the environmental effects of approved renewable energy facilities to affect other municipal development objectives. Any savings in the duration and cost of the approvals process remain to be seen.

Despite diverging views, this proposal has a good deal of momentum in government and is likely to be implemented much as currently proposed. Planners should therefore turn their minds to how best they can serve the public interest when their clients, agencies or employers propose or may be affected by renewable energy facilities.

*Steven Rowe MCIP, RPP, is an environmental planning consultant and contributing editor for the environment for the Ontario Planning Journal and chair of the Policy Committee’s Environment Working Group. He can be contacted at [deyrowe@sympatico.ca](mailto:deyrowe@sympatico.ca). He would like to thank Tony van der Vooren of AMEC and Al Lightstone of Valcoustics Canada Ltd. for their advice on the air quality and acoustics provisions of the discussion paper, respectively. The views expressed here are his own.*

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# Is this thing on?

Philippa Campsie

A recent *Globe and Mail* article suggested that “Newspapers may well be going the way of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker . . . there’s the stampeding flight of advertising, the public’s loss of trust, the decline in literacy, blogging, a reluctance to pay for news, a market fragmented into shards . . .” \* I am not a journalist, but I am deputy editor of a *Journal*. I write a column every now and then, not a blog every day. Should I be concerned? Does the *Journal* have a future, or will OPPI members one day get all they need to know from the web?

There are two elements to the “Newspapers are dead” argument. One is the death-of-print argument. Print on paper is environmentally suspect. It is not interactive. It cannot be updated instantly. All true. Yet it is long-lived—compare the exhibit of the Dead Sea Scrolls at the Royal Ontario Museum this summer with the documents you saved 15 years ago on 5 1/4-inch disks. And it is portable, for those who enjoy reading in the bath, at the beach, or on the bus. And I for one find it easier on the eyes and the neck.

The other part of the argument is the death of reporting and editing. Newspapers and journals represent gatekeepers to communication and knowledge, versus the everyone-to-everyone interaction of the web. The Internet can offer micro-local news, instant feedback, access to anyone with access to the technology. All very democratic.

Mind you, there is a limit to everyone-to-everyone interaction. For example, I don’t Twitter, much as I appreciate brevity in self-expression. I can well imagine that the medium offers a vehicle for the brilliant aphorism or the pithy insight. The trouble is that finding such a needle requires hours of sifting through a haystack filled with less-than-brilliant trivia.

Whatever the alarmists may say, we know that new technology does not automatically displace old technology. Neither television nor film killed live performance, for example. All three co-exist, doing different things in different ways for different audiences.

So perhaps we need to think about what the *Journal* does that is different, and how it does it, and who its audience is.

We’re not about instant news or instant feedback. Although we’re much faster than academic journals, which can take a year or

more to print an article (we manage with a lead time of a couple of months), we don’t offer late-breaking headlines. We see this as a good thing—blogs and Internet news sites are about being fast, and accuracy often suffers as a result.

What we do offer is reflections on current trends, insights into planning practices in Ontario communities and around the world, useful information on legislation and OMB decisions that affect how we do our jobs, and

.....  
**And just who are we doing this  
for? OPPI surveys tell us that  
members, in general, appreciate  
the Journal as part of their  
membership benefits**  
.....

stories from around the province about what members are doing that will become part of the written record of the Institute.

And we do this in a certain way. We invite submissions from any OPPI member or planning student, or occasionally those outside the profession with ideas of interest to planners. But it’s not like blogging. We’ll adjust your grammar and your diction if they depart too much from standard usage. We’ll make you more concise if you are taking up too much space. Glenn and I also see our jobs as keeping potential authors from shooting themselves in the foot with dull opening paragraphs, incomprehensible jargon, poor organization, or embarrassing mixed metaphors.

That’s not all. Brian Smith, our designer, will make sure that the type sits gracefully on the page, with illustrations, if possible. And we proofread it all to clean up the little gremlins that never cease to bedevil the translation from one computer to another. (We don’t catch everything, but we do try.) And we do all this so that readers barely notice the medium and can focus on the ideas the authors are trying to convey. When our work is invisible, we have succeeded.

And that makes us gatekeepers. The gate is open and anyone can walk in, but it’s not a free-for-all. We have to allocate limited space,

we try to ensure a balance of views from around the province and from different areas of practice, and we have a duty to the Institute to include certain service items that members expect.

And just who are we doing this for? OPPI surveys tell us that members, in general, appreciate the *Journal* as part of their membership benefits. We even sell a few subscriptions to non-members. But I can’t help noticing that the rare letters to the editor that we receive are for the most part written by people in their mid- to late careers, including retired members. Occasionally, a student of mine mentions having seen something in the *Journal*, but students seldom react in writing to what they read. Is the *Journal* relevant to younger members?

I feel a little like a stand-up comedian tapping the microphone. Is this thing on? Is there an audience out there beyond the footlights? Or are they all glued to laptops and handhelds, Twittering and BlackBerrying and blogging, contributing to wikis and commenting moment by moment on the day’s events? Are we going the way of the Ivory-Billed Woodpecker? Only you can tell us.

\* Suanne Kelman, “Read all about it—while you still can,” *Globe and Mail*, June 6, 2009, F12.

*Philippa Campsie has been deputy editor of the Journal for 16 years and before that worked in print publishing. She is old enough to remember not only 5 1/4-inch disks, but really ancient technology such as the Gestetner machine. She can be reached at pcampsie@istar.ca.*

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**Transportation (cont. from page 7)**

Through a collaborative process, the agencies worked closely with each other to understand their practices, identify opportunities for coordination, and make recommendations. The result was the creation of a new coordinated transportation group called EasyRide, based on a central dispatch model in which the individual agencies remain independent. There is, however, an agreement to coordinate certain functions (dispatch, client intake, and marketing) through a central structure.

Under this framework, clients request a trip through a single point of contact, the central agency determines how the trip will be delivered, and the individual agency continues to operate its services. This structure allows for a more effective use of resources and an ability to increase the number of shared rides, thereby freeing up capacity. The process has also involved the development of a single brand and marketing strategy that clearly communicates to potential customers in both counties their mobility options and reduces client confusion about who to call and how to arrange a trip.

The newly branded EasyRide service was launched in July 2009. While the initial benefit has been slow to realize, the seven agencies have put together a structure that will help them meet growing pressures of an aging population in an environment that is difficult to service by transit. This will go a long way in helping seniors maintain a high quality of life and remain at home.

*Dennis Kar, MCIP, RPP, is the Ontario Planning Journal's contributing editor for transportation. He is an Associate with Dillon Consulting and teaches at Ryerson University's School of Urban and Regional Planning. He was part of the team at Dillon Consulting that developed the coordinated transportation framework and is currently assisting the group with implementation.*

*More information about EasyRide can also be obtained by contacting Wendy Orchard, Executive Director, Stratford Meals on Wheels and Neighbourly Services at (519) 271-2217 ext 21.*

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