

ONTARIO Planning

JOURNAL

MAY/JUNE 2010, VOL. 25, NO. 3

ONTARIO PLANNERS: VISION • LEADERSHIP • GREAT COMMUNITIES

Hamilton Prepares

The economy, the games, and more

Also in this issue: Thinking regionally

- Space for Agriculture •
- Bioregionalism • Permaculture •
- Growth Plan • Greenbelt • OMB's
- Executive Chair • The Big Apple •
- The City of Tomorrow • Weasel Practice
- Web Resources • Student Delegate

And

Planning for the Future

Ten things you need to know
about the national standards
initiative

by Dana Anderson

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ONTARIO PLANNERS:

VISION · LEADERSHIP · GREAT COMMUNITIES

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Hamilton Prepares for the New Economy, the Pan Am Games—and More

Investing in the future

Daniel Nixey and Iain Myrans

EVEN BEFORE THE ONSET of the recent recession, officials at the City of Hamilton were strategizing how to move ahead with ambitious plans to renew infrastructure and capitalize on the city's many community assets. Seeking to align private-sector aspirations, opportunities related to implementation of the province's Places to Grow legislation and a strong commitment to revitalize the Hamilton-area economy, the City, in cooperation with the Ministry of Energy and Infrastructure, approached the Canadian Urban Institute for advice on how best to proceed.

The result of these discussions was that CUI undertook to assess the City's long-term infrastructure requirements, strategic directions, and growth vision, and to help identify priorities for investment in infrastructure projects by analyzing existing and proposed community assets. The analysis included placing potential projects and planning initiatives in the context of provincial and federal initiatives and regional trends.

Setting priorities means identifying which projects offer not only the greatest return on investment, but also have the potential to stimulate other projects or actions and thereby add to Hamilton's tax base and quality of life. By coordinating its investment in related projects that support each other, the City of Hamilton can gain the greatest benefit from its investments.

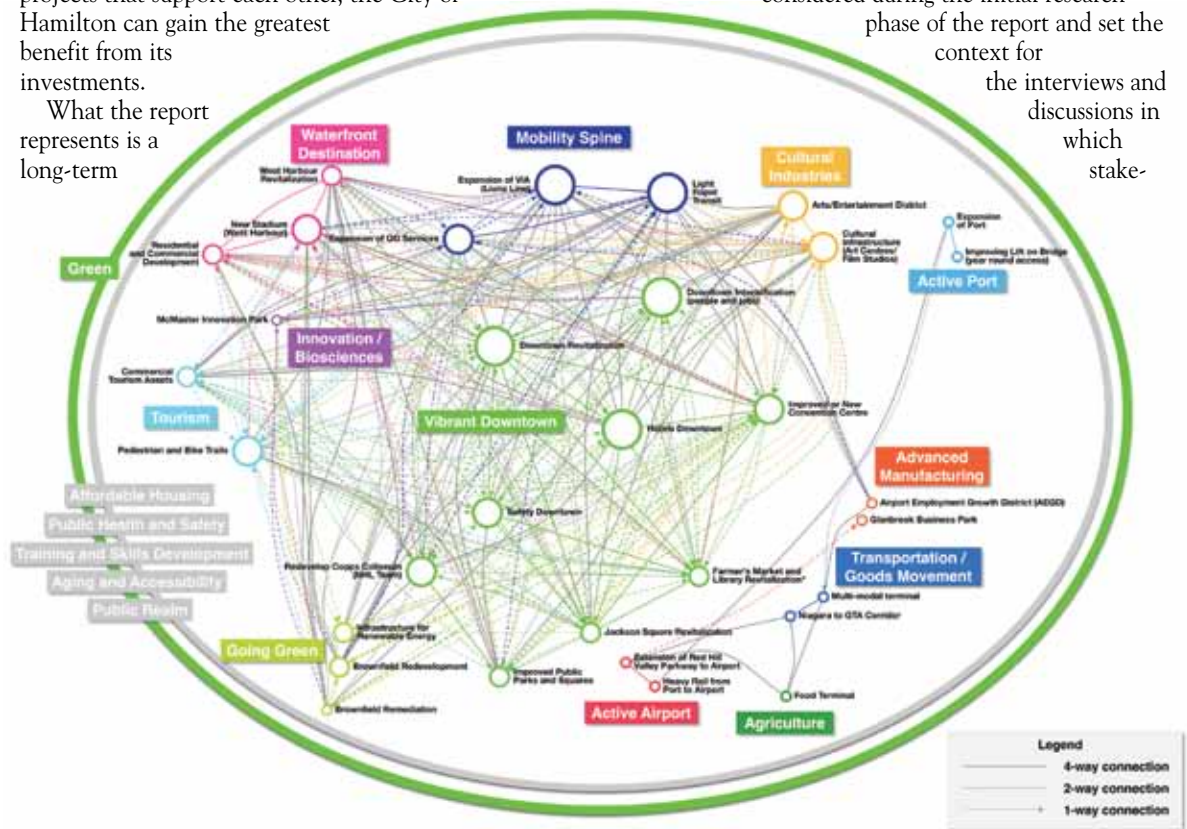
What the report represents is a long-term

perspective on how Hamilton can best invest strategically for the future. Hamilton's many current plans and projects—such as the priority investment opportunities along the B-Line LRT line (as reflected in the new Urban Official Plan) and the importance of increasing commercial and industrial assessment largely through investments in new business and industrial parks (e.g., the airport employment growth district and Brownfield redevelopment etc.), complement the recommendations in the report. Ultimately, the report revolved around a stakeholder engagement process that was intended to help the Hamilton community think innovatively about how, at the intersection of community planning and infrastructure investment, the city's economy could be regenerated.

Value Planning: planning that strengthens the tax base and quality of life

Building Momentum assesses the long-term infrastructure requirements for the City of Hamilton, and suggests priorities for investment in infrastructure projects by identifying and analyzing existing and proposed community assets. The City of Hamilton has completed several planning exercises. These were

considered during the initial research phase of the report and set the context for the interviews and discussions in which stake-



holders identified priority infrastructure projects to meet the objectives of the current plans and policies. It was assumed during the interview process that hard infrastructure—such as water, waste water, roads and bridges—were critical to future city-building and would be maintained and improved as part of Hamilton’s effective asset management program.

Starting with a list of more than 100 potential priority infrastructure projects suggested by Hamilton councillors, staff and stakeholders, CUI researchers conducted an analysis to identify “foundational projects.”

A foundational project is:

- valuable in its own right;
- stimulates productivity and economic competitiveness;
- offers a clear return on investment, building on the tax base;
- provides a platform for other projects (it is not a “one-off” or isolated asset);
- advances municipal priorities;
- advances provincial policies and initiatives (Growth Plan, etc.);
- contributes to quality of place and quality of life.

Through consultation with Hamilton stakeholders, 25 foundational projects were identified. These consultations also drew out six principles for infrastructure investment in the city: invest in the heart of the city strategically to drive regeneration; ensure connectivity; work at all scales; leverage cultural and creative assets; focus on quality of place; and build on existing green assets.

The 25 foundational projects were grouped into five districts: four in the downtown and waterfront areas of Hamilton, and the fifth in

the McMaster Innovation Park. For each district, an analysis was conducted that drew on best practices from other industrial cities that have carried out successful revitalization programs in similar districts under similar circumstances. Based on this analysis, the CUI project team calculated the estimated increase in assessment value and taxes for private sector developments that would build on major and minor infrastructure investments in each of the five districts.

Tapping CUI’s expertise in best practice research

In our role as Canada’s applied policy institute, we seek out examples of best practices in Canada and abroad. Our team invested considerable effort in researching the evolution of “rust-belt” city revitalization, including fieldwork in Portland, Oregon, and Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania (which included interviews with current and past mayors, planners, development corporations, chambers of commerce, students, and leading entrepreneurs). The CUI team was able to both inspire and educate stakeholders about the possibilities for the future. (Our best practice findings were subsequently published in articles in the Ontario Planning Journal). The intent of the best practice research was twofold: (1) to help our team understand what combination of investments have driven regeneration in other cities; and, (2) to inspire the community to think “outside the box” about their city’s potential.

Key Findings & Recommendations

The report concludes with a listing of 25 foundational projects and three key strategies:

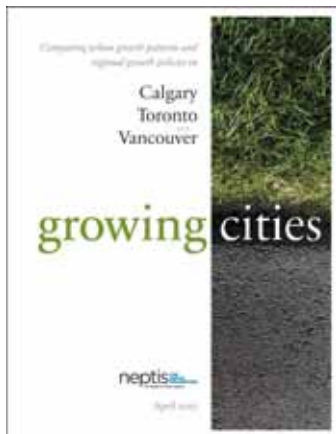
- Proceed with creating an arm’s-length development corporation with a city-wide mandate. This recommendation highlights the effectiveness of such corporations in other cities where revitalization has been successful. The structure of such a corporation should reflect Hamilton’s strengths; many different models are possible.
- Prepare a comprehensive financing strategy. The City of Hamilton needs to mobilize limited resources through integrated strategic investment and planning.
- Maintain momentum with quick wins. Projects that require limited investment and can be launched relatively quickly will give Hamiltonians a sense that progress is being made while longer-term initiatives are planned. Examples include festivals, design competitions, bike-sharing programs, public art programs, fast-track approvals for sidewalk cafés, and initiatives to make use of vacant upper storeys in commercial areas. Many other quick-win projects are possible.

The response from interviewees, stakeholders, and city staff during the course of the project was enthusiastic, and we helped awaken a sense of optimism about the future. The report has since received favourable coverage in the press (print, television, and radio). Hamilton has huge potential: what this report offered was a way to unlock the potential of this often-overlooked urban centre.

Daniel Nixey is the principal of Danix Management Inc. in Ottawa and a Senior Associate with the CUI. Iain Myrans is a senior planner with the CUI in Toronto.

Growing Cities:

Comparing urban growth patterns and regional planning policies in Calgary, Toronto, and Vancouver



REPORT

146 pp



HIGHLIGHTS

28 pp

The latest report from the Neptis Foundation is a multi-disciplinary study of three rapidly-growing Canadian city-regions. The authors used innovative geomatics techniques to provide an “apples-to-apples” comparison of urban growth over a decade, and analyzed the results in the light of long-term public goals, policies, plans and governmental institutions.

The research and findings form an important context and stimulus for debate on urban growth management, as well as the basis for further research on how and why cities grow the way they do.

To download or order a copy of the report and its highlights, visit www.neptis.org. For more information about the report, contact its authors Zack Taylor (zack@metapolis.ca) and Marcy Burchfield (mburchfield@neptis.org).



Thinking regionally still makes sense

Scale defines the challenge for regional planning



PHOTO: MICHAELS, HANNETT PLANNING SERVICES LTD.

THE ACCOMPANYING ARTICLE, *Thinking Regionally*, represents ideas about planning from our urban-regional planning class in Fall 2009. Teaching the class was an interesting journey and presented some major challenges. The “canon” on regional planning set out in *The Urban and Regional Planning Reader* (Birch 2009), which we used as a course text, was criticized by students not only for the lack of discussion about Canada (my fault with apologies to Gerald Hodge and his *Planning Canadian Regions*) but because the textbook did not reflect burning questions of the day such as: food security; energy planning; Canada’s diverse culture, wealth, and regional differences. In particular, the students saw a need for new ideas to address regarding the failure of land use and transit/transportation planning to work well together.

The students were a diverse group themselves; those without a background in planning brought ideas and questions from other disciplines; thinking about the scale of the region, for them, was a new experience.

If I were to teach the course without a student-led model, I would have structured the course around: regional municipalities; the rise of bioregional planning (much discussed in this and other classes in FES); and suburbanization and the history of efforts at urban containment (starting, of course, with Ebenezer Howard’s Garden Cities and Patrick Abercrombie’s greenbelt for the city of London in the early 20th century). Regions are a scale of planning and governance

taken for granted by the planning community in Ontario. We have a strong history of thinking of spatial planning in regional terms, from governance structures to watersheds, as well as through geographical regions defined by landscapes such as the Canadian Shield and St Lawrence Lowlands with related habitat regions such as the temperate and boreal forests. Regions are also defined as a scale of government intervention to deal with development issues, especially in rural development.

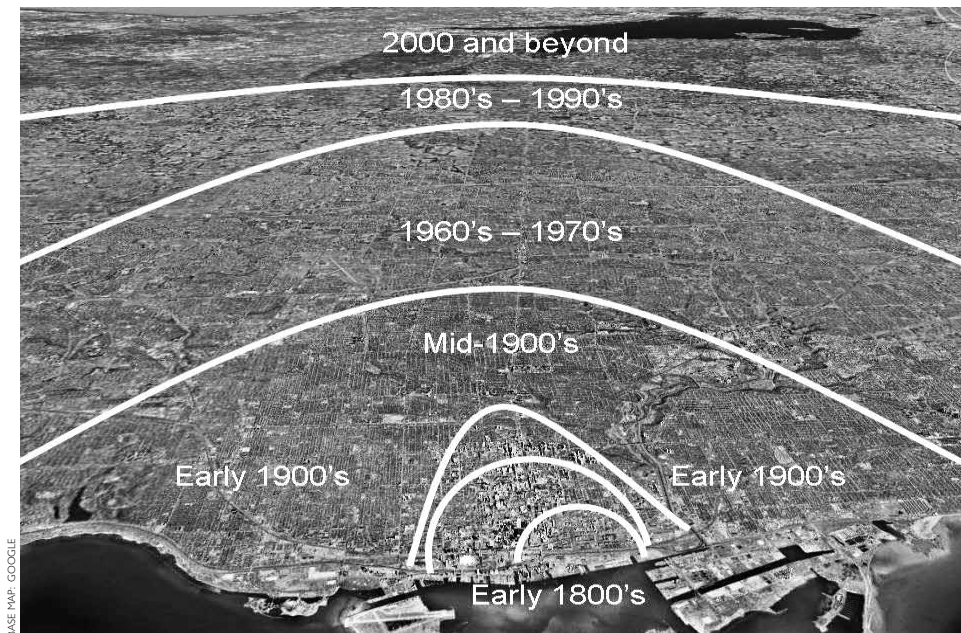
Instead, for their major assignment, students self-identified areas of interest for presentation and discussion, arriving at dendrochronology (or looking critically at the growth rings of the Toronto region; arrived at independently of Zack Taylor’s transect walk and work with Neptis, see Vol 24 Issue 1); mega-regions; revitalization of the manufacturing economy through regional co-operation; and regional foodsheds.

It is interesting to me that the ideas were forward-thinking, leaving behind more traditional issues of regionalism. We challenge you, the reader, to think through the possibilities of regional scale in working through your issues of interest.

Dr. Laura Taylor, MCIP, RPP is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University and welcomes comments (taylorL9@yorku.ca). She will also be able to share an extensive list of references.

Thinking regionally

Sama Bassidj, Rachel Bruner, Marko Cekic and their classmates



"Urban dendrochronology"

How do we make sense of regions? Are they a useful scale for planning interventions? "Thinking and talking regionally" this past fall resulted in great debates that, in the end, reinforced the role of regions in contemporary planning. In this article, our working groups summarize our findings in the areas of urban and regional physical growth, economic revitalization, transportation and mega-regions, and foodsheds.

Making sense of regional growth

Change in cities and regions is embedded in the physical and built landscape, with the speed of growth, the conditions for development, and unique local variations all available for study. Following a perspective we called "urban dendrochronology," the first group considered the historical growth of the Toronto region in the same way that one would count and analyze the rings of a tree. The result was eye opening. The first rings close to the city core developed in the 19th century; the second ring originated from the post-WWII period to the 1970s; the third ring from the 1970s to the 1990s; and finally, the most recent ring beginning in the year 2000.

Although the chronological pattern of growth through the decades always seems to be creating new and different landscapes, recent patterns are beginning to echo the established growth patterns of the city core. Looking ahead, two factors are most likely to influence regional growth patterns: climate change and the depletion of energy resources. These issues will challenge future urban planners to create sustainable development through improved urban and regional growth plans. The rings of the region each reflect the ethos of planning and culture at the time of development. The future physical pattern of settlement will continue to tell the story of contemporary values and choices.

Why regions make sense for economic revitalization

The first ring of growth, formed during the Mackenzie-King era of economic protectionist policy, established the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) as the economic and manufacturing engine of Canada. However, since the 1970s, the manufacturing sector has been steadily shrinking, dropping from 21% to 15.5% of Ontario's GDP in only five years. To counter this trend, the province has embarked on a strategy of economic revitalization by supporting green industry,

renewable energy, and the knowledge economy. Our question is: how can regional planning facilitate this shift?

Even though Toronto might often be identified as the heart of the regional economy, it is the synergies of the GGH as a whole that keeps the economic engine going. Overcoming the psychological barriers represented by the "705-905-416" area codes is absolutely critical. Toronto must rethink its role as part of an interconnected region, and the region must in turn accept its interdependency with Toronto.

For these reasons, infrastructure and environmental planning are two areas that benefit from a regional approach. Senior levels of government must step in to adequately fund infrastructure initiatives that physically link the regions (particularly public transit, roads, and telecom). A regional environmental plan would address critical issues like industry support. Such a plan could also encourage small-scale renewable energy initiatives and more aggressive environmental accountability. In an era of global competition, the success of the GGH relies explicitly on regional planning that recognizes a region as more than the sum of its municipalities.

Why regions matter: transportation and mega-regions

Different eras of regional growth have been structured and defined by the infrastructure of rail and roadways. This is still true, as can be seen by the flow of daily commuting patterns and trade related to the scales of government within which they are embedded.

Gottmann's 1961 *Megalopolis* first identified a mega-regional framework for understanding geographies encompassing multiple metropolitan areas. We found that mega-regional thinking has come back into fashion in North America in response to globalization. For example in the United States, the Regional Plan Association's America 2050 plan makes linkages and connections within and between mega-regions on a national scale (see america2050.org).

In the Canadian context, thinking regionally about transportation issues has also led to regional initiatives such as Translink (in Metro Vancouver) and Metrolinx here. The goals of these plans may be progressive and holistic (combining transit, driving and

cycling) but they operate at a limited local-regional scale. This is a missed opportunity. In the Toronto region, where our relief airport is in Buffalo, NY, re-defining and understanding the economics and cultural implications of mobility in our “greater” region is important. The region may be growing, but our world is shrinking. This requires that we plan at the scale of the mega-region.

Increasingly, we perceive our identity through the lens of the local, regional and the global, to the exclusion of the national or state level. If the mega-region is the scale at which we are aligning our identity, shouldn't we look at our transportation linkages as reinforcing or enhancing that identity? Planning should coordinate investment at the mega-region to improve our collective experience of the landscape at this scale.

Why regions matter: foodsheds

Although the food system significantly influences all parts of human life, planners have tended to neglect the factors that affect food security. Food needs to be on the planning agenda at all scales; the regional scale is particularly important because this allows aspects of the food system, such as production and processing, as well as distribution chains and retailing, to be considered.

Historically, human settlements were organized around the food supply and regions were self-sufficient in terms of basic food (or not). In the modern era, our food sources have been forced out to the periphery of our settlements, past the outermost ring of regional growth, and in many cases, to entirely different regions/countries. At first this was done out of convenience, but modern zoning and spatial divisions have helped create a separation between food production and consumption. We now find ourselves within a globalized food system characterized by a general disconnection between consumers and how their food is produced, processed, and transported. As a result, many cities can be said to be “food insecure” in a number of ways (child hunger rates, obesity, food bank use and urban food deserts).

A progressive approach to food system planning could integrate the concept of a regional foodshed to imagine the flow of food into, and within, a particular region, and identify opportunities for intervention. In some cases, regional planning is beginning to include the food system as an aspect of human life that needs to be accounted for, and some jurisdictions (such as Waterloo Region and B.C. Provincial Health) have

started to plan for the food system on a regional level.

Regions matter!

Everything we do in planning has regional consequences. Urban growth in the larger Toronto region is taking place at a rate and dimension that is best understood at the scale of the region. In the coming decades, site-by-site and organization-by-organization decisions will add rings to the regional structure. Planners, thinking regionally, can influence the scale at which decisions are made and initiatives are created to address contemporary mobility choices, the system that feeds us, and the remodelling of an economy to reflect a dramatically different energy future. As John Friedmann suggests, “it is our task as planners to think the unthinkable . . .”.

The class members were Sama Bassidj, Rachel Bruner, Marko Cekic, Anais Deragopian, Denisa Gavan-Koop, Marcel Gelein, Sean Hertel, Penny Kaill-Vinich, Melissa Kiddie, Jed Kilbourn, Alex Kleiner, Andria Oliveira, Erkin Ozberk, Dimitri Pagratis, Sukhjinder Sahder, Stephanie Schaeffner, Pablo Vivanco, and Abasi White Sanders. Glenn Miller and Russell Mathew were guest critics.

Recognizing Contributions to Heritage Conservation

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The nomination deadline for this year's programs is July 16, 2010.



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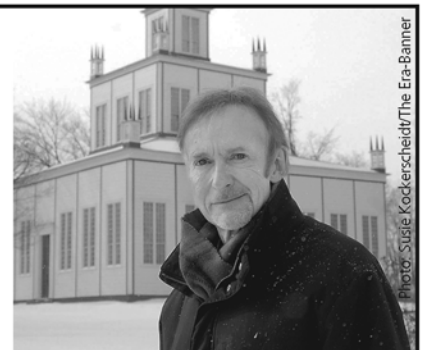


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Making Space for Agriculture

Near Urban Getting Closer

Gary Wilkins



PHOTO: MICHAEL S. MANETT PLANNING SERVICES LTD.

Economics of near-urban agriculture are a challenge

The Living City vision of the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) suggests that our quality of life is being determined in large part through the impacts of rapidly expanding city-regions. A key challenge identified by TRCA is to find creative ways of developing more environmentally friendly urban spaces. An example would be the provision of local food in an urban and near-urban agricultural context. Unfortunately, it has taken the realities of climate change and the need to mitigate its effects to bring agriculture to the forefront as an important part of any successful, healthy and sustainable community.

What is TRCA's contribution? People generally associate conservation authorities with parks, flood and erosion control, and resource management, rather than agriculture. In reality, TRCA has been involved with agriculture since its inception in 1957 and before that through the work of its predecessor, the Humber Valley Conservation Authority, established in 1948. What is different now is the shift to a new kind of agriculture, with different types of partnerships, and alternative ways of doing business.

As the largest public landowner in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA), the organization has acquired over 40,000 acres of land

for a variety of purposes. Some of this land is maintained as floodplain, some represents the core and linkages of the terrestrial natural heritage system, some is used for recreation and education, and some continues to be used for agricultural purposes. Today, about 3,000 acres is rented for agricultural use: 2,000 acres in the Rouge River watershed, 900 acres in the Humber River watershed and 60 acres in the Duffins Creek watershed.

TRCA's perspective on its agricultural lands is undergoing a radical change. The traditional approach was to treat agriculture as in interim use, so the lands were rented to farmers who grew conventional crops such as corn, soybeans and alfalfa. There was also livestock pasturing, and a minor amount of dairy and beef production. In 2003, the Living City vision recognized that short-term leases offered farmers little incentive to make personal investments to implement long-term and often more costly beneficial management practices. The use of the lands for conventional agricultural uses was also affected by land fragmentation, small plot sizes, and the difficulty in accessing them due to congested roadways and other urban related limitations. The vision challenges the organization to contribute more to achieving sustainable communities.

The vision for agriculture on land owned by TRCA includes the use of new and innovative agricultural production methods and technologies, and environmental best management practices that collectively will complement and increase the value of local ecological goods and services. Near-urban agriculture will complement TRCA's sustainable communities objective by contributing to a variety of important goals.

In 2008, the TRCA adopted a policy that requires staff to give serious consideration to agriculture when discussing the future use of TRCA land. Staff is now authorized to negotiate five-year land leases, to promote local food production, and to seek local food procurement for TRCA facilities. New opportunities using smaller land parcels, innovative techniques and intensive agricultural production methods are being created. TRCA is now working out agreements with new partners to grow crops that satisfy the public's desire for locally grown products and cater to changing demographics.

The first of a number of initiatives is the Toronto Urban Farm, located on eight acres near the southeast corner of Jane Street and Steeles Avenue, opposite the Black Creek Pioneer Village. This is one of Toronto's most vulnerable and stigmatized communities. Although there are many community services in the area, none integrate child and youth development, food security, environmental stewardship, health promotion, recreation and social entrepreneurship like the Toronto Urban Farm.

The Toronto Urban Farm is operated by Toronto Parks staff as an extension of their Community Garden Program, which offers multiple services that support city-wide urban agriculture. The objectives of this project are ambitious:

- create meaningful employment opportunities for local youth;
- enable youth to develop leadership and entrepreneurial skills;
- increase participants' knowledge and skills in organic farming and environmental stewardship;
- increase public awareness and build community capacity to address local food security;
- promote healthy nutrition and active lifestyles;
- increase the availability of heirloom vegeta-

- bles and other plant species;
- generate and disseminate knowledge in sustainable agriculture and community development.

A second urban agriculture project is being undertaken at the Claireville Conservation Area in Brampton. In 2008, TRCA and FarmStart signed a lease agreement that allows a not-for-profit organization that receives provincial and federal government support to coordinate farm facilities, resources and linkages important to new and young farmers. The project will also develop effective land tenure and stewardship arrangements; explore emerging local and direct farm market opportunities; support a new generation of farmers; and promote innovative and sustainable business models. The lease gives FarmStart custodianship of 37 acres. This joint endeavour aims to help new farmers establish ecologically sustainable and economically viable agricultural enterprises to supply local markets, conduct agricultural research and demonstration facilities, and offer new farmer training programs.

At the end of the first five-year period in 2012, the new farm facility is expected to be fully operational, and will feature a dynamic research and demonstration facility, a farmer-training program and 18 or more new farm enterprises. The value of new crops such as okra, bitter melon and a variety of eggplants, beets and chilies—crops chosen to cater to the area's growing South Asian community—will be higher in both volume and dollar value than historic cash crops, while maintaining and improving soil fertility and cultivation practices. Research and demonstration plots will illustrate current and emerging sustainable farming practices such as low till/no till, trash mulch systems, all-season unheated greenhouse production and water conservation practices. Wind- and

solar-generated energy will power equipment, educational displays and demonstrations. In addition, outreach and educational planning will increase public awareness of sustainable farming practices and food distribution.

By encouraging new farmers, local food production and community engagement, this farm project will allow people to access and connect to the source of their food and to understand and value the land on which it is grown and those who have grown it. The site is accessible by foot, bicycle, car and public transportation. The proximity of the site to town will also attract community use and stewardship as people come to buy their food, walk the trails and bring groups of children for fun, food-oriented educational programs.

Two other near-urban agricultural projects are being pursued by TRCA; one at The Living City Campus at Kortright in the City of Vaughan and the second on 100 acres in the Albion Hills Conservation Area in Caledon. TRCA's plans for the centre will broaden the scope of programming from its focus on environmental education to a more holistic approach that will include near-urban agriculture. The farm will use bio-intensive farming methods and 'high tunnel' greenhouses to produce vegetables year-round. When fully developed, the farm will be a certified organic vegetable operation with direct market sales. The Albion Hills Community Farm will be similar, providing food for over 48,000 meals per year at the on-site outdoor education centre.

Looking beyond conservation authority property, perhaps one of the biggest challenges for agriculture is the difficulty of protecting the land base from competing uses. The revised Provincial Policy Statement, Places to Grow Act and Greenbelt Plan, all adopted in 2005, provide stronger language and direction in support of the protection of agricultural land. These planning tools will

need to be enforced and upheld by governments as each policy comes due for review. Municipal governments must make provisions in their official plans to protect the land base for agriculture and other secondary and agriculture-related uses that support the industry at a variety of scales.

Some municipalities, such as the Region of Peel, updated their agricultural policies in 2009. Caledon has already made significant advancement in its policies to protect agriculture. Practitioners and proponents of urban and near-urban agriculture such as community gardens and allotment plots will need to look for more space through community retrofits and new community design, and even in areas currently zoned as open space.

In future, local bylaws will have to be changed to reflect the need to accommodate diverse agricultural use not only in rural areas, but in urban areas as well. City-regions will need to make space to grow food friendly neighbourhoods, make food a priority for a green economy, re-connect the city with the countryside through food, and seriously consider food connections and opportunities in the way businesses and governments operate.

On an individual level, life skills training and information is needed in the techniques of growing food in ordinary places such as backyards, on balconies, in school yards or at places of employment. To make it all work, widespread individual commitment is necessary to ensure that local urban agriculture thrives and makes a significant contribution to healthy, sustainable communities in the future.

Gary R. Wilkins, MCIP, RPP, is a Humber Watershed Specialist with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (gwilkins@trca.on.ca). Topics such as these will be addressed at OPPI's fall symposium—see the Billboard for details.



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Northern

What The Growth Plan for Northern Ontario Means for Downtown Revitalization

David Welwood

Last fall, the province released its Proposed Growth Plan for Northern Ontario. The plan is the culmination of three years of work that involved gathering input from hundreds of Northerners at consultation sessions across the region, in order to create an economic revitalization strategy for the entire region.

There are two key areas of the Northern plan that have the potential to help municipalities in their efforts to revitalize central business districts. The chapter entitled “Connecting and Strengthening Northern Communities” deals with “quality of place” planning and regional service delivery improvements.

By “quality of place,” the Growth Plan refers to “characteristics that make” a community “a desirable place to live, work and play.” Quality of place measures in the plan include the encouragement of local planning initiatives that centre on “downtown revitalization, brownfield remediation, promotion of parks, public open spaces, trails, and cultural amenities and preservation of heritage sites.” Such initiatives can also potentially enhance the appeal of downtowns to Northern youth, whose out-migration rates are a key concern of Northern municipalities.

Meanwhile, enhancing the downtown is a common goal found in planning documents across Northern Ontario’s cities and towns, and there are existing and ongoing revitalization success stories in Northern Ontario that

the Growth Plan can hopefully make use of in its quest to encourage quality of place planning. An example of a success story in the North is North Bay’s rail yard redevelopment and creation of a “central park plan” to improve recreational opportunities and improve linkages between the downtown and waterfront.

The Prince Arthur’s Landing mixed-use development in Thunder Bay is a significant project that seems likely to enhance waterfront and downtown linkages in that city.

In Sault Ste. Marie, a downtown improvement study highlighted the goal to make the downtown a “24/7 neighbourhood” as well as the “entertainment and cultural centre of the City.

Sudbury’s Economic Development strategy envisions the city as a place for the “creative, curious, and adventure-some,” while that city’s Downtown Streetscape Project highlights proposed projects that will enhance the downtown by bringing “eyes on the street,” as well as “24 hour activity and additional daytime visitors.” These proposals include the creation of a Northern Ontario School of Architecture, a performing arts centre, and a condominium conversion project. Thunder Bay’s Prince Arthur Landing Master Site Plan highlights that city’s desire to “reinforce existing and proposed linkages from Lake Superior to the downtown and to the City of Thunder Bay as a whole” by creating a mixed-use community on the north downtown waterfront, while the city’s official plan envisions a



strengthened role for both of its traditional downtowns as the city’s cultural and social focal point.

North Bay’s official plan highlights its ongoing efforts in downtown revitalization through intensifying development and reinforcing the relationship between the downtown and the waterfront through the creation of a community Waterfront Park, as well as its goals of increasing residential growth in the downtown, preserving heritage architecture and encouraging a compact commu-

nity form. The city recently opened its first pedestrian link across the old CP rail yards to connect downtown North Bay with the shoreline of

Lake Nipissing, while a new condominium complex for retirees was constructed downtown, on top of a brownfield site, overlooking the lake.

Revitalization and quality of place initiatives are already happening in the North, but challenges remain. The region’s cities have, in recent times, experienced slow rates of population growth, no population growth, and in some places, declining population rates. The proposed Growth Plan characterizes the region’s population-change rate as one that is stabilizing after a sharp period of decline between 1987 and 2001, while it expects “modest” growth in Northern cities in future years.

David Welwood recently joined the firm of Tunmock Consulting. He is a candidate for his MES from York University. The next issue will address a second aspect of the plan.

Toronto

Bioregionalism in the City

Lindsey Savage

Last fall, York University graduate planning students in the Bioregional Planning Workshop in the Faculty of Environmental Studies worked with a community group to develop a Master Plan with a bioregional lens for the North West Queen Triangle in Toronto. Course instructors Steve Heuchert and Quentin Hanchard led the master planning process in the Triangle, an area northwest of Queen St. and Dufferin St.

The area is currently designated as employment land by the City’s Official Plan; however there is a great deal of interest in how this area could evolve in the future. Active 18, a group of citizens and business owners in Ward 18, have been actively involved in the area. They want to ensure that any changes in the neighbourhood reflect excellent design, development and architecture standards, and that citizens can be involved in these processes.

York students worked closely with Active 18 throughout, and also engaged with other members of the community through a design charrette to learn more about the community’s concerns and hopes for the area.

Prior to the development of the Master Plan, the students produced a “Bioregional Toolkit” to analyze opportunities for the practical implementation of key bioregional principles. The principles highlighted the unique ecology of the bioregion, encouraged local food, the use of local materials, and the cultivation of native plants in harmony with the bioregion.

The students presented their findings at a design charrette and

the roundtable discussions that followed resulted in some fantastic ideas (from parking solutions to green roofs, artificial wetlands and food production). The impressive turn-out and enthusiasm of the community illustrated the importance of harnessing local knowledge and solutions within a bioregional approach and gave the students great insights into their future profession.

Some of the Master Plans created by the students in the Bioregional Planning Workshop can be found on the Active 18 website (<http://active18.org>). For more, visit the Faculty of Environmental Studies website at York University, at <http://www.yorku.ca/fes/community/news/archive/587.htm>

The Ontario Planning Journal welcomes articles from all members—from Full to Provisional to Student members. Articles may be edited for length.

Western Lake Ontario

Permaculture in Guelph

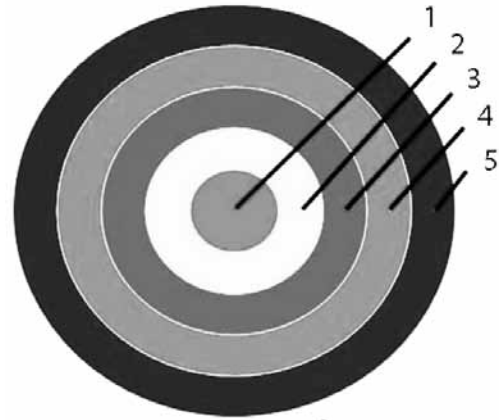
Tracey Tomlik and Karen Landman

The concept of permaculture was developed in Australia by Bill Mollison and David Holmgren in 1974 and documented in their first publication, *Permaculture One*. Permaculture is the integration of self-perpetuating plant and animal species that supply human needs. It is an “ever-evolving ethical design and management system of agriculturally-productive ecosystems, integrating human settlements within the landscape and providing food sustainably.”

Holmgren’s recent book, *Permaculture: Principles & Pathways Beyond Sustainability* (2002), describes in detail the three ethical principles and 12 design principles of permaculture.

The three ethical principles are: 1) to care for the earth; 2) to care for the people; and 3) to set limits on consumption, reproduction and to redistribute surplus. The 12 design principles are: 1) observe

no waste; 7) design from patterns and details; 8) integrate rather than segregate; 9) use small and slow solutions; 10) use and value diversity; 11) use edges and value the marginal; and 12) creatively



The five districts of permaculture

and interact; 2) catch and store energy; 3) obtain a yield; 4) apply self-regulation and accept feedback; 5) seek and value renewable resources and services; 6) produce

use and respond to change. The seventh principle—design from patterns to details—organizes the landscape through the use of five permaculture districts,

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or land use designations; these districts were used to form a permaculture land use plan for the City of Guelph. These five permaculture districts are based on the energy input and the extent of land required for each land use.

The intensity of energy use relates directly to the extent of land that is required for that land use. The overall goal is to create a design that uses human energy efficiently, and to reduce the energy input required for maximum energy output. The land use that requires the most human energy will be placed closest to the centre of the highest human activity.

The conceptual diagram illustrates the distribution of energy and land for each district. The central circle (1) represents the area of highest energy input, whereas the outermost circle (5) requires the lowest energy input. The central circle requires less land while the outer ring requires more land. The central circle must be located where there is

high human activity, while the outer circle is furthest away. The districts will take any shape once the criteria for each are applied to the landscape. The notion of a district as a continuous band may not apply on the ground, as the criteria must respond to the existing, fragmented nature of the urban landscape.

To demonstrate what a permaculture land use plan might look like, criteria for the five permaculture districts were applied to the existing land use and zoning maps for the City of Guelph. This research was presented to the City of Guelph at a meeting attended by the Director of Planning, three city councillors, and other staff members. There has been considerable interest and follow-up as a result.

Tracey Tomlik is completing a masters in landscape architecture under the direction of Karen Landman, PhD, MCIP, RPP. Karen is an Associate Professor

and MLA Program Coordinator at the School of Environmental Design & Rural Development, University of Guelph. A complete version of this article, including a description of the districts and academic references, can be found on the Ontario Planning Journal page of the OPPI website (www.ontarioplanners.on.ca).

People

Jeff For Mayor

Jeff Lehman, a former contributing editor for the *Ontario Planning Journal*, is running for mayor of the City of Barrie. Jeff is a principal with urban development firm MKI and was elected to Barrie council in 2006. He will run against former Barrie MPP Joe Tascona and former mayor Rob Hamilton, who was defeated in 2006. Jeff's father, **Bob Lehman**, is president of Meridian Planning

Consultants and the current representative on CIP Council for the College of Fellows.

Town of Markham planning and urban design director **Val Shuttleworth** is leaving to take on the role of planning and building services general manager at the Town of East Gwillimbury. Shuttleworth has 27 years of experience and prior to Markham, she was a planner in Scarborough and North York.



Jeff Lehman

Jeff's planner father, **Bob Lehman**, is also active as a principal of his own consulting firm as well as the point person linking the College of Fellows with the CIP Council. Members of the College are evaluating how best to make their expertise available to the profession.


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Planning for the Future (PFF)

Warning: This article contains information that is advantageous to our profession

Dana Anderson



OPPI IS NEARING its 25th year as a professional organization in Ontario. Over those 25 years our profession has faced many challenges and has grown significantly. Today we are faced with what I believe is one of the most important decisions our members will make. That is the decision to improve our national standards for membership to ensure our profession has the formal requirements for education and certification in place to secure trust and respect for our profession in Ontario and throughout Canada.

What has happened so far?

For more than four years OPPI has been actively involved in revising our national membership standards through the Planning for the Future project or PFF (formerly called the Membership Continuous Improvement Program or MCIP). In 2009, OPPI Council endorsed the three initial Task Force Reports on Ethics, Competencies and Certification and has since been working on the implementation of the recommended changes to modernize the membership process and standards.

The National Affiliate Membership Committee, which consists of the membership chairs and registrars from all CIP affiliates, endorsed the PFF implementation reports relating to accreditation of planning schools, certification, and fellows at its meeting in February 2010. These reports, which include the establishment of a national Professional Standards Board (PSB), were endorsed by CIP Council in March 2010 and by OPPI Council on April 30, 2010. Copies of these reports are available online (www.planningincanada.ca).

Where do we go from here?

We are now moving into the most important stage of the process, whereby all of the Affiliate Councils will move to approve the implementation reports and both the Affiliates and CIP will begin to implement the needed changes to the membership process. This will mean changes to CIP and OPPI's by-laws. A vote on these by-law changes is expected go out to the members in fall 2010.

How can such a broad group such as planners be "standardized"?

A profession is by definition a group of individuals recognized for their common levels of education and for a system of accountability. I have heard concerns that planning is a

broad and diverse field that draws on many disciplines and that by setting standards we are restricting and narrowing the way the profession is defined.

I strongly believe we are recognizing the broad scope of our practice through this process and ensuring that our future planners have the strong foundation they need to practise in a variety of areas. We are not all "land use" planners and the national task forces have recognized this fact. Also, more than 1,000 planners from a broad range of practice participated in the development of the competency standards proposed.

What are the main changes proposed to the membership process?

There will be seven steps in the new membership process. Note that in future, the term "provisional member" will be replaced by the word "candidate."

1. Apply for candidate status.
2. Receive candidate status.
3. Meet mentorship requirements (one year minimum).
4. Pass course on ethics and professionalism.
5. Meet requirements for practical work experience and sponsorship.
6. Pass written professional examination.
7. Receive professional status from Council.

As has always been the case, there will be differences in the process for those entering the profession with a degree from an accredited planning school and those entering with a degree in a subject other than planning. There are also provisions for planners who have trained outside Canada who want to become professional planners.

In all cases, applications will be submitted to a national Professional Standards Board (PSB), which will be responsible for evaluating

applications for membership, notifying applicants and affiliates of new candidate members, and implementing all membership standards and marking examinations.

All routes to membership require candidates to pass an examination on ethics and professionalism, complete a period of practical work experience, meet a mentorship requirement, and pass a final professional exam. Many aspects of the mentorship requirement have been modelled after the successful program currently used in Quebec.

Why such a strong focus on ethics?

Ethics and professionalism are at the core of what we do. Planners provide independent professional opinions to their clients and employers – governments, developers, agencies and organizations. Ethics and professionalism are the basis of accountability – they are what bind us and makes us professional planners. We need to conduct our work in accordance with standards for practice and high ethical standards to maintain respect for our profession. Those who choose not to be part of our profession are not bound by those core values and principles and are not accountable to a professional body for their actions – as we are, through our Code of Conduct and our Standards of Practice.

The oral Exam A is an important part of the current process—why are we getting rid of it?

Several members have expressed their opinions for and against the elimination of the oral examination, which was eliminated in the province of Quebec some years ago. Many of us have had very positive experiences with the Exam A process. It does allow for face-to-face interaction with provisional members and gives them the opportunity to respond to questions on professionalism and ethics. However, as the Director of Membership Services for many years, I heard numerous complaints about the oral exam from those who have participated in it.

The recommended changes to certification will ensure that the candidate's knowledge of ethics and professionalism is tested in a consistent, objective and reliable way. The interactive role between the full member and the provisional member that currently takes place for one hour at the very end of the membership process will now be provided through a minimum year-long interaction with the provisional member's mentor. OPPI is also looking to ensure that the interaction with full members at the end of the process takes place in a positive setting where new members are recognized for their successful completion of the process by their peers.

We must also acknowledge that OPPI does not have the resources, staff or available volunteers to continue to administer and carry out an oral exam. Other professions have adopted standardized written examinations to assure consistency in support of assuring transportability of professional credentials across the nation. The oral exam approach is also not an approach acceptable for a self-regulating body because it is not objective, rigorous, or transparent enough, and it is therefore subject to challenge by unsuccessful candidates.

Where can I find out more about this process?

Included with this article is a summary of ten things you need to know about this national standards initiative. As well, you can continue to stay informed by visiting the OPPI website and look for the heading "Planning for the Future." A fact sheet is available there, as well as a link to a special website just about this initiative. There is also a special e-mail address for your comments (planningforthefuture@ontarioplanners.on.ca). OPPI can also arrange workplace or district information sessions to inform you about this initiative and answer your questions.

Dana Anderson, MCIP, RPP, Director Membership Services and OPPI representative on the National Membership Committee. Dana can be reached at danderson@oakville.ca

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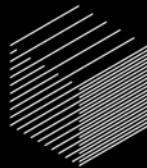
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Ten things you need to know right now about the national standards initiative, known as Planning for the Future (PFF)

1. You will be asked to vote yes or no on the proposed national initiative in fall 2010.

In just a few months, you will be asked to vote on this major national initiative by the Canadian Institute of Planners. If there is support for the initiative, OPPI will hold its own vote to amend the necessary by-laws to allow for implementation. So you need to become informed about what all this means for you and for the future of the planning profession across Canada—and also about what it does *not* involve.

2. The focus of the initiative is on standards – ethical standards, competency (i.e., educational) standards, membership standards – that will apply to all planners and planning schools in Canada.

For the most part, these are the standards that we have always upheld in our codes, in our planning schools, in our disciplinary bodies, in our membership processes. The difference is that with a “yes” vote at the national and provincial levels, a consistent set of agreed-upon standards for entry into the profession and a national ethics code will be formally adopted by all provincial affiliates, making it easier for planners to move from one province to another.

3. A yes vote means the membership process will change for new planners entering the profession after the new standards are implemented.

The proposals include a national, independent Professional Standards Board that will review applications for membership and mark written examinations in accordance with standards set by CIP and its affiliates. As the profession matures, the membership process must too. The existing process has evolved over time, and the profession has now outgrown it. We need a process that can be administered to ever-greater numbers of people who want to enter planning in a way that is both impartial and fair to all and that maintains respect for the planning profession.

4. A yes vote will ensure greater consistency in planning school curricula.

In a mature profession, it is important to train students in a consistent way. Students entering a planning program need to be assured that their credentials will be respected across the country

and that their studies prepare them adequately for the work they will do. A panel of senior planners and educators from across Canada, with input from more than 1,100 CIP members across the country, identified the competencies (skills and knowledge) that all planners should acquire in planning school, and Canada’s planning schools will be required to demonstrate how they are helping students build those skills and acquire that knowledge.

5. The oral membership examination (Exam A) will be replaced by a written examination.

The oral examination will be replaced by a written examination to ensure greater consistency, objectivity, and transparency in the membership process across the country. The introduction of the written examination will occur even if national members vote no in the fall, since the oral exam was becoming harder to organize and regulate as the number of candidates increased; however, a yes vote will support the creation of the Professional Standards Board, which will then administer the exam.

6. A yes vote will formalize requirements for Continuous Professional Learning.

This change is a concern for many planners, who fear that meeting CPL requirements will be both expensive and onerous. As part of its contribution to this national initiative, OPPI is strongly committed to supporting its members by providing a range of no-cost or low-cost CPL options, and by making the CPL reporting process as simple as filling out the annual application form.

7. A yes vote will standardize the designation Fellow of the Canadian Institute of Planners.

This honorary designation will be retained, and all CIP members who meet certain criteria will be eligible for this honour. The procedure for naming Fellows will be standardized at the national level. The FCIP designation will no longer be a class of membership. Those granted the Fellows designation will be considered as Full Members of the Institute with an

honorary title permitting them to use FCIP instead of MCIP.

8. A yes vote is not a vote for higher membership fees.

Many planners are concerned that this initiative means higher fees for existing members. This is not the case. Revenue from members’ fees will be deployed differently, but a change to the total fees is not part of this proposal. Fees for those entering the profession will be restructured, however, and may be higher, lower, or the same relative to those paid by current provisional members, depending on the individual’s path through the membership process.

9. The proposals were developed in consultation with planners across the country.

This initiative has been in the works for four years. OPPI members have participated with members of other affiliates in the three task forces that developed the standards, and feedback has been sought and received on the proposals through membership-wide surveys and focus groups. OPPI has received and considered hundreds of comments from members in framing its position on this initiative.

10. Consultation is continuing.

If you would like to talk about these proposals, either in your workplace or in a district meeting, OPPI would be happy to send a task force member to meet with your group, describe the proposals, answer your questions, and lead a discussion on what the initiative means for the profession and for you personally. There is also a wealth of information available at <http://www.planningincanada.ca> and on the OPPI website <http://www.ontarioplanners.on.ca> (follow the link to the fact sheet from the home page). You can let us know your thoughts and concerns by sending an e-mail to planning-forthefuture@ontarioplanners.on.ca or by writing a letter to us at OPPI, 234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 201, Toronto, Ontario M4P 1K5.

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Meet your new Student Delegate

Dan Woolfson

I am excited to begin my term as the OPPI Student Delegate for 2010-2011. Currently, I am a student in the Master's of Environmental Studies (MES) Program at York University specializing in Urban Planning. So far, my time at York has been filled with interesting challenges and wonderful opportunities. My academic research has been focused on our Transportation Planning Divisions. I would like to test the hypothesis that any regional/municipal Transportation Planning Division should always be situated within a Planning Department, instead of an Engineering or Public Works Department. I am keen to pursue this research and discuss my work with planning students across Ontario.



Dan Woolfson

continue in the tradition of all the excellent students who have previously held this position.

Adam spent much of his time focusing on building the relationship between student members and OPPI. I hope to continue all the great work he has done over the past year. My goal is to ensure the OPPI provides its student members with the best possibilities to get involved and learn outside the classroom. I believe that planning students everywhere can gain an excellent education by combining their in-classroom experiences with lessons learned from the many various professionals in the field. I will work to provide those

experiences to all the planning students across Ontario.

Of course, this position is designed to ensure that every student is represented on OPPI council meetings and I would like to encourage everyone to reach out to me and share their opinions on the organization and our profession as a whole. I will do my best to ensure that the OPPI student membership continues to grow and becomes even more valuable to future planners in the province.

Dan Woolfson is an MES student at York University. This marks the start of his term as student delegate. He can be reached at dwoolf@yorku.ca

For the past year I have been co-chairing Plan-IT, the student planning organization at York University. Serving as a student-run organization, Plan-IT and its executives have continuously focused on enhancing the planning student experience by organizing workshops and seminars to enrich our learning experiences outside the classroom. I would like to take the lessons learned from my Plan-IT experience and expand them to the position of Student Delegate, ensuring that planning students across the province get a chance to expand their learning as much as possible.

As I begin my term, I would like to congratulate Adam Zende on his previous successful year as student delegate and I hope to

Building Bridges to Ontario Planning School Web Resources

Mark Paoli

One of the key strategies in OPPI's Strategic Plan is to promote research and scientific interest in planning. Over the past few years, member surveys, as well as discussions with university planning program directors and student members, have reflected a strong interest in connecting planners, academics and students who share common research topics.

To this end, OPPI worked with the universities to establish a page on OPPI's website that has a link to each of the six Planning Schools/Programs in Ontario.



Mark Paoli

The site continues to improve as it reflects progress being made at the universities to increase access to and outreach from faculty and student research projects.

One example is York University's Faculty of Environmental Studies page, from which it is possible to:

- search completed student theses by title keyword;
- browse faculty profiles and research interests;
- download or purchase studies and reports.

Whether you are a planner, academic or student, I encourage you to visit all six of the planning school web pages to see the wealth of planning research in Ontario, and hopefully build bridges to your own research interests.

Mark Paoli, MCIP, RPP, is OPPI's Director of Membership Outreach. He can be reached at markp@county.wellington.on.ca

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Editorial

Who has the power? Debating governance and city building

Glenn Miller

A city-wide planning board or commission can play an important role as an independent buffer

ONE OF THE DEBATES that gets trotted out before municipal elections is the tension between decisions of municipal councils and their planning staff. There are many ways to frame the question: should professional planners have more of a say in land use decisions as in British Columbia, or should we continue to rely on municipal councils to have the final word? When decisions are referred to the Ontario Municipal Board, should the public feel aggrieved if the OMB appears to overrule a decision made by an elected body? Or have councillors ducked a hard decision that would have made them unpopular with constituents by not following their approved policies? In his usual insightful manner, contributing editor Paul Bedford uses his column this issue to examine how planning—make that city building writ large—is done in New York City. In explaining the intricacies of the mechanisms for citizen input, and probing the balance of power between city officials, politicians, appointed volunteers and professional staff, Bedford starts to unlock some of the mysteries that tend to mask the public's dissatisfaction with municipal decision-making. Although his focus is clearly on the needs and aspirations of Toronto, it is

worth asking how his insights might have broader application to communities across the province.

A key difference between the New York model and Ontario is the role played by city council. In New York, the focus is said to be on “governance,” whereas in Ontario, the priority of councils tends to be more on management, in some cases duplicating the work of their professional staff. Another point worth noting is that a city-wide planning board (or appointed commission) can play an important role as an independent buffer between recommendations of professional staff and elected officials.

If there appears to be a spotlight on Toronto, is it because the stakes for electing a new mayor are so high? Or are there similar debates occurring all over the province? Relying on the media to gauge the pulse can lead to false conclusions. Write to the *Ontario Planning Journal* with your views to set the record straight.

Glenn R. Miller, FCIP, RPP, is editor of the Ontario Planning Journal and Vice President, Education and Research, with the Canadian Urban Institute in Toronto. He can be reached at editor@ontarioplanning.com

Letters

To comply, or not

I RECENTLY READ an article written by Greg Newman in the March/April issue, Vol. 25, No. 2.—“Questions Raised about Non-complying Buildings”—refers to two decisions I won on behalf of my client, at the OMB and in the Divisional Court, on the subject of non-conforming uses, and non-complying buildings. I would like to propose that I write an article in response in partnership with a planner colleague as I disagree with the author's conclusions.

—*Michael Polowin is a partner with Gowling Lafleur Henderson LLP in Ottawa.*

How much land is enough?

THE RECENT ARTICLE by Tim Jessop—*Planning for Employment: Is a Fresh Approach Required?*—recognizes a major challenge of the Growth Plan: how to plan for land-extensive employment areas while still supporting objectives for a more compact, transit-oriented urban form. Having been central to the debate

for some time, a few observations from our firm's experience may be helpful.

As a point of clarification to Mr. Jessop's comments, the method used to forecast employment originated by Hemson Consulting Ltd. for the Province in 1989 is not one premised on the continuation of pre-existing patterns. Rather, the three land use types—major office, population-related and employment land—are a descriptive categorization within the context of an overall employment and economic outlook that considers long-term structural change in the economy. In our work, the allocation of employment to the three types has changed considerably since 1989—generally shifting towards major office from employment land.

The shift among the land use types reflects changes that have been occurring in the structure of employment, notably the shift away from goods-producing industries and towards the service sector. The occurrence of this shift is relatively well understood. What is not so well understood is what the shift actually means for land use planning. The assumption made by Mr. Jessop is that far less employment land will be required. Our evidence is that significant new employment areas will still be needed.

The “fresh approach” of integrating more employment into mixed-use areas is already being planned by many municipalities through their official plan updates and conformity with the Growth Plan. The degree to which significant employment can actually be directed to these locations, however, is more likely to be governed by the business decisions of firms and development economics than by land use planning policy. To significantly change how employment is accommodated, planners will require a better understanding than currently exists of the relationship between economic activity, built form and land need and how these factors can be influenced.

—Antony Lorius, MCIP, RPP, is an associate partner with Hemson Consulting Ltd. He has written about employment lands on a number of occasions for the *Ontario Planning Journal* and will be doing so again shortly.

Heritage Register not District

SINCE 1975 ALL MUNICIPALITIES that had designated heritage properties under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act* were required by the legislation to include all details of that property designation and the designating By-law in a register that was to be maintained by the Clerk of the municipality. In essence, the register was created as an

administrative, record-keeping device.

The *Ontario Heritage Act* was then amended to enable municipalities to include additional properties in the register that were not formally designated by by-law under Part IV of the Act. The amended Act allowed inclusion of property that the Council of a municipality “believes” to be of cultural heritage value or interest (a much lesser test than proving beyond all doubt as with designation by by-law and meeting specific criteria). Once non-designated properties are included in the register, the Act provides that an owner of a property shall not demolish or remove a building or structure on that property unless the owner gives the Council of the municipality at least 60 days notice, in writing.

This 60-day period was enacted as a partial response to the changes to the *Ontario Building Code Act*, which took effect January 1, 2006. Accelerated building permit review timeframes under the changes to the *Building Code Act* allow little time for municipalities and their Municipal Heritage Committees to assess properties that are potentially of cultural heritage value and that face demolition. In addition to simply being a record-keeping device, the municipal register now potentially functions as a conservation management tool by allowing temporary protection of buildings or structures on non-designated properties from demolition.

The 60 days provision also allowed municipalities the opportunity to formally designate property to allow more comprehensive management of a property’s heritage attributes. When reporting to Council on this matter in 2008 Hamilton’s heritage staff questioned whether this time frame allowed for successful processing and administration of potential designations (detailed research and by-law preparation) and concluded that it is doubtful that sufficient time existed to enable a comprehensive, sound and defensible process of designation to occur. (The “defendability” aspect is important as the appeal body, the

Conservation Review Board, appears to be rigorously examining the veracity of heritage research and evaluation).

Hamilton City Council subsequently requested the Ontario Minister of Culture to consider extending the time period that buildings or structures on non-designated properties are afforded protection from demolition, when included in the register established under Part IV of the *Ontario Heritage Act*, from 60 days to 125 days.

Accordingly, “local heritage registers” were not new administrative creatures but rather ones that had evolved into a refined management tool rather than an accounting mechanism. To assert that the register contains “everything” in a community thought to be of cultural heritage value or interest is a little bit of a stretch. It can only contain “real property” (i.e., non-movable heritage rather than movable heritage) which is defined in the Act and legally cannot address anything above and beyond the removal of buildings and structures. As “cultural heritage” typically includes other types of cultural resources such as archaeological sites and cultural heritage landscapes, it is evident that the register is focused on a very specific form or component of a community’s cultural heritage, i.e., buildings and structures.

—David Cuming, MRTPI, MCIP, RPP, is Senior Project Manager (Heritage and Urban Design) Community Planning and Design Section, with the Planning Division, City of Hamilton Planning and Economic Development Department.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Members are encouraged to send letters about content in the *Ontario Planning Journal* to the Editor (editor@ontarioplanning.com). Please direct comments or questions about Institute activities to the OPPI President at the OPPI office or by e-mail to executivedirector@ontarioplanners.on.ca

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Ontario's Greenbelt in an International Context

Maureen Carter-Whitney

Early in the 20th century, governments began to create greenbelts to preserve open rural landscapes and provide a separation between urban areas and the countryside. Decades later, many other benefits provided by these landscapes have become understood and valued. Increasingly, greenbelts have been recognized as land use planning tools with the potential to support local food security, protect ecological integrity, conserve biodiversity, protect local water quality and quantity, and provide natural recreation areas for nearby urban centres.

In the future, growing populations will only need more of the benefits that greenbelts can provide, such as clean air and water, fresher produce near to home, and outdoor recreation opportunities. Greenbelts will continue to be vital to help society address future needs in light of changing global conditions such as climate change impacts, water scarcity, rising oil prices, and food price inflation.

The creation of Ontario's Greenbelt in 2005 provided an opportunity to preserve an important part of Ontario's natural and cultural heritage and find ways for Ontarians to live sustainably. The experiences in greenbelts established around other cities internationally—such as London, Copenhagen, São Paulo, Frankfurt, Portland and Melbourne—provide insights into how greenbelts can be used to control urban growth, support near urban agriculture and protect the environment.

The most common objective of greenbelts the world over is to curb urban growth in the face of the constant threat that urban development poses to natural spaces. Ontario has addressed this tension by pairing the Greenbelt Plan with the Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Plan to direct where, how, and in what form future growth should be accommodated, as well as a regional transportation plan for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton area. Provincial and municipal governments need to ensure effective containment of urban and suburban expansion while accommodating future growth in the new ways outlined in the Growth Plan. They should also take advantage of opportunities to expand the Greenbelt to better protect prime farmlands, significant natural features and

environmentally sensitive lands currently outside the boundaries of the Greenbelt.

While land use protections are necessary to achieve greenbelt objectives, they are—by themselves—not sufficient. Other measures are needed to provide support to near-urban greenbelt farmers to ensure continued farm viability, and to rehabilitate and enhance degraded natural areas.

In Ontario, the Greenbelt's valuable agricultural land base can be protected from loss and fragmentation only if near-urban agriculture remains economically viable. Governments need to collaborate with local agricultural action committees and others in the sector to expand markets for locally grown foods, develop direct farm-to-consumer relationships, diversify on-farm activities, and strengthen farming capacities.

Infrastructure expansion and resource extraction both have the potential to degrade the ecological integrity, biological diversity, water quality and long-term permanence of greenbelts.

Different greenbelts worldwide have dealt with transportation corridors and other infrastructure in a variety of ways. Experience suggests that, when looking at alternatives for

transportation and other infrastructure in Ontario's Greenbelt, governments should consider cumulative adverse effects and use methods of lowest impact development where new or expanded infrastructure is unavoidable.

Aggregate extraction has generally been permitted in greenbelts where those resources are present. Ontario has an opportunity to lead other greenbelts by revisiting and improving its aggregates policy to address concerns about the appropriateness of aggregate extraction in the Greenbelt, promote the use of recycled materials, and minimize the negative impacts of extractive activities where they occur.

A greenbelt has to be more than simply a land use policy on a piece of paper.

Most of the greenbelts around the world, including Ontario's, are living, working landscapes—the public must understand what they are, the benefits they provide, and how to connect with them. This need to emotionally connect local people to their greenbelts is crucial to maintaining and strengthening them into the future.

At five years old, Ontario's Greenbelt is still relatively new, but has the strongest supporting laws and policies in the world. Its first five years have shown significant progress, yet there is much to learn from the experiences, successes and challenges of greenbelts that have existed for decades.

The founders of early greenbelts are now recognized for their foresight concerning the importance of setting aside valuable lands. In addition to the presently known benefits of preserving Ontario's Greenbelt, there are almost certainly as yet unknown benefits. It is likely that future Ontarians will also come to see the creation of the Greenbelt as a visionary act of leadership.

Maureen Carter-Whitney is the Research Director of the Canadian Institute for Environmental Law and Policy. She was the author of a report prepared for the Greenbelt Foundation, which is hosting the International Greenbelts Conference in Toronto, March 22-24, 2011. Visit www.globalgreenbeltsconference.ca for more information.



PHOTO: SARAH DOOP

The success of the Greenbelt is encouraging discussions about expansion



Planning Futures

City Planning in the Big Apple

Paul Bedford

A key difference between the New York model and Ontario is the role played by city council

HAVE YOU EVER WONDERED how city planning works in New York City? What are the planning priorities, how is the city planning department organized and how does the development approval system and governance structure operate? Perhaps most important, what civic engagement mechanisms are used to communicate with 8.4 million people in five Boroughs with 51 city councillors? Ironically, both New York and Toronto are products of an amalgamation approximately 100 years apart. Despite the obvious size differences, are there lessons to be learned for Toronto that can make city planning more effective here?

The recent visit of Amanda Burden, New York's Director of City Planning and Chair of the New York City Planning Commission, and her University of Toronto speech on "A Strategic Blueprint for New York's Future," gave me an opportunity to get her insights into that "New York state of mind." Her visit was co-sponsored by the Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance and the Neptis Foundation. (The webcast is available at <http://www.utoronto.ca/mcis/imfg/events.htm>.) I had the pleasure of taking Amanda on a city planning tour of Toronto's central area. This is what I learned.

Alignment of Political and Bureaucratic Leadership

It is clear that Mayor Bloomberg values city planning and he demonstrates this commitment in a variety of ways. First, he is able to appoint the Director of City Planning and Chair of the City Planning Commission, then delegate them authority to do what they think is right. The Director and City Planning Commission Chair serve at the pleasure of the Mayor. This close working relationship gives the Director the power to take risks and exercise bold leadership in both local and city wide matters. (Amanda holds both posts.)

The city planning department has about 300 staff organized into three functional tiers. An Executive-level administration includes in-house legal counsel and a press secretary. The second tier consists of four major city-wide operational clusters: Land Use and the Environment, Urban Design, Strategic Planning and Information Technology. The areas of Transportation, Housing, Economic & Infrastructure, Demographics, Waterfront & Open Space, Zoning and Studies Implementation are all encompassed within this level. The third tier consists of five separate Borough offices to support local area planning activities.

The department has aggressively protected neighbourhoods and targeted growth in key areas of the city. While New York does not have the equivalent of an official plan, it has embarked upon numerous area studies resulting in the rezoning of 8,400 blocks within the city. Once the lengthy

studies are completed and new planning rules adopted, all development proceeds as of right. New zoning rules and neighbourhood plans are translated into three-dimensional drawings that illustrate exactly how the new zoning would work. This allows communities to understand what new development would actually look like. The idea is to demystify zoning and bring a diverse group of stakeholders together. If a developer wants to exceed the newly established zoning, the entire study process must be repeated. Site specific re-zonings are not tolerated. Many new tools and incentives have been used to secure affordable housing and bonus the creation of non-profit artists' space by transferring density. Current initiatives include the promotion and securing of neighbourhood grocery stores.

Community Boards

To foster civic engagement, the city is divided into 59 districts, breaking a huge city into manageable, bite-sized pieces to which people can relate. Each district is represented by a community board of up to 50 members from all sectors of society who live and work in the district. They are selected by the Borough President and the local city councillor and serve without pay. Local ward councillors have a very close relationship to the community boards within their ward. The boards meet in public, supported by city staff assigned to work with various geographic districts. This ongoing relationship establishes trust and credibility with the community. Community Boards are advisory to city government, and their structure and powers are spelled out in the City Charter. Developers normally take their proposals to the Community Board before the formal review begins. Each Board must hold public hearings within 60 days of receiving a certified complete development application and the Borough President must issue a written recommendation to the City Planning Commission. If the Borough President fails to act within this time limit, the application proceeds to the City Planning Commission.

City Planning Commission

New York has a single city-wide Planning Commission comprising of 13 citizens appointed for staggered terms of five years. Established in 1936, the Chair and six other members are appointed by the Mayor. Each Borough President appoints one member and the Public Advocate appoints one member. The Commission meets every two weeks in public session and considers planning studies and development applications. It has 60 days to approve, approve with modifications or refuse a development application. It is clearly a powerful body that exercises much authority and influence with City Council. If a

development application is refused by the City Planning Commission that generally ends the matter. City Council only considers refused applications under special circumstances.

Role of City Council

New York city council has 51 members elected on a ward basis every four years. Each ward has about 165,000 people. It also consists of a Borough President for Manhattan, Brooklyn, Queens, The Bronx and Staten Island plus the Mayor, who is the only person elected at large. Political parties and term limits are key features. Mayor Bloomberg recently persuaded the State to amend the City Charter to enable him to run for a unprecedented third term of office.

Council does not automatically review all actions of the City Planning Commission such as development applications. Mandatory and optional categories exist but zoning, housing, urban renewal and development applications that have been refused by both the Community Board, Borough President and City Planning Commission are considered by Council. This is known as the "Triple No."

City Council has 50 days to consider such applications and if it wishes to change or modify the recommendation of the City Planning Commission, it must first refer the matter back to the City Planning

Commission which must determine if the proposed modification requires additional review. If no further review is required, the City Planning Commission has 15 days to make a determination. If Council fails to act, the decision of the City Planning Commission stands. The Mayor can veto any council action, but Council

Considerations for Toronto: What Stands Out?

The New York system of governance, city planning and civic engagement all offer Toronto much to consider. First, it is noteworthy that a city of 8.4 million people is capable of seriously engaging citizens on a local level through the Community Board

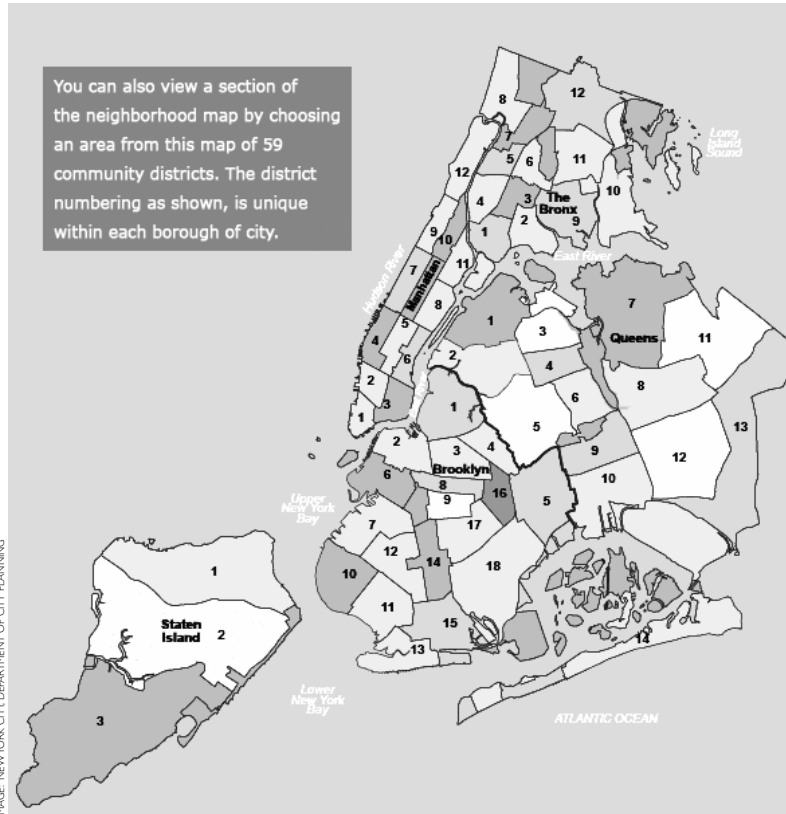
model. People feel that their voice matters and that they are real partners in governing the city. City Planning staff have a close working relationship to their communities and spend a lot of time listening, walking and understanding the challenges and needs of neighbourhoods. Second, it is clear that a lot of weight is placed on the recommendations of the City Planning Commission.

Development applications are largely determined by the recommendations of the Community Boards and the City Planning Commission, not City Council. A city-wide Planning Commission of well-respected citizens ensures that a consistent lens is applied to planning matters across the entire city.

This is also one layer removed from the politics of City Council. The primary role of the City Council is to govern, not manage. It sets the policy framework for large area studies then

entrusts the development process largely to the City Planning Commission.

I can't help but reflect on the comparisons with Toronto's system of governance, city planning and civic engagement.



The districts of New York

can override the veto by a 2/3 vote. There is no body equivalent to the Ontario Municipal Board unless a matter of law is at stake which can be appealed to the courts.

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Toronto's City Planning department has a total strength of about 300 which is the same as New York! However, at present there are over 65 vacant positions in the Toronto department. I think there are many opportunities for a total re-think of how city planning is done here. To me, it would make sense to integrate the numerous free standing secretariats of the Waterfront, Public Realm and Tower Renewal among others under the City Planning department umbrella. These functions are a key part of city planning and city building. Second, while Toronto's citizens are consulted, they do not seem to be engaged in the governance of the city. The Community Board model offers much potential for Toronto to help make amalgamation really work. The existence of a city-wide Planning Board in Toronto should also receive consideration. Ironically, we had a City of Toronto Planning Board primarily comprising citizens during the 1970s. It was abolished in the 1980s in the interest of streamlining the development approval process.

New York's planning system is a finely tuned machine that seems to work well at both the big picture and local level. Toronto is not New York and has its own unique history and value system that needs to be reflected in any changes made to the way city planning is organized and delivered. Changing the prevailing structures alone will not produce more effective city planning and governance. This will only happen through local citizen-driven actions that collectively make collaborative change possible on a city-wide basis similar to the situation in the 1970s. People came together and voiced their frustrations in a creative and positive way because they wanted a new direction. I sense a desire across the amalgamated city to repeat this.

I believe that a much stronger commitment must be made to City Planning for Toronto to reach its true potential. The fall election of a new mayor, city council and the retirement of the current Chief Planner next January all offer a unique opportunity to harness the political, bureaucratic, community and development interests of our city into a powerful alliance to move the city forward. Let's hope Toronto's next mayor rises to the occasion.

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

Ontario Municipal Board

Meet the OMB's Executive Chair—New Position—New Direction



Eric K. Gillespie

The times they are a changing. As of late 2009, the Ontario Municipal Board has a new Executive Chair, Mr. Michael Gottheil. The position comes as a result of the *Adjudicative Tribunals Accountability, Governance and Appointments Act, 2009*, and related authority which sees the Executive Chair having overall responsibility for the OMB, Environmental Review Tribunal, Assessment Review Board, Conservation Review Board and Board of Negotiation.

Called to the bar in 1987, Executive Chair Gottheil practiced law in Ottawa primarily in the labour, employment and human rights areas before taking over as head of the Human Rights Tribunal of Ontario in 2005. There he faced tasks not dissimilar to his latest assignment. New legislation was coming into force that required changes to both the human rights system and Tribunal. Amongst other priorities, the system had to cope with a significant influx of self-represented parties while dealing with a backlog of cases. Access to justice as well as efficiency needed to be addressed. The results seem to speak for themselves, as then-Chair Gottheil was the successful applicant for the newly created Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario Executive Chair position.

At the heart of the system he now oversees lies the concept of "clustering." Each of the five tribunals that have been brought together appear to face many similar systemic issues. Some of the overall goals of the new Executive Chair are to enhance the quality of expertise, service delivery and adjudication while ensuring that the needs of the "community of users" of each tribunal, a phrase that comes up often when speaking, are being met. These are goals that over time it is believed can be achieved more efficiently and effectively by drawing on common strengths, resources and techniques.

At the same time, the Executive Chair is prompt to emphasize an essential feature of clustering, that each entity remains distinct. When asked if there are plans to amalgamate tribunals, the answer is a clear "no." Instead, he speaks of the "long and distinguished

history" of the OMB and other bodies and "their important role in Ontario society." The Executive Chair's approach follows the new legislation, which continues to recognize each tribunal as a separate entity and permits the appointment of individual Associate Chairs. At present, Mr. Wilson Lee (the longest serving member of the OMB) acts under the title of Executive Vice-Chair until further sections are proclaimed, which the Executive Chair says may take place within the next few months.

In the interim, Executive Chair Gottheil is already well into the process of consultation with various communities that make up each tribunal's user groups. In the case of the OMB, to date he has met formally with OPPI Directors, the Ontario Bar Association's Municipal as well as Environmental Law sections and informally with numerous other stakeholders. From these discussions and drawing on his previous experience and knowledge some key issues appear to be emerging.

First, there is a recognition that the OMB regularly adjudicates on complex matters requiring extensive expert evidence that often results in lengthy and costly hearings. The Board is not the only tribunal facing such challenges. The Executive Chair points to recent amendments to the Rules of Civil Procedure governing experts in courts as an example of the opportunities that may be available to begin to achieve some of the overall goals of improving not only quality, but efficiency and access to justice before all of the tribunals he administers. As well, he notes that ideas from other jurisdictions within Canada and from elsewhere may suggest new options.

Conversely, it is recognized that many hearings that take place before the OMB are not lengthy and involve self-represented parties and/or non-lawyers, such as planners, who may both act as expert witnesses and make submissions. The same procedures and rules that may be appropriate for one type of hearing may not be suitable for all. In addition, matters related to consistency in case management and pre-hearing practices have

been raised. However, given the range of procedures and hearings that occur before most tribunals, it may well be possible to develop transferable processes to simplify or expedite many types of events in more cost-effective ways.

Changes in these areas could clearly be implemented through revisions to the OMB's Rules and Practice Directions and those of other tribunals. The Executive Chair, though, emphasizes that such changes will not occur immediately and will be the subject of extensive consultation, including focus groups with a wide variety of users, followed by further discussions once draft revisions have been prepared. As well, standing stakeholder committees may be formed.

He also emphasizes the use of mediation and other alternative dispute resolution mechanisms to seek to potentially avoid hearings altogether.

Many of these initiatives, while far-reaching, may not prove to be overly controversial. On the other hand, possible revisions to the process of appointments and training of Board members could potentially engender debate. The principle of open, competitive, merit based appointments and re-appointments is in the new legislation and this may lead to the development of adjudicative competency (i.e., job) descriptions and member review criteria coupled with ongoing training

opportunities. Many of these approaches are either currently being implemented or actively reviewed by various adjudicative bodies elsewhere. Whether here in Ontario they are viewed as evolutionary, or somewhat revolutionary, remains a more open question.

The last word goes to the Executive Chair, who closed our discussion by observing that "the engagement of OPPI and its members is extremely useful. Their interest, ideas and full participation as we move ahead are most welcome." Please join us in wishing the OMB's Executive Chair success in his new role.

Eric Gillespie is a lawyer practising primarily in the environmental and land use planning area. He is the contributing editor for the OMB column. Readers with suggestions for future articles or who wish to contribute their own comments are encouraged to contact him at any time at egillespie@gillespielaw.ca

For further information on OPPI's policy development activities, please contact Loretta Ryan, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Policy & Communications at policy@ontarioplanners.on.ca

For further information on OPPI's professional practice issues, please contact Brian Brophay, Manager, Professional Standards at standards@ontarioplanners.on.ca

transit investments and priority neighbourhood revitalization.

- **Transforming Infrastructure:** The Gardiner Expressway initiatives (burying, retaining and building over and around it); an example of a promising new direction is that major City projects including Queen's Quay, Jarvis Street and University Avenue have been redesigned as tree-lined boulevards for pedestrians and cyclists provide a cleaner, greener idea of how major city arteries can work.

Dean Sommer spoke about the democratic planning process of city building illustrated through his work on the Boston "Big Dig," a massive, \$14.6-billion urban infrastructure project that rerouted the city's central highway into a 5.6-km tunnel. The remaking of the city's surface required a three-dimensional model to understand the urban design implications of built form and the allowable building envelopes.

Responding to the panel question, Dean Sommer writes: "A consciousness about the physical extent of the city following amalgamation, and the intense diversification the city's population in recent generations does not seem to have effected nearly enough reform in the way the City of Toronto goes about planning for today and its future. A misinterpretation of Jane Jacobs ideas about the importance of acting locally on small-scale elements and building textures in the city seems to have provided an alibi for a system of council rule where the interests of a local, and vocal few, overrule even a discussion about what broad, new physical reforms to the city might serve shared, city-wide interests."

A large, economically diverse and multi-cultural city like Toronto is not well served by a medieval and disaggregated system of planning, and designing the city. So, no: at a time when we are all being asked to think about what form a more socially and ecologically sustainable city might take, the City of Toronto is not able to think in either a bold enough or systemic enough way. To start, we need a better account of and make equations between the schemes being pursued by various public and private forces in the city. This would include the work of bureaucracies associated with planning and regulating transportation, housing, parks and land conservation, as well as use, density and zoning—to name just some. But taking account and making equations between existing schemes will not be enough: there needs to be a bigger design picture, or set of pictures to which the piecemeal and incremental projects that build the city over time can aspire, and ultimately be measured.

Urban Design

Designing the City of Tomorrow—Are we Thinking Boldly Enough?



Anne McLroy

In mid April, Dean Richard M. Sommer, Professor of Architecture and Urbanism at the Daniels School of Architecture, Mark Sterling with Sweeny Sterling Finlayson & Company and Anne McLroy, Brook McLroy, presented new directions influencing big-picture planning in the City of Toronto. The panellists had mixed views on the relative success of Toronto's bold city initiatives. This led to a challenging discussion fuelled by compelling questions from the audience. The panel emphasized these key points:

- **Toronto Needs a Bigger Picture:** Toronto is a cosmopolitan city that deserves a planning and design culture worthy of its international stature.

- **Planning in-the-round:** We must develop a stronger culture of communicating large-scale projects and community designs in three dimensions to achieve understanding of what it will look like and consensus from all stakeholders.
- **Mid-Rise Urbanism:** Mid-rise buildings on Toronto's Avenues will revitalize and strengthen the city's stable neighbourhoods and transit system while achieving greater density in a form that relates to its surrounding built fabric.
- **City governance must champion bold visions to tie the City and Suburb together across the GTA.** Toronto's Official Plan needs to more accurately reflect and actively support new legislation, policy,

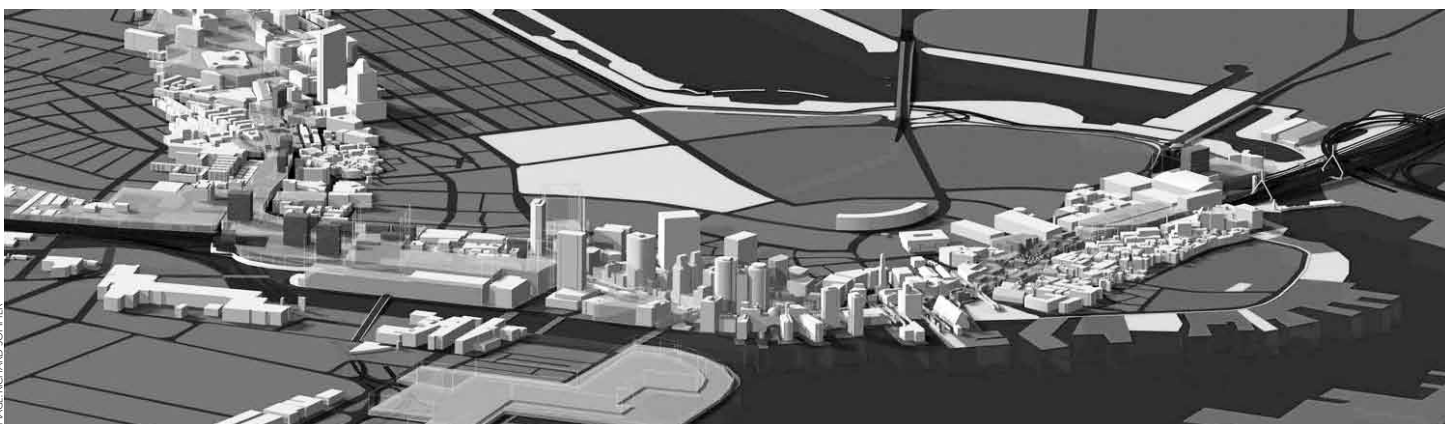
Mark Sterling argued that our thinking for designing the City of Toronto is both “bold” and “not bold” and that we need a new way of doing things. Mark states that “there are examples of bold visions for the future of Toronto that are in progress and beginning to appear right now. Many of these, such as the urban design and public realm-driven plans for Regent Park and the numerous Waterfront Toronto Precinct Plans employed a type of “integrated design process,” and did so essentially outside the conventional development and design processes anticipated by our new Official

Plan—which is focused mainly on incremental development over long periods of time—and, did so relatively quickly. We have to imagine a new kind of Official Plan that focuses on “places we must CREATE”—one that:

- Is focused on specific future plans for real places;
- Recognizes the need for new approaches to the design and planning and the economic realities of revitalization projects in priority neighbourhoods, tower renewal areas and along the Transit City lines;

- Outlines an integrated design approach and applies it to this broader description of the “places we must CREATE”—one that sets in motion the many small plans in a larger scale urban context that will enable us to more efficiently leverage public assets and infrastructure investments and at the same time attract private capital.

Anne McLroy added that in early April Amanda Burden, Director of the New York City Planning, spoke to a full audience at the University of Toronto. In the last eight years



Visualization of the Big Dig in Boston helped nurture debate about big picture issue

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Ms. Burden has overseen the transformation of five Boroughs, 8,400 City Blocks and approximately one-fifth of the City. She would have challenged the panel members and recommended that the way to achieve great cities is through walking our streets and neighbourhoods, at least 12 times before we have the right to be involved in their design. Ms. Burden believes in the importance of fostering distinct neighbourhoods and legislating requirements to plant street trees in every new development. Her current favourite project is the High Line, the abandoned rail corridor now transformed into an elevated park stretching 2.5 km through the Chelsea district of New York. This project alone, she explained, is the defining element for a new neighbourhood and a catalyst for great architects building around it from around the world. A park on an abandoned rail line transforming a city? That is a bold idea.

Anne McIlroy, MCIP, RPP, is a principal of Brook McIlroy Planning + Urban Design (amcilroy@brookmcilroy.com). Anne was the founding chair of the Urban Design Working Group. A podcast of the session is available at www.canurb.org

Professional Practice

Weasel Practice: The Off-Colour Joke that is Undermining Planning Practice

Robert Shipley

Canadians generally don't like to be confrontational or even contrary. We are, after all, a people known in the world to hold politeness next to godliness. But after many years of practicing and teaching planning, there is a trend that is too troubling for me to remain politely quiet.

I'm talking about what I call "weasel practice." I teach students that good planning practice is providing advice that a) looks at the merits of a planning proposal; b) assesses the proposal and its impacts against recognized



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planning standards; and c) considers the broader public good. That means that sometimes the client or employer is advised that the plan is good and is provided with the best means of accomplishing the objective. It also means that sometimes the planner is obliged to say the plan is not a good idea. I'm not suggesting this is simple or that everyone always agrees, but the elements I outlined ought to be there. Weasel practice, on the other hand, ignores recognized standards, impacts and the public good, concentrating instead on finding technical

loopholes in regulations, in obfuscating facts, and in some cases in tampering with data in order to give a client what they want or more accurately what they've paid for.

A recent example in a rural area of Ontario concerning protection of important views with which I was involved illustrates my point. The 2005 Provincial Policy Statement states that Cultural Heritage Landscapes are to be conserved. My team at University of Waterloo had documented the view-shed on a website as part of a public consultation process and determined that the

area "was valued by the community." Planning consultants retained by a proponent who sought to erect a structure that it was felt could potentially compromise views of this particular landscape, submitted a report in support of the client's project. Although the criteria and arguments set forth were sound, the planner chose to avoid presenting the view-shed that would have been problematic, electing instead to present a view from a different angle that showed no impact. This unfortunately pre-empted an objective analysis.

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In some ways this is a small and insignificant case. In other important ways it is troublingly symptomatic of a malaise in the professional practice of planning in Ontario. I might not have taken such offence at this particular incident except that I was later informed that the planning consultant involved had bragged about how he had “gotten around” an obstacle and “out smarted” an opponent. I have heard this sort of braggadocio all too often. Because my main interests concern heritage issues, I hear it most often in relation to those matters but it occurs also with regard to environmental regulations, affordable housing and so on.

Apparently, getting around obstacles, which some planners seem to forget are specified in law and intended to enhance the common good, is considered a clever, even admirable practice. We are not talking here about taking bribes or vacationing on money from the client trust fund. These are not indictable ethical transgressions that get reported to the OPPI Ethics Panel. Yet, cumulatively, weasel practice undermines the standing of the profession almost as much a blatant transgression. This is of particular concern as OPPI circulates a questionnaire and contemplates moving to the next step of becoming a self-regulating profession.

I am not alone in this concern. *Municipal World* magazine has recently published a book entitled *Municipal Ethics Regimes*.¹ They say that, “Canadian municipalities faced with ethical challenges, as well as the ethically challenged, are at an important juncture,” and that there is, “increased public concern with the conduct of municipal government and administration.” This extends very much to the areas of municipal and private-sector planning. Another recent book, *The Dark Side: Critical Cases on the Downside of Business*,² explores the same issues and particularly the “grey” zone of ethics where weasel practice lurks. The authors say that, “the discredit of a certain brand of capitalism—and the managers that practice it—continues apace,” and that, “there is also a need to foster a climate for future and current business managers to reflect, feel, and think differently both ethically and cognitively.” In the end, however, it is not books or ethical complaints that are needed to deal with weasel practice. What is required is for the majority of responsible planning practitioners, who respect the CIP/OPPI Code of Practice, to reject the notion that weasel practice is clever or even tolerable. It is no accident that “Responsibility to the Public Interest” comes before “Responsibility of Clients.” Bragging about beating the system should be met with the frosty silence it deserves.

Not wanting to end negatively, let me share the brighter note. In *The Dark Side* book mentioned above, the authors urge the teaching of better practices. “But,” they say, “when educators look for resources to illustrate to students the more typical cases, let alone the really scandalous practices of the worst firms, the cupboard is almost entirely bare.” Thanks to examples such as the one outlined above, my teaching cupboard is not bare. I am quite happy to cite such cases and ask students what they think. Fortunately for the future of planning in Ontario, they are not impressed with weasel practice, see it immediately for what it is and are not interested in emulating it.

Footnotes

¹ Gregory J. Levine, 2009.

² Emmanuel Raufflet and Albert J. Mills, Greenleaf, 2009.

Dr Robert Shipley, MCIP, RPP, is an assistant professor at the University of Waterloo School of Planning, and Chair of the Heritages Resources Centre. He is a former contributing editor to the Ontario Planning Journal and was a member of the Editorial Board of Plan Canada from 1999 to 2004. He is also the North American editor for the journal, Planning and Research.

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