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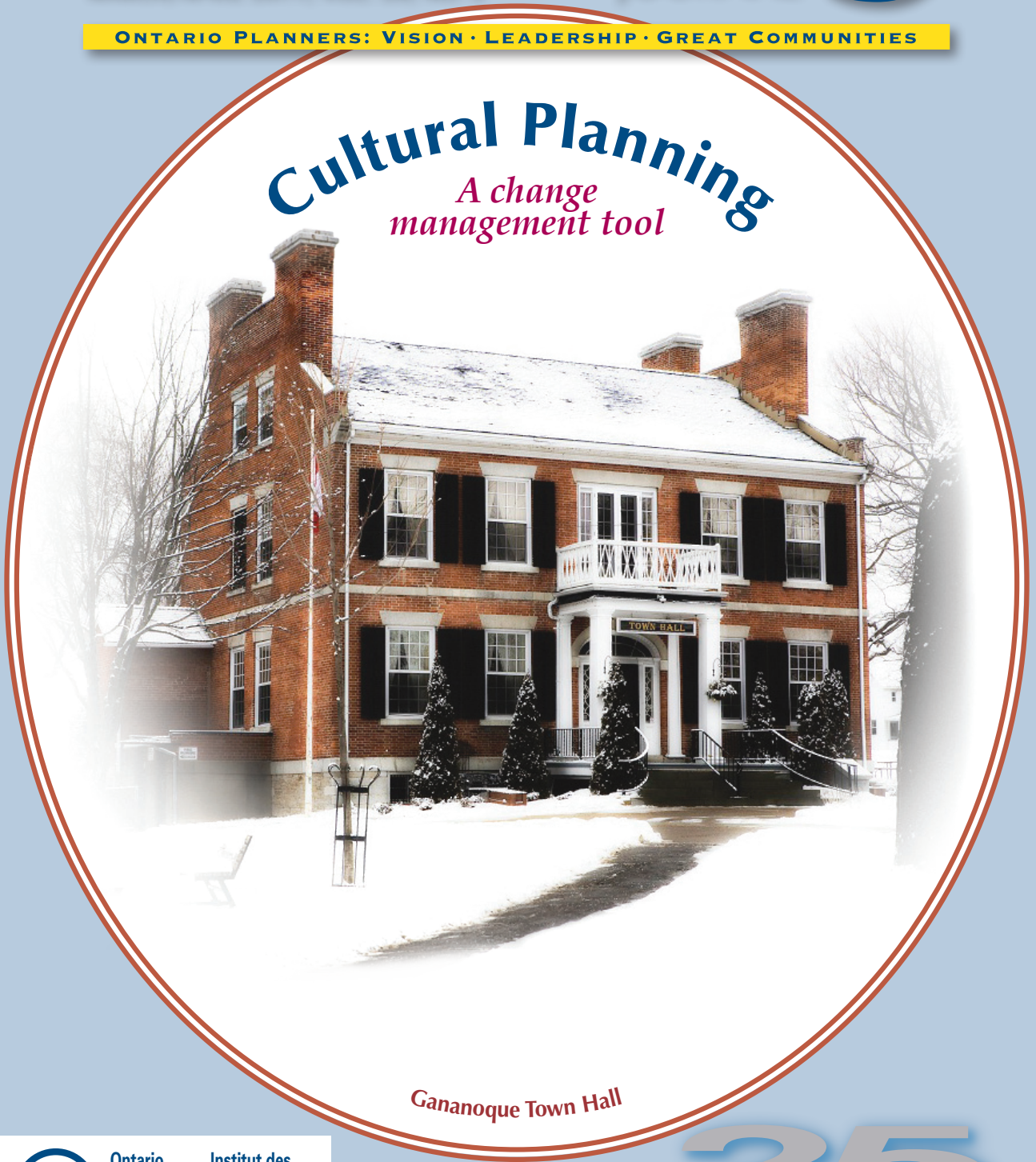
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JOURNAL

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## Cultural Planning

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 Fax: (416) 483-7830  
 E-mail: [info@ontarioplanners.on.ca](mailto:info@ontarioplanners.on.ca)  
 Web: [www.ontarioplanners.on.ca](http://www.ontarioplanners.on.ca)

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[charles.lanktree@ottawa.ca](mailto:charles.lanktree@ottawa.ca), 613-580-2424 x13859

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 905-685-4225 x3485

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Toronto, David Oikawa, MCIP, RPP  
[doikawa@toronto.ca](mailto:doikawa@toronto.ca), 416-392-7188

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Western Lake Ontario, Rosalind Minaji, MCIP, RPP  
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**Ontario Planning Journal**

Editor, Lynn Morrow, MCIP, RPP  
[editor@ontarioplanners.on.ca](mailto:editor@ontarioplanners.on.ca)

Photographic editor, Michael Manett, MCIP, RPP  
 Art Director, Brian Smith

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# Gananoque Cultural Plan

By Carl Bray



PHOTO: STEVEN WILD

Like many other small towns grappling with economic and social change, Gananoque is facing an uncertain future. Its formerly strong industrial base is gone, thanks to restructuring of global finance and manufacturing, and is unlikely to be revived in any substantial way. Long-established patterns of tourism in the region are in decline, thanks to the twin effects of a drop in traditional high volume, low yield tourism and a weakening global economy. At the same time, the region within which the town functions is experiencing pressures for growth from new residents and new businesses coming to Eastern Ontario. In the face of these pressures, Gananoque must adapt.

Economic development studies prepared over the last decade have all concluded the only future for the town is to face these changing conditions by embracing new economic development opportunities instead of trying to revive its former industrial base. The challenge is how to do this without losing the very qualities that make Gananoque a special place.

A cultural plan is an excellent vehicle for easing the transition from the past to the future because it is, in essence, a change management tool. It functions this way because it defines local character and provides ways of conserving and enhancing what is unique, before suggesting ways of deriving economic benefit from exploiting Gananoque's culture and place. Communities with a strong sense of their unique qualities before they begin marketing themselves to the outside world are much less likely to lose what is special in the push for economic revival.

The intent of culture plan for Gananoque was to position the town to benefit from its local character in a period of economic and social transformation. The successful outcome is a cultural plan that will:

- Identify community cultural resources of all kinds;
- Evaluate the potential of resources for tourism and economic development;
- Provide strategies for realizing economic benefit from cultural tourism via community engagement, institutional strengthening and partnerships;
- Strengthen the creative cultural sector.

Neighbouring municipality—Perth, Ontario—provided some insights having gone through much the same process over 30 years ago. It was at a crossroads, on the one hand trying to revive a dying industrial economy, on the other hand aware of its substantial physical and cultural assets but uncertain of their economic potential.

The catalyst for change was a commitment by local residents, with the help of outside experts, to emphasize the town's special culture and urban settings. Their process reached a consensus among the various constituencies in town as to what Perth was to become, as well as what was best about the past and the present. "Heritage Perth" became the brand and the marketing campaign that promoted local cultural activities as well as on the beauty of the town's buildings and natural setting.

Increased tourism activity was the initial benefit, but the town's intent was always to view tourism as an interim strategy to attract residents and investment in new businesses. In this, it was successful, Perth now enjoys an excellent quality of life based on an enhanced physical setting that attracts new residents as well as visitors, and complements a rapidly diversifying local and regional economy and an expanding cultural scene.

Perth was able to use a cultural lens to identify and sustain what local people valued and, as a result, find specific ways by which to enhance the local economy that built upon these values. Most important, the broad consensus that underlay this approach ensured that no single catalyst was required to achieve results; instead, modest, everyday actions cumulatively made the difference.

The creation of the Gananoque Cultural Plan followed a similar approach within a shortened time frame. While prepared by a team of outside experts, the plan is based on a thorough understanding of Gananoque's character. A thematic history identified those aspects of town life that had defined the community in the past. Those characteristics that were still relevant today and could be the basis for new enterprises that were rooted in traditional local activities were then identified. For example, the substantial number of new health care and



wellness businesses in town reflects traditional uses of the 1000 Islands region as a place of recreation and renewal; similarly, the increase in local food service and outdoor tourism businesses shows the continuing strength of connections to local farms and natural features.

Links to the past were also important in establishing a common vision for Gananoque's future. Local cultural values were established and recommendations for future actions based on those values were delineated. The consultants canvassed local opinion through discussions with the study steering committee, interviews with selected local residents, and workshops held with high school students and the public-at-large. In this way, the process was able to distil the elements of an action plan, including priorities, potential partnerships and sources of funding. The result is a plan that can move quickly from recommendations to real projects, buoyed by wide public support.

In conclusion, Gananoque can learn from places such as Perth and thus achieve much the same result in a shorter period of time. But the town cannot do so if it mimics the cultural planning now popular in major cities. Proponents of the so-called "creative economy" tend to see the greatest potential in large urban areas where synergies between enterprises are most likely to be successful. Applying that model to rural areas and small towns is less successful because of the dispersed and smaller population but also because of the lack of institutional and economic capacity. Rural and small town life is also different from urban life in many significant ways. As a result, tying one's future to a model intended for cities can be a recipe for failure.

Done well, however, cultural planning can be a

crucial means of moving small towns into the post-industrial age while celebrating key aspects of their past and present. A cultural plan will focus on under-developed resources, especially cultural ones. This approach addresses emerging markets and builds on current successes in local development.

Highlighting key aspects of local culture helps tourism broaden the local economic base and build community pride. So, while Gananoque may never again be an industrial powerhouse, and the boat lines providing tours of the 1000 Islands may never again see visitation numbers comparable to the peak years, the town can find new ways of sustaining itself by recognizing and celebrating its cultural assets. In the same fashion, so too can other small towns.

A focus on creativity and the importance therefore of cultural planning, is linked to the concept of sustainable development, with culture one of the four "pillars" of a sustainable society, integral to a community's future along with economic health, environmental responsibility and social equity.

In the shift from an economy based on resource extraction and manufacturing to one that relies on adding value through knowledge-based activities, Canada is investing in the creative economy at all levels of government. Funding for the Gananoque Cultural Plan is one element of this initiative, intended to take what has been a city-oriented approach and apply it to smaller communities in rural areas. Cultural planning is seen by the province as one means of achieving rural community revitalization.

*Carl Bray, PhD, CSLA, CAHP, MCIP, RPP, is principal of Bray Heritage, a heritage planning firm based in Kingston and lead consultant for the Gananoque Cultural Plan.*

The "creative economy" concept derives from the work of Richard Florida, an American academic now based in Toronto whose work centres on understanding the ways in which knowledge-based enterprises can revitalize urban economies. In essence, his conclusions are that economic success in future will be driven by two main groups within what he terms the "Creative Class." These groups are knowledge-based workers, some who work in health care, business, finance and law, and some whose focus is on innovation, such as scientists, researchers, technologists, as well as artists, designers and writers. Such people normally congregate in cities but are by nature highly mobile and will relocate to places offering a high quality of life, as long as such places offer the basic infrastructure needed for running a knowledge-based business or agency.

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Founding OPJ Editor: Glenn Miller

# A tribute

By Sue Cumming



Glenn Miller

To pay tribute to Glenn Miller, founding editor of the *Ontario Planning Journal*, I enlisted the help of OPPI past presidents, some of whom were instrumental in launching of *Journal* some 25 years ago. Their vision and foresight to see the *Journal* as an important tool for creating a profile for the planning profession in Ontario and their trust in Glenn was well placed.

Former president Barb Dembek (1988 – 1990) noted the early days of struggling to figure out how to put out a magazine for members and having Glenn step up to take on the role of editor, which at the time was seen as an interim role. With the publication of the 150<sup>th</sup> issue in January 2011, Glenn hung up his editorial hat. His leadership with the *Journal* over these years has shepherded its transformation into the professional publication we read today.

To see how far we have come, one need only look at the 1<sup>st</sup> issue: “Welcome to the ‘Ontario Planning Journal’, OPPI’s new magazine, incorporating North Country News, The Record and SWOC Talk.” The *Journal* of the day was OPPI’s only means of communicating with its membership—these were the days before fax machines, email and websites.

Over the years the *Journal* has reflected the evolution of the profession and the incredible changes in visual sophistication.

“[The] *Journal* kept pace and in some cases led our evolution in becoming a recognized profession in Ontario. Glenn and Philippa are responsible for the professional level of our ‘flagship’ for which we all are deeply indebted. The *Journal* is both

our internal window to the excellent work we do as well as a window through which the rest of the world can see the best of our professional achievements,” notes former president Don May, (2003-2005).

In each edition, Glenn “day lighted” planning stories about projects and initiatives throughout Ontario and provided a forum for learning about global and national issues affecting planners and planning. His editorials were thought provoking and sometimes hard hitting, demonstrating his view that as a profession we must always critically examine where we are at and where we are going.

Another OPPI former president, Tony Usher (1992-1994) shared with me the following extract from *Journal* Issue #50, May-June 94—milestone that was marked with the 1st colour cover!

“...for many members, the *Journal* is OPPI and OPPI is the *Journal*. A look back at the first *Journal* shows that it, like OPPI, has grown and matured phenomenally in eight short years. OPPI owes a profound debt to Glenn Miller, our one and only editor, and the other *Journal* staff. Just as important, however, is the role our members have played in contributing hundreds of articles and letters and making the *Journal* our marketplace of ideas.”

Former president Phil Wong (1994-1996) said, “My dealings with Glenn have always been professional and courteous. Glenn is so deserving of our recognition and thanks.” He also comments that “Philippa’s work as deputy editor for the *Journal* is equally impressive; her articles on writing/ grammar are always enjoyable to read and learn.”

Commenting about the birth and evolution of OPPI, former president Stephen M. Sajatovic (1986-1988) reflects on the importance of the *Journal* as the face of the organization.

“I have nothing but fond memories and a great sense of accomplishment of my time as the creation of an OPPI was contemplated in the mid 1980s, founded in the late 1980s and then as it grew slowly but surely into the great organization that it has become today. I remember with a special pride the accomplishments that were made on behalf of the organization as a whole as we went through a thorough and sometime very gruelling but very necessary membership review process in the early 1990s.

“Throughout this whole time, The *Ontario Planning Journal* was the glue and polish that always bound the group



In March, OPPI council together with the past presidents honoured Glenn and Philippa at a celebratory luncheon

PHOTOS PAGES 3-4, OPPI PHOTOGRAPHY: WWW.MARVALL.COM

together and put a very professional and unified face on the organization. I want to congratulate both Glenn and Philippa for their perseverance, vision, journalistic excellence and professionalism in seeing that edition after edition has been produced and distributed for the betterment of the OPPI. It was not only our voice to our membership, but it was our voice to the public, business, industry and government as well."

As the current OPPI president (2009 – 2011), I would like to congratulate Glenn on a remarkable achievement over the past 25

years and to thank him for his extraordinary dedication, which is reflected in the high quality and appeal of today's *Ontario Planning Journal*. We look forward to reading articles with Glenn's by-line in future editions of the *Journal*.

*Sue Cumming, MCIP, RPP, is president of OPPI. She is also the principal facilitator at Cumming+Company and adjunct lecturer in the School of Urban and Regional Planning at Queens' University. Sue can be reached at cumming1@total.net.*

## Plain Language Expert

# So much more

By Glenn Miller

One of the first things that Philippa Campsie tackled after taking up her role as deputy editor of the *Ontario Planning Journal* was to write an account of the day Jane Jacobs suggested that planners were "brain dead."

This phrase of course was designed by Ms Jacobs to make a point, but Philippa managed to provide both context and content to round out Jacobs' remarks in a way that allowed the profession a useful period of introspection. The ensuing furor carried over from the *Journal* to Plan Canada and still shows up in Google searches.

Fresh from completing her MSc. in planning at the University of Toronto, Philippa soon showed why she had risen to the position of editor-in-chief at one of Canada's premier publishing houses. Having given this position up to study urban planning, she chose to work with the profession rather than within it by utilizing her analytical and writing skills on projects like the *Ontario Planning Journal*.

During an excellent editorial collaboration lasting 17 years, I came to know Philippa as someone willing to challenge the status quo—she once dared to question the rationale for intensification—who was compassionate—"I took some extra time with this piece because I thought she deserved to have her views aired"—and cryptic. Just read one of her communications contributions and

you will not find a redundant sentence or an incomplete thought.

Starting with a popular series in this magazine on "planner-ese," Philippa developed one of OPPI's earliest sustaining successes in professional development—her course on plain language, which has been delivered to diverse audiences throughout Ontario. Only someone who has sat with her during the pre-course preparation can appreciate the extent of the work required for the participants to succeed—and enjoy the experience. As well, Philippa teaches in the planning program at the University of Toronto—a role that allows her to influence the way would-be planners organize their thoughts and sharpen their communications skills.

Within the circle of people engaged in the production of the *Ontario Planning Journal*, Philippa's eye for detail is legendary. To the hundreds of authors who have benefited from her editorial pen, you may not realize it—that is the skill of a true professional at work—but if you have been published in the *Ontario Planning Journal*, you've been 'philippa-rized'!

*Glenn Miller, FCIP, RPP and Philippa Campsie worked on the Ontario Planning Journal together for 17 years. They continue to collaborate on applied research projects at the Canadian Urban Institute.*



Philippa Campsie

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# A better way to streamline?

By Janet E. Amos

**A**ccording to the recently proposed Ministry of the Environment amendments to the Municipal Class EA, “by combining environmental assessment and land use planning processes into a single approach, proponents can streamline their efforts and more effectively meet the requirements of both the *Planning Act* and *Environmental Assessment Act*.”

## Limited experience with integrated approach...

The integrated approach, set out in Section A.2.9 of the existing Class EA, permits developers or municipalities to combine the *Planning Act* and Class EA processes into one unified process resulting in one appeal to the OMB. The goal was to increase “recognition” for studies under the *Planning Act* where certain requirements of the Class EA are met.

The result was a little used experiment in streamlining Class EA. Since then, the integrated planning process has been very slow to find users. I would estimate that there may only be a handful of cases where the integrated approach has been implemented. In my view this was due to the separation of planners and engineers into separate departments, managing separate planning processes under differing timelines. The existing integrated approach did not provide much, if any, incentive or guidance for users. In turn, this lack of guidance led to uncertainty and opened up proponents to appeals by public and agencies.

Ironically, during the last ten years, planners and engineers have been criticized more often by members of the public wanting to see a higher level of coordination in planning and servicing. An example of this trend is found in the Lake Simcoe Protection Plan which calls for Class EA studies for new sewage plants to be approved prior to *Planning Act* approvals.

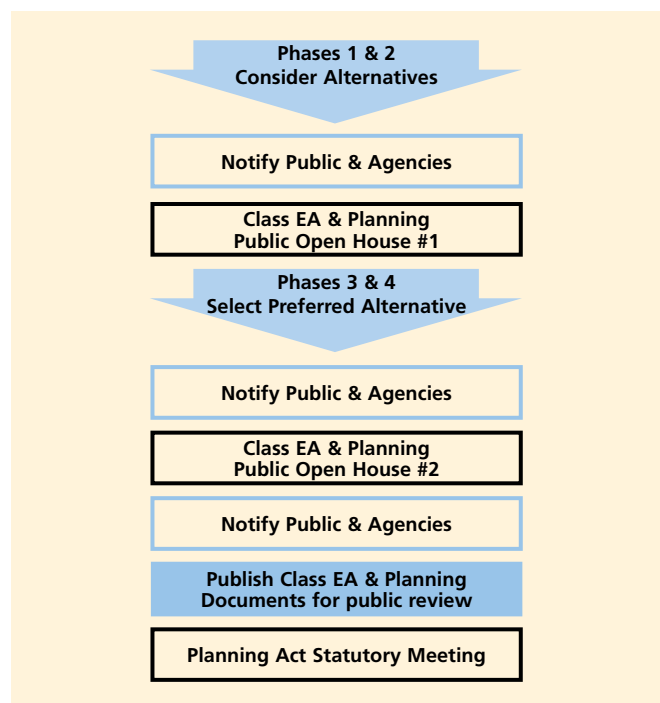
## OMB decision on integrated approach remains outstanding...

The jury is still out on one of the ongoing Ontario Municipal Board cases concerning the use of an integrated approach is a development file in Aurora (OMB #PL030997). The Aurora project used the integrated approach to plan for a 75-home development and golf course with a new well water system, new wastewater treatment plant, stormwater management pond, road improvements and a golf cart underpass. In a September 16, 2009 pre-hearing decision in response to a challenge to the board on its statutory jurisdiction, the board confirmed that it “has a positive obligation to consider the environmental, ecological, public health and safety impacts as well as natural resources conservation and improvement implications”. In other words, the board had no concerns with its ability to adjudicate on an integrated approach process where the *Planning Act* application is before the OMB. The board decision on this

file is pending and is likely to be the first major examination of a complete integrated approach.

## Recently proposed amendments...

My review of the proposed changes indicates the overarching purpose of the integrated approach remains unchanged and the process remains substantively the same. It continues to allow studies completed for a *Planning Act* application, which also fulfill the Class EA study requirements, to be coordinated in order to satisfy the Class EA.



Integrated Approach Simplified Steps, based on proposed amendments to Municipal Class EA, 2000 (as amended)

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A handful of new provisions have been proposed which could alter the way Section A.2.9 is used. Here are some changes to watch for:

*Provision:* A successful Class EA study following Section A.2.9 will no longer be designated as a pre-approved (Schedule A) project. Instead the amendment states, “Proponents are encouraged to review Section A.2.9 for opportunities to integrate Class EA projects with the *Planning Act*.”

*Comment:* This change could cause confusion and lead to weakening of Section A.2.9 since infrastructure projects will have no grounding in a formal Schedule in the Class EA.



*Provision:* For the first time Section A.2.9 acknowledges a proponent may change during the planning and implementation of a project. This allows, for example, a municipality to comply with Phases 1 and 2 of the Class EA requirements for a project while completing a secondary plan or official plan amendment. Then a developer could comply with Phases 3 and 4 of the Class EA requirements for the same project while completing a plan of subdivision. Either the standard Class EA process or the integrated approach could be used to satisfy these phases. This change appears to give proponents more freedom to structure the planning and approvals to reflect real life.

This change, however, must be read in conjunction with a new provision that the proponent of a project using the integrated approach must be “the same as the applicant under the *Planning Act*, whether it be a municipality or private sector developer or both.”

*Comment:* This change is likely to create uncertainty about the proponents of projects and will require guidance to clarify who is the applicant and who is the proponent.

*Provision:* The amendment specifies that planning for infrastructure projects located outside of the *Planning Act* application boundaries is permitted. The amendment signals Ministry of the Environment’s acceptance that infrastructure projects may be planned on lands that are not specifically subject to the related *Planning Act* application as long as “the need for the infrastructure is triggered by the [development] project being planned” and the projects are “directly related to and required by the application(s).”

*Comment:* While this is a positive step forward, the ability to use this benefit is significantly reduced by adding, “if infrastructure beyond the boundaries of the *Planning Act* application were required, the off-site infrastructure project must at a minimum involve the municipality as a co-proponent.” Many private sector developers carry out infrastructure projects required for their developments, with the consent of the municipality on land that is near the site subject to a *Planning Act* application. For example, a pumping station, a collector road or a stormwater management pond may be planned and built off-site by the developer. In my view, the municipality does not need to be a co-proponent to satisfactorily complete these works.

*Provision:* Notice changes are proposed. The integrated approach continues to require a proponent meet both the Class EA and *Planning Act* notice requirements. The amendment states that, “when combining notices to meet the requirements under this Class EA and the *Planning Act*, a 30-day period for public viewing of documentation is required.”

Previously the integrated approach provided more leeway for a proponent to provide notice of the availability of the infrastructure documentation in a publically available report in the same format used for the *Planning Act* application (i.e., 20 days for an official plan amendment).

*Comment:* This change removes one of the simpler incentives available to a proponent using the integrated approach. The original version was simpler to follow and deferred to the *Planning Act* timeframes. The original approach continues to be reasonable given the *Planning Act* timeframe for documentation leads to a statutory public meeting; an extra feature not available to the public when a standalone Class EA study approach is being followed.

*Provision:* Public Meetings to be held. The amendments propose that Class EA public meetings (e.g., a minimum of two public

meetings for a Schedule C project) are somehow equated to the statutory public meeting for a *Planning Act* application.

*Comment:* The Class EA public information meetings are equivalent to the information meetings often held under the *Planning Act* prior to the statutory meeting. The schematic flow chart accompanying this article shows how the simplified steps in an integrated approach could work with the statutory meeting being the culmination of all the Class EA and *Planning Act* steps.

*Provision:* Municipal responsibility for infrastructure: Without any apparent provocation, the amendments propose that “municipalities should not avoid *EA Act* requirements through the use of conditions on *Planning Act* approval where the appropriate proponent for the work is the municipality”.

*Comment:* The definition of proponent in the *EA Act* is used by municipal and private sector developer proponents to determine their roles. This type of advice further obscures the intent of the integrated approach section of the Class EA.

### Conclusions...

The introduction of the integrated approach in 2000 by the MEA and MOE was a tentative step towards streamlining land use and infrastructure planning processes. It was hoped that the process could be understood and adopted by planners and engineers and that both professionals could find benefits from planning projects together. Since 2000 the new process was rarely tested. As a result, there has been little experience gained by proponents and some of it negative. With the recently proposed changes, some of the small benefits of streamlining offered in the existing Class EA have been removed. In my view, these revisions will likely further reduce tolerance towards streamlining and introduce more rigidity.

When government requirements are altered there is often a settling in period during which interpretations are tested and processes tried. In the case of the original Section A.2.9, the settling in period took over ten years. Given the uncertainty around many of these new provisions, I believe that incentive to use Section A.2.9 will be reduced further. For example, when contemplating using the integrated approach private sector developers may be discouraged by the loss of the projects’ designation as Schedule A, changes to notice requirements and the new requirement that off-site projects will require the municipality be a co-proponent.

One of the really positive prospects is the upcoming guidance and training materials to be offered by the Municipal Engineers Association and Ministry of the Environment to assist municipalities, consultants and developers in becoming familiar with the Section A.2.9 provisions. Also, ministry staff will be looking for opportunities to engage stakeholders, including the Ontario Professional Planning Institute.

Streamlining is never easy. With two such complex planning processes involved there will likely be a long trial period before participants make significant use of the integrated approach. It could be that planners’ and engineers’ best hope for streamlining will come from public and environmental groups insisting on a more integrated approach to planning and servicing.

*Janet E. Amos, MCIP, RPP, is the principal of Amos Environment + Planning and can be reached at amos@primus.ca. Her practice focuses on the integration of land use planning and Class EA’s for public and private sector municipal projects.*



Janet Amos





## Decision point

By Mary Lou Tanner

**T**he number 25 has special meaning for OPPI and its members this year. Twenty-five years ago on January 7<sup>th</sup> OPPI was born. In the intervening years, the planning profession and our organization, OPPI, have grown in ways that our first leaders may have hoped for, dreamed for, but couldn't really predict. Because of their foresight, members today enjoy the fruits of being a professional planner in Ontario.

The number 25 also represents the last time our professional standards were reviewed. These are the standards we hold ourselves to as professional planners and what we require of colleagues seeking to advance to full professional membership. Can any of us imagine trying to stay with policies and plans that were created twenty-five years ago—do they truly and adequately reflect what we work for in today's Ontario?

Just as OPPI's first leaders envisioned a new future for planning and planners in Ontario, it is again time for our generation of planners to think to the future. To think about our profession today and in the years to come—what it means to be a professional planner, what do planners “need to know” and how we make sure the standards for planners are current, relevant and forward-thinking. Planning for the Future is the platform for this conversation about what it means to be a planner and what future we envision for our profession.

### Planning for the Future is...

Planning for the Future, nicknamed PFF, is a national initiative in partnership with the Canadian Institute of Planners and all seven of its provincial/regional affiliates. Planning for the Future is about a shared vision of national standards for planners, a Canada-wide consistency to the membership process for certification of planners and the accreditation process for university programs, and a commitment to raise the bar on professionalism of planners in Canada. Three key areas have been identified by the PFF Task Forces for updating: competency standards for planners; ethics for planners; and accreditation of university planning programs. These future directions emerged through reports prepared by teams of colleagues from across the country with specific expertise in each of the areas, results of a national survey in which 1,200 members participated and members' comments on various drafts.

What is changing?

### Membership certification process

I heard a well-respected colleague describe our current membership process as 65 routes to becoming a professional planner. That

is not a comment on the work of our predecessors but rather the reality of a 25-year evolution of membership processes.

The new membership procedure reflects best practices from other professional organizations tailored to the planning profession. The requirements are clearer and reflective of what professional planners need to know and demonstrate to become full members of the professional association.

New graduates will have two routes to become full members. Those who have graduated from an accredited planning program will complete the following (in this order):

- Application to become a “Candidate Member” (replacing provisional);
- Two years work experience during which you must:
  - work under the direction of a sponsor to whom you submit your record of planning experience
  - complete a one-year mentorship with a full member
  - complete the mandatory ethics and professionalism course;
- Successfully complete the written examination on professionalism.

Those who have not graduated from an accredited planning program, the route to full membership is called “Prior Learning Assessment Review,” which requires you to complete the following (in this order):

- Five years work experience as a planner;
- Application to become a “Candidate Member” at which time you must submit the assessment of your education and work experience demonstrating how you have achieved the competencies of the membership requirements;
- Once accepted as a Candidate Member you must:
  - complete one additional year of work experience with a sponsor to whom you submit your record of planning experience
  - complete a one-year mentorship with a full member
  - complete the mandatory ethics and professionalism course;
- Successfully complete the written examination on professionalism.

The most significant changes in the membership process are the move to two clearly identified membership routes and the

mandatory mentorship and ethics requirements. The written examination reflects change as well—consistent with best practices for professional organizations, is replicable, transparent and may be appealed based on the written record (the exam and its marking) and not the summary of oral examination. It should be noted that OPPI Council elected to move to a written exam in 2010.

Professional planners work under a Code of Conduct; we all need to be practicing within this framework. The ethics and professionalism course is intended to ensure new colleagues understand their obligations. Similarly, the mentorship requirement takes the current one hour oral examination and turns that into a year-long conversation with a full member about what it means to be a professional planner. Finally, the written examination is necessary to ensure consistency of questions and grading. It is about transparency, consistency and integrity of the process.

### University planning programs accreditation

The Planning for the Future initiative brings recommendations to update the requirements for university planning programs. CIP, its affiliates, and university programs all want the best planning education for graduates. We all support the range of planning specialties offered and want students to have access to programs that suit their specific area of interest and future career path. To achieve these shared objectives a review of university programs is recommended through a partnership between a newly established Accreditation Program Committee and the university planning programs.

Accreditation of university programs helps to ensuring the faculty and program provide students with the knowledge to work as a professional planner while being trained in a program that has close ties to the profession and professional planning practice.

### Professional Standards Board

Administration of both the membership certification and accreditation process will be done by the Professional Standards Board. The new organization will operate as a partnership between CIP and its affiliates and will ensure national standards are applied consistently across Canada. In other words, if you are living in Manitoba, you can expect the same membership process as a resident of Ontario or Prince Edward Island. National consistency is a hallmark of mature professional organizations.

The Professional Standards Board will be self supporting and will operate as efficiently as possible with regular reporting to CIP and its affiliates based on an accountability framework.

### National Membership Standards Committee

Policy on membership matters and accreditation will continue to be the shared responsibility of CIP and its affiliates through the National Membership Standards Committee. It is very important that there are checks and balances to ensure the new process is implemented properly, is providing the service expected and in a manner that is fair, transparent and affordable. Furthermore, a commitment to ongoing continuous improvement of professional standards is imperative—we won't wait another 25 years to review them.

### Decision time

Both CIP and OPPI councils have unanimously endorsed the PFF Task Force reports. The decision as to whether to move forward on the recommendations will be determined by two membership votes. First, CIP will conduct a national ballot on by-law changes to implement PFF starting in April. The by-laws concern the new categories of membership and certain membership requirements. Results will be known at the end of May. Second, if PFF passes nationally, OPPI will similarly conduct a vote on amendments to its bylaws to implement Planning for the Future.

Help to make 1986 and 2011 hallmark years for the planning profession in Ontario. Having matured as a profession, the Planning for the Future recommendations seek to enshrine forward-thinking, updated, relevant standards, transparent processes, checks and balances in our policy making and a commitment to continuous improvement.

The future of our profession is now in your—the membership's—hands. In another 25 years, when we celebrate OPPI @ 50, our decision this year will have set the course and determined our legacy to future generations of planners. Please remember to vote.

*For more information about Planning for the Future visit [www.ontarioplanners.on.ca](http://www.ontarioplanners.on.ca) or [www.planningincanada.ca](http://www.planningincanada.ca) or email [planningforthefuture@ontarioplanners.on.ca](mailto:planningforthefuture@ontarioplanners.on.ca).*

*Mary Lou Tanner MCIP, RPP, is manager of policy development with Niagara Region's Integrated Community Planning Department. She is the president-elect of OPPI and serves as OPPI's representative on CIP Council.*

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# Hypothesizing its absence

By Joe Nethery

Part of the provincial government's ambitious land use planning reforms and heralded by many municipalities and planners as a way to address pressing development issues, in 2007 the Province of Ontario extended the ability to use development permit systems across Ontario from its original five demonstration areas—Hamilton, Oakville, Lake of Bays, Toronto, Waterloo Region. As a trade-off for the additional powers, the province shortened the approvals timeline for small applications under a develop permit regime to a maximum of 45 days in contrast to the 120 days for a zoning by-law amendment, and 30 days for both minor variances and site plan approvals.

On January 1<sup>st</sup>, the development permit system celebrated its fourth birthday and to date only three municipalities have implemented such a system: the infamous Township of Lake of Bays pilot project in 2006, Town of Carleton Place in June 2008, and most recently the Town of Gananoque in October 2010. This lack of uptake has puzzled researchers at the University of Western Ontario and research is underway to determine whether barriers exist within municipalities or the planning profession that are hindering a more widespread implementation of a once much touted regime.

The lack of uptake of development permit system by

municipalities over the past three years certainly is not for lack of opportunity. In a survey of 119 municipalities across 17 counties or regions (single-tier municipalities fitting into their geographic county), 28 new or updated zoning by-laws have been adopted in the past three years. A few municipalities are considering adopting a development permit system, Brampton being one example, while others have considered and rejected development permit system in its current form.

While there is plenty of anecdotal evidence and conversation in the planning world as to why development permit systems seem to be off the municipal radar screen, few, if any, comprehensive evaluations have been undertaken to date. Having spent much of the autumn of 2010 documenting some of these opinions, I uncovered six hypotheses.

First, relevant stakeholders (staff, council, and perhaps the development industry) tend to be relatively conservative and adverse to change and there may be little actual appetite for change with respect to the development approvals process.

Second, councils are reluctant to delegate authority to staff. While the development permit system regulation under the *Planning Act* allows for delegation of authority, councils may be unwilling to release some of their powers to staff for any number of reasons.

*While the findings of this research are not statistically significant and the survey results cannot be generalized to planning across Ontario, the results have provided a framework for further research planned at the University of Western Ontario during spring and summer 2011.*

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[Litavski@planners.to](mailto:Litavski@planners.to) P: (416) 323-1444  
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Third, municipalities may be unwilling to adapt to a new planning framework. If the current system is working effectively and there is no impetus for change, the potential for adopting a fundamentally new planning regime would be significantly reduced.

Fourth, implementing a development permit system may be perceived to be a time consuming and cost-prohibitive undertaking. A municipality may deem it impossible to accommodate implementation of a development permit system outside of its forecasted work program.

Fifth, decreasing public input on certain development applications under a development permit system may be viewed as a deterrent to its adoption. Development permit systems may be structured to limit public input into staff level approvals, with appeals by the public only available when the municipality is adopting the development permit by-law or major applications are considered, such as a redesignation. If municipalities wish to maintain public comment on every planning application and appeal rights to the OMB, a development permit system may not be a desirable tool.

Sixth, planners may not be aware of the option to enact a development permit system or the steps required to implement it.

To test these six hypotheses, a two-question survey was circulated to senior planning administrators in each of 15 municipalities across Ontario. The municipalities were selected based on recent policy approvals of new development lands (residential, employment, or both) or significant redevelopment-supportive land use plans (such as a secondary plan). The survey asked:

1. In discussions on how to implement recent policies, had staff considered using a development permit by-law?
2. Given a list of 64 phrases capturing some first impressions around implementing and administering a development permit by-law, or planning in general, respondents were asked to select as many of the phrases that applied to their municipality.

Over a two-week span, eight responses were received. Of these, five respondents said they had considered using a development permit system to implement their development policies. Albeit a small sample size, some interesting insights emerged from the survey results:

- Municipalities appear to consider development permit systems to be an effective public engagement tool, with the removal of non-applicant appeal rights to the OMB not being a significant concern.
- Administrators appear to be interested in development permit systems and have considered their potential, with at least one respondent having considered the system and choosing otherwise.
- It appears that planners are keeping pace with the culture shift underway in Ontario and the range of issues in development policy this presents. Awareness of the development permit system option was not identified as an issue.
- Administrators appear to be concerned that a move to a development permit system may present challenges to council in voicing its opinion on planning matters.
- There was concern as to the time and cost of enacting a development permit system.
- Municipalities may not be convinced of the benefits of a development permit system, or may be convinced that traditional zoning is a fundamentally better approach than development permit system.

Long sought after by politicians and administrators alike, the slow rate of take up, even when just considering municipalities that have adopted new zoning by-laws in recent years, is an interesting phenomenon, worthy of further investigation. With Growth Plan conformity exercises nearing completion in a number of Greater Toronto Area municipalities, a further raft of zoning approvals is anticipated over the next few years. Planners across Ontario would benefit from statistically significant observations when considering adoption of a development permit system for their development approvals framework.

While the findings of this research are not statistically significant and the survey results cannot be generalized to planning across Ontario, the results have provided a framework for further research planned at the University of Western Ontario during spring and summer 2011.

*Joe Nethery, MCIP, RPP is a Masters candidate in Public Administration at the University of Western Ontario and is a freelance planning consultant. He can be reached by email at [joe@nethery.ca](mailto:joe@nethery.ca). Dr. Martin Horak at the University of Western Ontario provided advice in creating and undertaking this survey.*

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# Proposed amendment 1

By Drew Semple

In October 2010, the Province released for comment Proposed Amendment 1 to the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006*, for the Simcoe Sub-Area. A working committee of the OPPI Policy Development Committee has prepared a submission to the Ministry of Infrastructure in response to the posting of amendment 1 on the Environmental Registry. The following represents a summary of that submission.

## Major components of proposed amendment 1

The proposed amendment focuses on four key areas in the Simcoe sub-area:

First, it identifies urban nodes where growth and intensification can be focused—the six urban nodes identified are the Town of Alliston, City of Barrie, Town of Bradford, Town of Collingwood, City of Orillia, and the combined towns of Midland and Penetanguishene.

Second, the amendment provides population and employment growth forecasts for all communities in the Simcoe sub-area to ensure growth is focused where it can best be accommodated. The 2031 population allocation is 667,000, an increase of 229,900 people over the 2006 census population of 437,100. The allocation of employment to 2031 is 254,000, an increase of 73,300 over the 2006 employment figure of 180,700. Both forecasts reflect the allocations contained in Schedule 3 to the Growth Plan, 2006, which provided total population and employment allocations but did not distribute them to the individual communities.

Third, the amendment requires communities to assess the land needed to meet forecasted growth by 2031, and manage the supply of land available for development.

Fourth, it identifies focused strategic industrial employment areas along Highway 400 to support job creation, manufacturing and industrial activities and economic employment districts to support local employment.

Related servicing and transportation studies are to be completed at a later date through separate exercises and are not part of amendment 1.

Amendment 1 also includes the following new planning policies for managing growth:

Interim Settlement Area Boundaries—to address an identified oversupply of development land within approved development areas, local and county official plans are required to designate interim settlement area boundaries that reflect the lands needed to satisfy the growth requirements to 2031. The designated greenfield area that is not within the interim settlement area boundary is to be excluded from the measurement of the density target for designated greenfield areas.

Development applications will not be approved unless they

are within the interim settlement area boundaries. Municipalities can only expand interim settlement area boundaries through a municipal comprehensive review. Any expansion to interim settlement area boundaries must not extend beyond settlement area boundaries.

Identification of Economic Employment Districts and Strategic Industrial Employment Areas—two economic employment districts are located on Rama Road in Township of Ramara and at the Lake Simcoe Regional Airport near Highway 11. Two strategic industrial employment areas are identified along Highway 400 in Innisfil and Bradford West Gwillimbury. The sites are all designated in municipal official plans and in the case of Bradford West Gwillimbury the designation and land uses were approved by the Ontario Municipal Board. The employment areas are considered to be designated greenfield and not settlement areas.

Permitted Uses for Strategic Industrial Employment Areas and Economic Employment Districts—uses permitted in the strategic industrial employment areas that can benefit from a location adjacent to Highway 400 are identified; major retail and residential uses are not permitted.

Alternative Intensification and Density Targets—consistent with Growth Plan policies that allow outer ring municipalities to seek lower intensification and density targets, alternative intensification and density targets for each municipality are included. The intensification targets range from 40 to 20 per cent, with a county-wide target of 33 per cent. The proposed greenfield density targets range from 32 to 50 people and jobs per hectare.

## Highlights of OPPI submission

The OPPI submission identified a number of important aspects of amendment 1 that can be strongly supported. The designation of the City of Barrie as the major centre for future development in the Simcoe Sub-area is consistent with the principles in the Growth Plan. The identification of six urban nodes for future growth and intensification is also consistent and should provide a good foundation for smart growth. The amendment also attempts to address the issue of the existing oversupply of designated development land in the Simcoe sub-area.

The use of interim settlement area boundaries, however, as the implementation tool raises some concerns. In working with local communities prepare the amendment, the province accepted and supported major previous approvals: the two strategic industrial employment areas identified along Highway 400 and the economic employment districts associated with the Lake Simcoe Regional Airport and Rama Road reflect existing local official plan designations and prior

approvals. Given the approval history, existing growth allocations in the Growth Plan and possible legal implications, the OPPI review committee recognized it would have been difficult for the province to do otherwise. Nevertheless, in accepting previous planning commitments, the province included areas, which, in the view of the policy committee, appear to conflict with the basic principles of the Growth Plan and raise questions with regard to servicing, impact on the *Lake Simcoe Protection Plan* and the use of interim settlement area boundaries to control future expansions.

### Containment of urban sprawl/complete communities

The two strategic employment areas identified in amendment 1 along Highway 400 in Innisfil and in Bradford West Gwillimbury were intended to provide opportunities for large lot industrial employment uses that could not be found in existing settlement areas. These areas, however, are not part of existing settlement areas, do not represent complete communities and will encourage increased private automobile commuting rather than public transit or active transportation systems.

### Servicing and infrastructure

The provision of sewer and water services is the responsibility of lower-tier and single-tier municipalities in the Lake Simcoe sub-area. Infrastructure on the scale required to service the proposed development potentially will require significant inter-municipal servicing agreements between individual lower-tier and single-tier municipalities. Additionally, the potential environmental effects of the proposed development have yet to be addressed through any master planning or environmental assessment process. The amendment appears to assume that at least part of the need and rationale for such infrastructure will be scoped out of any future environmental assessment, however, this would pre-judge the outcome of the required EA processes and, potentially, future decisions on terms of reference and EAs for one or more individual EAs by the Ministry of the Environment. Some thought should be given to providing for a county-wide servicing agency to coordinate required approvals, provide efficiencies and define priorities.

### Interim settlement areas

The oversupply of designated land within the existing settlement areas of many of the lower-tier municipalities is

recognized in the amendment. To manage the oversupply, the amendment calls for the identification of interim settlement areas and provides for the inclusion of additional development lands within these areas subject to “municipal comprehensive reviews.”

Lower-tier municipalities are responsible for identifying need for additional lands. In the absence of an overall regional market approach, it is possible to foresee more pressure for expansion of the interim settlement area boundaries. Some committee members argued, however, that the use of interim settlement areas is a complex and sophisticated tool that will challenge municipalities to define boundaries and deal with the expectations and concerns of landowners located outside the interim boundary but within approved existing development areas.

### Lake Simcoe Protection Plan

The *Lake Simcoe Protection Plan, 2009*, comprises a series of policies applicable to the Lake Simcoe watershed, which includes portions of the Bradford West Gwillimbury and Innisfil communities, as well as parts of the City of Barrie, City of Orillia and Township of Ramara. While most of the Lake Simcoe sub-area is beyond the Lake Simcoe watershed, the strategic industrial employment areas in Innisfil Heights and Bradford West Gwillimbury, lie within the Lake Simcoe watershed as does the Lake Simcoe Regional Airport employment district. The Rama Road employment district is outside the Lake Simcoe watershed and drains to Lake Couchiching.

In view of the ecological fragility of Lake Simcoe and the phosphorus load reduction targets and other water quality issues raised in the *Lake Simcoe Protection Plan*, it can be argued that a detailed analysis should have been carried out beforehand to identify the impacts on the lake of the development being proposed in the amendment.

### Technical analysis missing

The Intergovernmental Action Plan for the County of Simcoe and cities of Barrie and Orillia provided a long term strategy for managing growth and development in Simcoe. The foundation for the action plan was a series of detailed technical volumes supporting the recommended policies and directions. In contrast, there appears to be no documentation of the analysis or technical work to support the province’s proposed amendment.

The OPPI submission maintains that the lack of technical analysis raises questions about the implications of the amendment related to water and waste water servicing, transportation, land use, the assimilative capacity of Lake Simcoe and the Nottawasaga watershed, municipal finance and the natural environment.

*The submission to the Ministry of Infrastructure was prepared by a working committee of the OPPI Policy Development Committee comprising Valerie Cranmer, MCIP, RPP, Patrick Kennedy, MCIP, RPP, Steven Rowe MCIP, RPP, Drew Semple MCIP, RPP and staff Loretta Ryan, MCIP, RPP. Drew is director of policy development on OPPI council.*



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# A watershed moment

By Rob McRae and Christine Woods

**M**ore than a decade has passed since the water contamination tragedy at Walkerton that caused seven deaths and a legacy of chronic illness. Drinking water source protection under the *Clean Water Act, 2006* is one component of the provincial government response to that incident. The intent is to ensure that communities have access to clean and plentiful sources of water. Source protection will be increasingly on the radar for planners in 2011.

The *Clean Water Act, 2006* introduced a resource planning system intended to complement the established *Planning Act* regime. Nineteen multi-stakeholder source protection committees have been formed on a watershed basis. They are overseeing technical research in assessment reports, and policy development in source protection plans. Conservation authorities, municipalities, public health units and the consulting community are supporting the effort with funding from the province. The focus of the work to date has been source water for municipal systems. Margaret Misk-Evans provided readers with a summary of the initiative in 2007 (“What Planners Need

to Know About Source Water Protection,” *Ontario Planning Journal*, Volume 22, Issue 1). This article provides an update on recent progress and next steps.

This is a time of transition between the completion of the initial assessment reports and the drafting of source protection plans. The assessment reports define vulnerable areas around municipal intakes and wells, and where broader-scale groundwater resources are vulnerable to contamination and/or reductions in recharge from the surface. They outline the drinking water issues (problems with the quality of the source water) and the inherent risk of drinking water threats (human activities that could harm the sources) in those areas. There are 21 types of prescribed activities (e.g., the application of road salt); however, source protection committees can obtain permission to consider others on a local

basis. In addition, water budgets are being prepared to assess the amount of source water that will be available for use in the future.

The proposed source protection plans are due for consideration by the Minister of the Environment no later than August 2012. They must include policies to address significant drinking water threats in vulnerable areas, and may include policies about monitoring those threats and related issues. Policies regarding the significant threats will be binding on the province, municipalities, and others. The plans may also include discretionary (“have regard to”) policies to address moderate and low-ranked drinking

water threats, among other matters. Each source protection committee will need to consider whether a given threat can be managed, or whether it should be prohibited now (a last resort) and/or in the future.

The development of a source protection plan will follow a process similar to the writing of an official plan: there will be consideration of technical findings, consultation on draft poli-

cies and finally provincial approvals. However, unlike an official plan, a source protection plan can discuss more than land use planning. It may also address activities, and may include policies related to education, incentives, infrastructure, risk management plans and other topics. Where vulnerable areas do not correspond to political boundaries, municipalities will need to discuss policies together, with guidance from the local source protection committee and conservation authority.

In the Cataraqui Source Protection Area near Kingston, the authors are gearing up for a year of extensive consultation with stakeholders. Roundtable events will be used to help create an open dialogue with stakeholders and to seek their input on draft policies. We anticipate the involvement of all three levels of government, public health units,



PHOTO: MICHAEL MANFETT

Holland Marsh, a source of both food and water

individuals and businesses that may be directly affected by source protection policies, and the general public.

There are three key reasons why source protection will matter to planners over the next few years. First, source protection plans will introduce a new, regional layer of mapping and policies that will need to be reflected and/or carefully considered (depending upon their legal effect) in land use planning documents and decisions. Second, other aspects of municipal business may be affected (e.g., *Municipal Act* by-laws, infrastructure decisions). Third, responsibility for implementing other aspects of source protection plans may fall to municipalities, with associated budget and resource implications.

Source protection is a new forum in which to make wise decisions about our natural resources. Although its introduction to Ontario came in response to a tragedy, its intent is forward-looking, with the goal of preventing future problems. Planners are encouraged to become involved in the policy development for their area. Source protection committees will welcome your vision, expertise and local knowledge. A listing of source protection areas and regions is available at [www.conservation-ontario.on.ca](http://www.conservation-ontario.on.ca).

*Rob McRae, MCIP, RPP, is source water protection project manager and Christine Woods, MCIP, RPP, is a source protection planner at the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority.*

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# Transit supportive guidelines

By OPPI Policy Development Committee

**T**he Ministry of Transportation is updating the province's Transit-Supportive Guidelines, first published jointly with the Ministry of Municipalities Affairs and Housing in 1992. The draft guidelines are intended to provide Ontario municipalities with tools and best practices to consider transportation and land use planning simultaneously in their local decision making to develop more transit-supportive communities. They are meant for use within Ontario's existing legislative and policy framework.

One of the ministry's key goals is to increase transit ridership by working with partners such as OPPI to improve public transit by expanding services, promoting integration and reducing congestion. OPPI has submitted the following response to the ministry.

## Endorsement of the 2011 Transit-Supportive Guidelines

The 2011 Ministry of Transportation Transit-Supportive Guidelines are an important and informative tool for all professionals involved in land use planning and the delivery of infrastructure. Widespread and effective use of these guidelines will benefit all Ontarians and provide the basis to successfully meet the transportation challenges of tomorrow.

## Suggested additions and enhancements

As professional planners, OPPI members are faced on a daily basis with responding to such typical questions as—

- How many people will take transit and what makes you think people will want to take transit?
- When will the enhanced and improved transit services be available and why should we accept more population and employment without these new services being available?

The guidelines need to address these questions and assist with communicating accurate responses to the public. To that end OPPI offers the follow six suggestions:

First, provide an expected transit service level by community / settlement area type. The Settlement Areas Guidelines indicate higher density nodes and corridors must be given a chance to fulfill their density levels before urban expansion can occur. While there is no disagreement with this guideline it may be beneficial to identify the level of transit service that is expected within a settlement area to support the planned population and employment.

To promote a healthy environment, transit must provide an effective travel time alternative to the automobile. Thus OPPI recommends the guidelines provide an expected transit service level by community / settlement area type. For example, if the average commute time in the settlement area is one hour by automobile, transit should provide sufficient coverage and an adequate service level to permit all individuals to complete the same one hour commute time with a combination 15 minute walk time and 45 minute transit travel time.

Second, provide a more refined walking distance definition by transit service type to assist decision makers. The Community Structure Guidelines, especially sections 1.1.2, 1.1.3 and 1.1.7, provide very valuable planning decision-making information. The illustrations use a maximum walking distance (800 metres) that typically relates to people accessing a subway. By examining different types of transit service, it is evident the walking distance people are willing to accept decreases in direct proportion to the transit service that is being accessed. Not only does the walking distance decrease (based on the transit service types described in section

1.1.7, subway down to basic transit) but the number of people who choose to take transit within a walking distance zone also decreases.

Third, provide greater clarity and additional descriptions and illustrations for basic transit service types and the expected adjacent land use formations, including walking distance relationships. Most communities—urban and rural—will be involved with frequent and basic transit service forms



PHOTO: MICHAEL MANETT

Still car crazy

such as dedicated rapid transit (e.g., LRT and bus-way

Fourth, it would be beneficial to indicate that walking distance is measured from a station or stop rather than any given point along a transit service route.

Fifth, incorporate a statement on the health benefits of taking a 15-minute walk to transit at the beginning of the work day and a 15-minute walk from transit on the way home. A 30-minute walk per day has proven to be an effective way to enhance the people's health.

Sixth, the *Development Charges Act (1997)* requires modification reflective of new thinking and financial commitments to secure the transit services necessary to meet forecast demands. The implementation guidelines indicate the *Development Charges Act (1997)* can be used to help off-set growth related capital costs including transit by levying new development. However, the wording of the act limits municipalities' ability to levy for current and past transit service levels rather than the service and equipment levels necessary to accommodate the increased population and employment levels being approved and planned.

### Promotion and circulation of the 2011 Transit-Supportive Guidelines

Under the banner of "Healthy Communities, Sustainable Communities," OPPI is committed to creating and fostering healthy communities in Ontario through urban design, active transportation, green infrastructure, links between public health and land use planning, and strategies for collaborating on tangible actions for healthier communities. Also, planners play a pivotal role in bringing together multiple partners and disciplines and in engaging their communities.

With its membership actively involved in public policy and the approvals process, private development, academia and numerous specialized disciplines, OPPI is well positioned to be a significant contributor in the distribution and implementation of the Transit-Supportive Guidelines.

*The submission to the Ministry of Transportation was prepared by the Policy Development Committee under the leadership of Nick Poulos, MCIP, RPP, transportation working group chair. This article has been edited from its original form.*

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# Portrait of a community retrofit

By Michael Hoy, Shannon Logan, Karen Nasmith

**T**he County Court Sustainable Neighbourhood Retrofit Action Plan—SNAP—is a collaboration among Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, Peel Region and City of Brampton to move an existing community towards sustainability. The first in a series of pilot projects, SNAP seeks to develop an action plan for local improvement, demonstrating the imperative for global climate change at a neighbourhood scale and showcasing mitigation and adaptation practices with multiple community benefits. SNAP is intended to provide a transferable template of process, information, incentives and action for neighbourhoods and municipalities across Canada.

This article provides a glimpse into an innovative response to planning for local action in the context of climate change, and includes a planner's reflections on the ideal outcomes and the project's early planning stages. It begins with a vision of the County Court Park neighbourhood in 2020.

## Background

Watershed and municipal objectives and initiatives have been successful in shaping sustainable greenfield communities and redevelopments; however, few initiatives focus on existing suburban communities. County Court SNAP takes a unique, integrated approach to implementing climate change objectives with a grassroots, neighbourhood focus. It reveals technically strategic, cost-effective solutions for overcoming barriers to sustainability and makes the business case for action.

SNAP brings together diverse stakeholders and implementation groups including municipal and regional government and agencies, residents and business—each with its own objectives and established operations. SNAP focuses on engaging these stakeholders in the design and implementation of their own sustainable community makeover and to build capacity for ongoing implementation.

SNAP is engaging City of Brampton, Peel Region and TRCA staff through an inter-departmental project management team led by TRCA. The team seeks ongoing input from the community and municipal/agency departments, including committees and council. While the city's current environmental efforts are primarily focused on greenfield development as Brampton is the third fastest growing municipality in Canada, the city supports SNAP as an opportunity to understand suburban issues, concentrate its efforts and monitor its successes in one place. SNAP also supports TRCA stormwater management and biodiversity objectives in the Etobicoke and Mimico Creeks Watershed.

Innovative ways are used to engage residents and build capacity through workshops, mail-outs, on-street interviews, plantings, nature walks, and neighbourhood events. The project team meets with community champions, faith-based leaders and local educators. A key focus is using social-marketing, stories around local benefits and demonstrations to build excitement and awareness of SNAP and local climate change issues.

Building the business case for sustainable action and fostering resource sharing networks is central to business engagement. Local tenants and landowners including institutions, businesses and golf courses are being engaged through information sessions and one-on-one conversations. Connections to TRCA's Partners in Project Green Pearson Eco-Industrial zone are being made wherever possible.

## Vision 2020

It's been 10 years since Brampton Council endorsed SNAP and we planted the water efficient "fusion landscape" garden in County Court Park...the first step in transforming the neighbourhood and a small indication of what environmental stewardship can achieve. The park's field house has been transformed into an eco-education centre showcasing green design and is used by the neighbourhood Green Team for events. A bulletin board and newsletter advertise park picnics and celebrate the 10th anniversary of the neighbourhood's transformation ...restored meadows, wetlands and forests in the Etobicoke Creek valley and 1,000 trees planted on private property ...the stormwater pond retrofit was an amazing success providing water quantity and quality benefits ... residents enjoy the new naturalized spaces and low-impact trail ...the green infrastructure integrates well with private practices that capture rainwater in gardens and harvest water for irrigation and grey water needs...households have decreased energy use and embraced renewable resources, including solar panels on roofs and in the park ...pathways and bike lanes provide safe access to bus stops, shopping, schools and natural areas ...businesses promote their green roofs, closed-loop waste systems, permeable parking lots and bike parking facilities.

...But most tellingly is the extension of the SNAP model to 10 other neighbourhoods in Brampton, one retrofit each year since SNAP began. County Court has led the way in suburban renewal. Now, SNAP is supported by intensified pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use redevelopment that has emerged at the neighbourhood's edge with a light rail transit corridor linking County Court to the rest of the Greater Toronto Area.



## The climate change imperative

Creative retrofit solutions in County Court SNAP lend support to a critical issue facing people and communities across the world: accelerating adaptation and mitigation action in aging neighbourhoods. According to Peel Region's climate change strategy, adapting will involve initiatives to reduce vulnerability to: warmer and wetter weather; a doubling of days exceeding 30°C; and more frequent and severe weather events. TRCA watershed modelling also identifies a need for improved sustainability in support of healthy rivers and shorelines and regional biodiversity.

Climate change mitigation to reduce greenhouse gases and carbon footprints is a challenge in suburban areas where housing stock is predominantly single-detached, and energy and water consumption and car dependency are high. Through coordinated action toward local sustainability, SNAP will help the neighbourhood better adapt to climatic variability and will enhance flexibility and robustness to changing conditions. SNAP is turning the abstract concept of mitigation and adaptation into tangible action and commitments for all stakeholders.

## The neighbourhood

County Court is a 220 hectare, 30-year old neighbourhood of approximately 4,200 people in the City of Brampton (northwest of Toronto). The site was selected based on municipal and watershed priorities, in particular the need for local stormwater facility retrofit. The neighbourhood contains a diverse population and a variety of land uses, including residential, institutional, commercial and recreational with two golf courses and the Etobicoke Creek valley lands. Residents are young, educated, earning higher than average wages and living in privately-owned, detached homes. Although over half of the population identified themselves as foreign-born in the 2006 Census, most have lived within the community for over 10 years.

## The action plan

SNAP will be developed over three phases:

1. Background characterization, brainstorming retrofit options, developing a monitoring baseline and framework of working goals and targets based on existing strategies and best practices;
2. Developing and evaluating retrofit scenarios for local benefit;
3. Optimizing synergies, developing a business case, implementation plan and marketing strategy. Retrofits focus on stormwater, natural heritage, water and energy conservation, and green buildings; however, SNAP seeks to find complementary benefits in health and well-being, transportation, waste, cultural heritage and community design.

Increased uptake of better stormwater management, water and energy conservation practices is key to climate change mitigation and adaptation. SNAP will identify innovative actions to achieve framework targets and engage the community in retrofits on private and public land.

Engagement and social-marketing will help overcome barriers to behavioural change and long-term roles and responsibilities for each of the project partners will be identified. The final SNAP will include a tested marketing strategy to address local barriers to uptake.

## Reflections from 2015

SNAP is now directed by the newly formed neighbourhood association that installed solar thermal panels in County Court Park in 2012. With the provincial government Feed-in-Tariffs, the interest free loan was paid off in 3 years and the association is using revenue to fund local sustainability projects, including restoration plantings and home energy audits.

The solar thermal project was a catalyst for change. Residents using the park could view 'live' statistics on energy production, and the park became a gathering place to share ideas and learn about sustainability by touring community gardens and viewing stormwater reuse demonstrations.

## Concluding thoughts

Climate change requires action—from global to local—where people live, work and play. SNAP is intended to demonstrate innovative approaches to dealing with climate change by residents, businesses, municipalities and agencies, and how the community can address multiple environmental issues and support a variety of strategic objectives. Once developed, SNAP will be implemented in phases, requiring long-term commitment from the partners and recognition that the project will evolve over the coming years.

County Court SNAP is a model to begin the process of adapting and mitigating climate change at a local scale. There cannot be an international response to climate change without concerted efforts on how to live sustainably in neighbourhoods across the world.

*Michael Hoy, MES, RPP, MCIP is an environmental planner with the City of Brampton. Shannon Logan MES (Pl.), RPP, MCIP is a project manager with the Watershed Planning group at Toronto and Region Conservation Authority. Karen Nasmith, B Eng, MUP, MCIP, RPP, is a senior planner and associate with Toronto-based consulting firm planningAlliance, who is acting as lead consultant in the preparation of SNAP Phase 1 and 2. Learn more about SNAP at [www.sustainableneighbourhoods.ca](http://www.sustainableneighbourhoods.ca).*

## Reflections from 2011

The first year has been challenging. From the outset, SNAP lacked resident support, but as outreach continued, neighbourhood champions emerged. During 2010, we struggled—to profile the neighbourhood's carbon footprint and establish a baseline due to data gaps; to agree on appropriate priorities and actions, as educating all stakeholders including ourselves was necessary ...but by the end of 2010, we undertook some "quick win" demonstration projects including the park fusion landscape garden and a green home makeover ...and finally a dozen residents stepped forward as community champions.

# Districts & People

*Committed to community engagement and stewardship, the City of North Bay began to develop a new official plan in 2005 with a unique approach to public consultation*

## TORONTO

### Toronto District Connections

### 2010 in Review

By David Oikawa and Ryan Guetter

OPPI's Toronto District, which is the largest OPPI District based on membership, had many successes in 2010. Our committed group of volunteers successfully executed several programs focused on mentoring, professional development and networking among our members.

In February, the Toronto District hosted an event on the Healthy Communities Handbook. The speakers for the event were George McKibbin (OPPI Policy Development Committee past chair and McKibbin Wakefield Inc. principal), Regan Smith (Halsall Associates Ltd.) and Thelma Gee (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing).

Home to three CIP-recognized planning schools—Ryerson University, University of Toronto and York University—our annual planning student event in March brought together a number of guest speakers, including OPPI president elect Mary Lou Tanner, past Toronto district representative Christian Huggett, and future members of the institute.

In April, a focus group was held on the evolving OPPI Strategic Communications Plan. Thanks to all who participated.

June brought good weather and a chance to get outside together on a walking tour of the Railway Lands, a major brownfield site in Toronto with over 7,500 housing units already in place or planned. City of Toronto

planners Lynda Macdonald and James Parakh led this informative tour.

After a well deserved summer break, we took advantage of a great early fall evening in September for a walking tour of public art achieved through the planning application process. I think all of those who participated were impressed by the installations highlighted by tour guide and Toronto planner Jane Perdue. Participants learned of the city's public art program and its recent successes and had an opportunity to appreciate the importance of public art as an expression of Canadianna in Toronto.

With only two months before OPPI's 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the Toronto District completed another successful World Town Planning Day program. This project involved two classroom sessions with Grade 9 students at Lake Shore Collegiate Institute in Etobicoke. Organizers of the event developed a program centred on giving the students real exposure to planning and how they can help shape their communities.

The most interesting component of this program was the student project, which allowed district volunteers to interact with students to help them think critically about their communities. We were all surprised at the student's high level of engagement in the program, which was rewarding for all who were involved. In the first session, the school's principal was equally surprised and very pleased with the students' engagement in the program.

The basic premise of the project was first, to have students think critically about their community, their likes and dislikes; second, to have them undertake a basic SWOT analysis of their study areas, and third, to

have them prepare a land use plan for their study area.

The study areas selected were in the students' immediate neighbourhood, which meant that in many cases they knew more about the area than we did. It was very interesting to hear the students' comments about their community. As you can imagine, most of the comments were somewhat negative or critical, despite our efforts to inject a positive balance into the discussion. Nonetheless, if the purpose was to engage the students, we were definitely successful. Furthermore, isn't public engagement the mark of a good planner anyways?

Throughout the two sessions, as district volunteers mingled among the students, we had an opportunity to infuse the discussion with land use planning principles, including the importance of healthy communities, access to transportation and recreation, and the importance of striking the appropriate balance between land uses.

Towards the end of the second session students began developing their own land use plans. One student explained his plan to convert a run-down building into a community facility. The rationale he used to explain his plan made it clear that we had made an impact. In the short time we had with the students, we had made an impression.

The Toronto District volunteers who developed and participated in the program are excited about the opportunity to expand this program to other schools in Toronto and hope that other districts have similar opportunities to impact the next generation of planners in their communities.

Finally, we capped off the year with

our annual Winter Social. This year's venue was the spectacular CN Tower. Over 120 OPPI members and guests were able to get an interesting perspective on all of the new developments in downtown Toronto from the top of the tower. In fact, we liked the view so much, that we have booked it for our 2011 Winter Social next November. Thanks to all our generous sponsors for their contributions to the event.

The boundaries of the Toronto District coincide with the City of Toronto, so the many planning initiatives being undertaken by the city are keeping district members busy just to stay up to date. Among recently developed and developing initiatives are council's passing of a new comprehensive zoning by-law; council's adoption of the corridor intensification midrise guidelines; and the Planning Division's continued public consultation on the living downtown tall buildings study.

*For more information about any Toronto District events and past programs, please contact David Oikawa, MCIP, RPP at doikawa@toronto.ca or Ryan Guetter, MCIP, RPP at rguetter@westonconsulting.com.*

## WESTERN LAKE ONTARIO

### Heritage Tourism in Oakville

## A planner's role in the process

By James Neilson

In 2005, the Ontario Ministry of Culture released a report on heritage preservation called "Strengthening Ontario's Heritage: Identify, Protect and Promote." This report examined how municipalities could use the new powers provided by the strengthened Ontario *Heritage Act* to enhance the role of heritage throughout Ontario's communities. For heritage planners, the focus has always been on identifying and protecting heritage buildings and infrastructure, with some municipalities having more success than others. However, heritage promotion can provide a great service in the goal of heritage preservation, by placing additional value on heritage assets. Essentially, if heritage can be an

economic driver, it provides a greater argument for the need for more heritage preservation efforts.

In Oakville, heritage preservation has been a success with over 900 registered properties of cultural heritage value or interest, including 127 individually designated properties as well as three heritage districts. As a recipient of the 2009 Lieutenant Governor's Ontario Heritage Award for Community Leadership in Heritage Conservation, the town had achieved the first two objectives set out in the Ministry of Culture's report. The next step was to determine how these assets could be promoted to become even more important assets for the community.

The result was the Oakville Heritage Tourism Strategy. Produced with the input of Oakville's three heritage societies, community and business leaders and the Oakville Tourism Partnership, the report made fifteen recommendations in three key areas—relationships among various organizations, infrastructure improvements and marketing opportunities—that would provide greater awareness of Oakville's heritage assets both within and outside the town.

While tourism may be outside the planner's realm of expertise, it is still possible for planners to play a key role. In Oakville, the heritage planning team had developed a strong relationship with the heritage community and was seen as the go-to point within town hall for any issue. Planners within the public realm are entrenched in a network that allows them to connect with a variety of people doing different work. This provides planners with the opportunity to act as the bridge between the heritage community and other facets of the public sector or the greater community. Eventually, the need for a bridge dissolves as the heritage community builds its own network, but in the initial stages, the planner might be one of the most important figures in this process.

Ultimately, it is in the best interest of the planner to be involved in a project like the Heritage Tourism Strategy as it not only provides greater opportunities for heritage preservation but allows planners to empower the heritage community with a greater chance at success.

*James Neilson is a recent graduate of the MES program at York University and a Planning Intern with the Town of Oakville with a focus on the Oakville Heritage Tourism Strategy. He can be reached at neilson\_12@hotmail.com.*

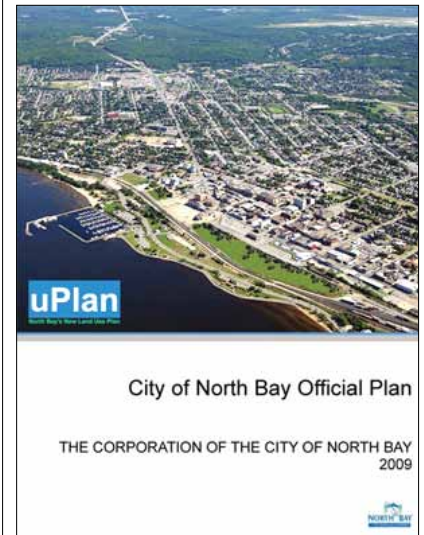
## NORTHERN

### City of North Bay Official Plan Review

## uPlan

By Beverley Hillier and Nadia De Santi

Committed to community engagement and stewardship, the City of North Bay began to develop a new official plan in 2005 with a unique approach to public consultation. A logo and brand name—uPlan—was developed to promote the city's intent to solicit public



input and communicate that the future of the city, how it should grow and develop, rests with the community.

To ensure the official plan reflected community needs and balanced the range of local interests a 19-member Sustainability Community Advisory Committee was established comprising representation from 17 economic, social and environmental organizations and the public-at-large. FoTenn Consultants Inc. was retained by the City of North Bay to facilitate six sessions over six months with the committee to identify a vision statement and strategic sustainable planning principles the city would use to develop official plan policies. The resulting Sustainable Community Planning Report, formed part of the



background research for the city's new official plan – uPlan.

The breadth of issues considered by the committee was extensive and included the following topics:

- Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation's Presentation on Sustainable Communities;
- Natural Features and Environment;
- Parks, Open Space and Trails;
- Housing;
- Community Heritage, Neighbourhoods and Urban Design;
- Employment/Economic Development and Tourism;
- Rural Areas;
- Transportation and Infrastructure;
- Growth Management Strategy.

FoTenn prepared visual and hand-written exercises to accommodate various techniques to engage the committee. Public education material included a Neighbourhood Workbook and Comparative Imagery: Your Urban Design Preferences, which helped committee members reflect on their community, both positive and negative elements, and what they would like to see in the future.

The result of the committee's deliberations was consensus on a vision statement, five guiding principles and 136 sustainable community principles unique to the citizens, businesses, and social and environmental stewards of the City of North Bay. Providing sound guidance to city council, the work of the Sustainability Community Advisory Committee provided the foundation for North Bay's new official plan.

In addition to the advisory committee, meetings with individual groups and broader public consultation sessions were held. Many of these groups included individuals who had participated on the advisory committee and this facilitated working relationships and open communication, ensuring the plan development process remained in tune with public opinion.

Meetings with the Sustainability Community Advisory Committee continued over a 4-year period. The benefits were three-fold:

- To identify and protect important environmental areas, such as the

North Bay Escarpment, and to develop relevant economic and social policies;

- To ensure the group stayed current in the official plan development process;
- To ensure the committee had the opportunity to review draft official plan policies prior to them being presented to city council.

The City of North Bay uPlan process was innovative and unique. It engaged the community as stakeholders in the development of its new official plan early in the process. The result was a local, community-driven official plan with little public opposition, prepared in-house by City of North Bay planning staff.

While recognizing that not every aspect or wish of the committee could be incorporated in the plan, members indicated their satisfaction with the public process, the level of direct communication with city staff and the amount of input received on the official plan.

The City of North Bay Official Plan—uPlan—was adopted by city council September 8, 2009 and submitted to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing September 22, 2009 for approval.

*Beverley Hillier, MCIP, RPP, is the manager, planning services for the City of North Bay Planning Services Department and can be reached at [beverley.hillier@cityofnorthbay.ca](mailto:beverley.hillier@cityofnorthbay.ca), or 705.474.0626 ext. 2403. Nadia De Santi, MCIP, RPP, is a senior planner with FoTenn Consultants Inc. in Ottawa and can be reached at [desanti@fotenn.com](mailto:desanti@fotenn.com), or at 613.730.5709 ext. 231.*

## EASTERN

### Moving the yardsticks forward

By Rory Baksh

**P**lanners need to support national and provincial votes to implement Planning for the Future. This represents a great stride forward for the practice of planning.

As planners, we typically choose to compare ourselves to professions we know well, such as architects and

engineers, when we as an institute explore the standards of our practice, responsibility to the public interest, professionalism and ethics. However, as we approach a milestone of professional self-advancement through Planning for the Future, this should encourage us to compare ourselves to a broader range of professions.

We have embraced a healthy communities mandate as an institute, so a comparison to doctors—the College of Physicians and Surgeons—is one worth exploring.

Society understands that doctors are obligated to put the best interest of their patients first. We as a group of professional planning practitioners are obligated to put the public interest first.

The role and authority of the College of Physicians and Surgeons is well established and functions in a number of realms: registration; inquires, complaints and reports; discipline; fitness to practice; quality assurance; and patient relations. So too does the Ontario Professional Planners Institute with our membership, accreditation, recognition, discipline and policy work.

The College of Physicians and Surgeons has developed a strategic plan to focus its energies towards attaining its vision—Quality Professionals, Healthy System, Public Trust. We too have a strategic plan and a strong vision—Ontario Planners: Vision - Leadership - Great Communities—and have focussed our efforts to raise the status of planning and the profession across Ontario.

As we succeed with Planning for the Future and progress forward in the coming years, professional planners can look ahead to the day when we are recognized as the pre-eminent self governing profession responsible for healthy, liveable, vibrant and great communities.

*Rory Baksh, MCIP, RPP is the OPPI Eastern District Representative and an Associate at Dillon Consulting Limited. He can be reached at [rbaksh@dillon.ca](mailto:rbaksh@dillon.ca).*

A Place in Mind

## Searching for authenticity

By Paul Yeoman

Coming across a book related to urban planning while browsing through a bookstore is sadly a rare occurrence. A few months ago, however, I picked up the book that is the subject of this review. I had learned about Mr. Friedman's innovative architectural designs and was excited when I came across the relatively thin new work by the author. The title engaged me as I was curious to explore the concept of authenticity and its relationship to urban planning.

*A Place in Mind* is a light, engaging and well-written book. The author delivers a series of short, punchy chapters that follow a consistent format: the author travels to a different part of the world and experiences a unique place that seems special, which prompts a research question about the authenticity value of the respective place. For example, Mr. Friedman finds himself wandering the streets of York, England, and stumbles upon an open-air farmers market located in a public square. Feeling engaged by the bartering of merchants and customers, and comforted by pleasant architecture on all four sides, Friedman ponders why public squares were created and why they still remain popular destinations. Each research question leads into a historical examination of a human process or pattern of development that endures in the modern world.

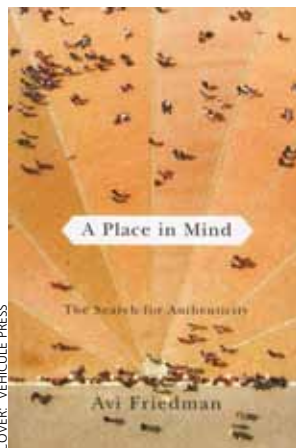
Friedman does an excellent job of providing his reader with just the right amount of information to gain some background on each topic, yet not feel overwhelmed (or bored) with detailed theoretical or conceptual debates. *A Place in Mind* makes for an excellent companion to a good cup of strong

coffee when one is seeking an informative escape. It is easy to put down and pick up again without feeling that you are lost in the overall message of the book.

My only complaint is that the book never really engaged with the concept of authenticity. As I read the concluding chapter, I was disappointed to realize that it was another issues-based chapter like those previous. I had hoped that Friedman would bring together the book with a consideration of why authenticity is important when planning public and private places. Is an authentic place necessarily special? Does a sense of authenticity require an emotional connection to the location? How unique must a place be for it to be considered authentic? Is a place universally authentic or only for certain groups or individuals? Does this matter? These are the type of questions I had hoped to find some engagement with from Mr. Friedman. I feel that he could have accomplished such an addition to the book without descending into complex normative theory that would have distracted from the overall tone of the book.

When preparing for your next vacation on the beach, hopping on a train ride to visit friends, or cozying up in a nook in your favourite coffee shop, bring along a copy of *A Place in Mind*. I'm sure you'll enjoy spending time with it.

*Paul Yeoman is a graduate student in the Master of Urban and Regional Planning program at Queen's University. His current research on cultural heritage landscapes assessment explores the connection between historic places and community identity.*



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City of Walls in a Region in Transformation

# Lessons for planners in Canada

By Alan Gummo

**A**s Derek Nawrot noted in his very insightful Perspectives article in Vol. 25, No.6, Teresa Caldeira has written an excellent book titled “City of Walls: Crime, Segregation, and Citizenship in Sao Paulo.” I would go so far as to call it a ‘must read’ for planners in Canada.

Caldeira is an anthropologist, not a Planner per se, so her analysis crosses a lot of terrain that we ‘land use planners’ tend to view as outside our scope. Examples include her discussion of societal attitudes to the judicial system, penal reform, the respective roles of public policing and private security, the nature of economic progress, human rights and civil behaviour. Interestingly for us, she links these discussions to ‘planning’ as we understand it.

I would argue it is time for us to take the blinders off. Notwithstanding a number of significant cultural differences between Brazil and Canada, this book contains a number of equally significant lessons that our profession could learn from.

Among the micro lessons, we must:

- Advocate relentlessly for investment in public space and public infrastructure;
- Direct our energies to design excellence in the public realm;
- Provide alternatives to further creation of gated, impermeable and exclusionary private space whether for social, recreational, or lifestyle purposes;
- Support measures beyond mere design solutions that assist the provision of safety and security in public spaces;

- Continue to advocate on behalf of the creation of great communities as opposed to exclusive enclaves for the elite.

As Derek notes, the election of President Luiz Inacio Lula Da Silva created enormous expectations for change for the better in urban Brazil. Before passing judgment on the success of the government’s efforts it should be noted that the Brazilian government has been engaged in not only pressing urban issues, but also equally pressing rural issues, all the while establishing a new role for the country in the global economy and global political structures. The success of its efforts has been particularly evident in the context of the recent recession that has occurred elsewhere. Eight years on, it could be argued that ‘Lula’ has been instrumental in bringing about the creation of a new Brazil.

That said, it should also be noted that Lula’s success has occurred against a larger regional Latin American backdrop that began with the Sao Paulo Forum in 1990 and has resulted in remarkable transformations in a number of Latin American societies. For a primer on this evolution I am happy to recommend Oliver Stone’s very interesting documentary “South of the Border” that examines the role of the respective social justice movements that have driven change throughout Latin America.

The New Brazil is a place that is changing up , a place where new city artifacts are slick, stylish, eclectic, beautifully designed and generally well-crafted. Massive investments are being made in public infrastructure, particularly



PHOTOS: ALAN GUMMO

A walk to the neighbourhood bakery takes pedestrians past stylishly gated high-rise condos in Sao Paulo



Copan’s massive and sinuous front to the street commensurate with the grandeur of its communitarian and visionary intent



transportation, and private investment in new development is occurring at a remarkable rate. The new Brazil is also a place of daunting social and economic legacy issues that will continue to challenge it for a long time.

Sadly, Canada is a place that is changing down, a place where our current bland acceptance of greater income disparity, underemployment, social exclusion and marginalization, erosion of human rights and community cohesion and absence of elevated organizing principles in whatever passes for public policy debate is moving us in the direction of the legacy challenges that still frustrate Brazil. We're going in the wrong direction!

This direction should be of great concern to the planning profession.



Planning in the future, and the future of planning, cannot be separated from broader public policies and strategies. We cannot build great communities if the backdrop public policy is a vacuum, or worse, dysfunctional. Nor can we claim to be visionary, nor to be demonstrating leadership, if we are not participating in efforts to address the root causes of the decline of our communities. The same evolutionary processes we profess to be engaged in will defeat us.

The profession needs to shore up its relevance by engaging in discourse about issues like poverty reduction and the social safety net; energy, water and food from a people perspective; strategically important economic sectors as employment generators; and enlightened redistribution through fair taxation and sustained investment in public goods.

In this effort the profession must support fundamental progressive principles like universality, equity, and inclusion, and be mindful of debate that compromises these principles, if it is to demonstrate its commitment to the public interest.

These are the lessons of Caldeira's book, and why it is a must read.

*Alan Gummo, MCIP, RPP, is a Niagara-based policy planner. He has one foot on the ground in suburban North St. Catharines, and the other in the Vila Mariana urban neighbourhood of Sao Paulo.*



A counter-legacy of collectivist tradition persists in this neighbourhood street market (left) and on this sidewalk patio (right) in central Sao Paulo

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Breaking into Professional Planning

# Advice for new planners

By Chris Wicke

**R**ecently, I've been frequently hearing about the situation confronting current planning students and new graduates. We've all heard the phrase 'in our current economic climate' more times than we can bear, so there's no debate that the prospect of job-hunting at the moment can seem like as much fun as trudging through slush for another three months. Also, it hasn't been that many winters since I graduated from planning school, so the memories of researching and approaching new employers are still fairly fresh in my mind.

I'm a new parent, so perhaps this relates simply to an over-stimulation of my advice glands, but in this season of searching for summer and permanent employment, I wanted to offer some tips for those working hard to find the perfect job.

**Tip 1: Don't expect that your first job will be perfect**

Apply for jobs broadly. You may not meet the qualifications or you may exceed the qualifications. Either way, as my basketball coach used to say, you miss 100 per cent of the shots you don't take. The job posted by the company for which I currently work was not for an urban designer, but for a planning technician. I contended that I could do all that they were looking for and much more, and they ultimately agreed.

**Tip 2: Get out to planning events and meet the people**

I attend as many district events and urban forums as I can. While there is often a good student turnout, I am dismayed at the lack of interaction between students and potential future employers. While in a perfect world, veteran planners would take initiative to readily engage fresh faces, the reality doesn't always work out that way. The onus is on you to make the move, so don't be a wallflower. Take a wingman and introduce yourself to people. And to all you veteran planners reading this article... go over and say hello. I'm sure it will be appreciated.

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**Tip 3: Do information interviews**

Talk to the people with whom you hope to work. Don't be afraid to make cold calls to set up a face-to-face meeting for fact finding. Information interviews are an excellent way to learn about the field and meet prospective employers without the baggage that comes with doing an interview. They represent an opportunity to make a good impression, to meet contacts and to get the information necessary to write effective applications in the future. And remember, the worst they can say is "No."

**Tip 4: Find a mentor**

At some point, perhaps while conducting information interviews, you will hopefully find an experienced planner with whom you feel you have a strong connection. Consider asking them to act as your mentor—either as an informal relationship or formally as part of your move towards full membership in OPPI. This person will have valuable contacts and insights to help you, and they will feel good giving back as they assist you in your career.

**Tip 5: Work hard at getting internship experience in the field**

I know... this one is a given. Support for internships in terms of resources and contacts can vary wildly from school to school, and opportunities can feel scarce. This is where earlier legwork can pay dividends. Here at FoTenn we have been hiring summer students for a number of years. Some of these students went back to class in the fall and returned post-graduation to find full-time positions with the firm. Some took the job as an entry-level position and stayed on as a full-time employee in the fall. Either way, they gained the hands-on experience necessary to prove that they are qualified for the position. I realize that competition can be fierce for spots like this, but it is worth fighting for. I also fully realize the economic necessity of having paid work during the summer to support your education, so volunteering for a project isn't an

*(Cont. on page 28)*

**LETTERS TO THE EDITOR**

Members are encouraged to send letters about content in the *Ontario Planning Journal* to the editor (editor@ontarioplanners.on.ca). Please direct comments or questions about Institute activities to the OPPI president at the OPPI office or by email to [executivedirector@ontarioplanners.on.ca](mailto:executivedirector@ontarioplanners.on.ca).

## Mobility Hub Guidelines

# Leveraging investment

By Jason Thorne, contributing editor

**P**rovincial land use policy has long advocated creating communities that support the use of transit and reduce auto-dependency. Most notably, transit-supportive land use is a strong theme in the Provincial Policy Statement and the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*. Two new guidelines released recently by the province are intended to provide some assistance to municipalities and others in implementing these provincial policy directions, and making transit-supportive communities a reality—Transit Supportive Guidelines and Mobility Hub Guidelines.

In January, the Ministry of Transportation released draft Transit Supportive Guidelines for public comment. While the 2011 version of the guidelines still focuses on land use-related measures, it goes beyond land use considerations to also address transit operations—scheduling, trip planning, customer service, fare strategies, promotion, education—and it emphasizes the need to balance vehicular and non-vehicular users of the road system—pedestrians, cyclists, transit vehicles and motorists. [Editor's note: see the *OPPI submission on the guidelines elsewhere in this issue of the Journal*.]

In February, the Metrolinx board of directors approved a comprehensive set of guidelines for the planning and design of mobility hubs in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. The Mobility Hub Guidelines represents the fulfillment of one of the key implementation commitments of the Big Move Regional Transportation Plan, adopted by Metrolinx at the end of 2008.

While covering some of the same ground as the Ministry of Transportation's Transit Supportive Guidelines—including strategies related to the location, design and access to transit stations—the Mobility Hub Guidelines provide guidance as well as inspiration to municipalities, transit agencies and others on developing plans for mobility hubs and incorporating mobility hub objectives into general planning activities. While the focus of the guidelines is on the 51 mobility hubs identified in the regional transportation plan, the planning principles espoused are also relevant to other transit station areas, both inside and outside the GTHA.

A key challenge the guidelines seek to address is the tension that exists within mobility hubs between their mobility function—the need for quick and efficient movement—and their place-making function—the elements that make the hub a desirable and interesting destination, rather than just a node to pass through.



The guidelines identify the following nine objectives, with a series of detailed guidelines and strategies provided for achieving each objective:

1. Seamless integration of modes at the rapid transit station—includes strategies related to minimizing transfer distances, coordinating schedules and routes of local feeder services, prioritizing access to stations by pedestrians and cyclists, and adopting transit priority measures.
2. Safe and efficient movement of people with high levels of pedestrian priority—includes strategies related to setting mode share targets, developing transportation demand management plans and creating complete streets and an attractive pedestrian environment.
3. A well-designed transit station for a high quality user experience—includes strategies related to station architecture, the public realm, services available within stations, customer amenities, wayfinding and accessibility.
4. Strategic parking management—includes strategies related to assessing commuter parking needs, minimizing surface parking, parking pricing, maximum and minimum parking standards, shared use parking practices, and design of parking facilities.
5. A vibrant, mixed-use environment with higher land use intensity—includes strategies related to land use mix and densities around transit stations.
6. An attractive public realm—includes strategies related to the design of sidewalks and the pedestrian realm, the design of open spaces, building massing, public art, and the use of crime prevention through environmental design.
7. A minimized ecological footprint—includes strategies related to energy and water conservation, landscaping and waste management practices.
8. Effective partnerships and incentives for increased public and private investment—includes strategies related to incentives and financing tools such as bonusing, flexible zoning, bonds and debentures, joint development and

Above: Bus shelter in Portland lit by solar-powered LED lights (Source: Metrolinx Mobility Hub Guidelines)



other public-private partnership models, development checklists and design competitions.

9. Flexible planning to accommodate growth and change—includes strategies related to phasing land use with infrastructure improvements and using performance measures and monitoring to support phasing.

It is expected implementation of the guidelines will occur in a variety of ways. For example, Metrolinx's regional transportation plan recommends all municipalities prepare master plans for mobility hubs within their jurisdictions. The guidelines are intended to be a tool for municipalities to use in developing these master plans.

Perhaps the most promising area of implementation for the guidelines will be how they affect the planning undertaken by Metrolinx itself. Half of the mobility hubs in the GTHA are centred on GO stations, which are owned and operated by Metrolinx. One of the stated objectives of the guidelines is to serve as a "key source of direction for Metrolinx when undertaking planning efforts or when building infrastructure in mobility hubs." Metrolinx has already begun developing plans for some of its station areas, both on its own and in partnership with local municipalities. Plans have either been prepared or are underway for mobility hubs in Toronto

**The regional transportation plan defines mobility hubs as major transit station areas that are particularly significant given the level of transit service that is planned for them and the development potential around them. More specifically, they are key regional interchanges (two or more rapid transit lines) with high level of forecasted transit ridership (4,500 or more boardings and alightings by 2031) and high development potential (minimum of 10,000 residents and jobs combined within 800 metres by 2031).**

**The vision for mobility hubs in the regional transportation plan is to become places of connectivity where different modes of transportation come together seamlessly and where there is an intensive concentration of working, living, shopping and/or playing.**

(Kipling and Dundas West TTC/Bloor GO Stations), Bramalea, Port Credit and Cooksville.

More intriguing is the potential for Metrolinx to apply the strategies contained in the Mobility Hub Guidelines "when building infrastructure in mobility hubs." This suggests Metrolinx will be leveraging its ongoing investments in capital improvements at its stations—new parking facilities, platforms, station facilities and more—to gradually transform its stations into true mobility hubs.

A member of the Metrolinx board identified yet another potential means through which Metrolinx itself could lead the implementation of the guidelines. At its February 18 meeting, when the guidelines were adopted, one board member suggested some of

the strategies contained in the guidelines could find their way into funding agreements related to major transit investments. Tying conditions regarding land use around stations to investments in transit infrastructure would be a clear and powerful signal of the importance of integrating transportation and land use planning.

*Jason Thorne is a principal with planningAlliance, an urban planning and design consulting practice based in Toronto. Jason is the contributing editor on provincial matters. More information regarding the Mobility Hub Guidelines can be found at <http://www.metrolinx.com/mobilityhubs>.*

**WICKE** (cont. from page 26)

option available to everyone. At the same time, I was approached recently by an applicant who, not having been successful for a position, wanted to know if an assignment was available as an experience-building medium. I was impressed by the initiative.

### **Tip 6: Look beyond your own backyard**

While life is still fairly portable, be adventurous. Internships in other countries and employment in places like the Canadian North often present opportunities to get experience.

### **Tip 7: Research the organization to which you are applying**

People and organizations love to know that you have taken an interest in them. Know who they are and what they do before you send in your application. Make specific mention of a project that they have done which interests you.

### **Tip 8: Call firms you are interested in even if they are not posting a position**

There may be a small project or an upcoming position available that will give you much-needed experience and legitimacy. Even if not, you may learn where to direct the next enquiries, saving time and increasing odds of future prospects.

### **Tip 9: Have a friend proof-read your application**

Minor mistakes can be very costly to a first impression. Ensure that the spelling, grammar and information that you are providing are correct.

### **Tip 10: Do follow-up interviews**

If you get an interview and you don't get the position, ask to do a follow-up interview so you can learn where you can improve. Be forewarned—you may need a thick skin for this one. Getting a rejection or a "We feel you are not quite the right fit for us at this time" is certainly dismaying, and digging a little deeper may sting a little, but the suggested improvements could lead to the necessary changes required to snag the next opportunity. No one wants to be perceived as a nuisance, but it is worth the time to seek out objective opinions of your application and your interview performance.

This advice is not limited to the planning field, but I can tell you from personal experience that it works in this one. These are all actions I have taken and I have recommended to friends, with success to date. While no guarantee, hopefully they will help separate your name from the pile of applications for a planning position. Again, I know it can feel like an uphill battle, but with perseverance and some luck, opportunities will become available. I look forward to meeting you at the Eastern District Spring Social!

*Chris Wicke is an Urban Designer and Planner at FoTenn Consultants Inc. in Ottawa. He is also the Membership Outreach Coordinator for the Eastern District of OPPI.*



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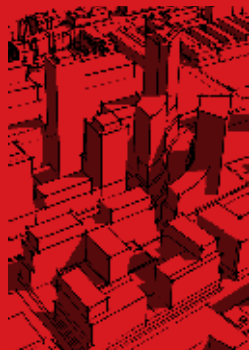
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