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ONTARIO PLANNERS: VISION • LEADERSHIP • GREAT COMMUNITIES

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A Tale of Two Cities

By Thora Cartlidge



PHOTO COURTESY THORA CARTLIDGE

Knowing Thunder Bay's evolution as a city is important to understanding the public resistance to its Active Transportation Plan.

IT IS REALLY A TALE OF TWO CITIES. Fort William was built from a Northwest Company fur trade post in the early 1800s at the mouth of the Kaministiquia River where it flows into Lake Superior, while Port Arthur developed in the late 1800s as the international harbour and transshipment point for grain and other commodities flowing from western Canada to the world. In 1970, the two cities amalgamated to become the City of Thunder Bay. What had once been two distinct municipalities, each with its own libraries, parks, water and sewer lines and street systems, merged into one city. It currently has a population of just over 108,000.

The landscape

Fiscal and political pressures to create efficiencies in municipal administration underscored this city's need for amalgamation, and mirror the experience of many other municipalities across the country at the time. Administratively, integrating the facilities and services of two cities into one presented a particular challenge when an expanse of marsh, wetland and river courses remained in an area that historically defined the separation of the two cities. Known as the intercity area, it was used for rail lines, terminal grain elevators and heavy industry. It remains home to the Canadian Lakehead Exhibition grounds and many residents remember it for the Mainline (#1) street car route that ran from Fort William to Port Arthur.

Today, some 40 years after amalgamation, the arterial roads and old streetcar routes through the intercity wetlands have been built

up with regional commercial development. The McIntyre and Neebing rivers that run through the area are hardly visible save for the floodway built in the 1980s to facilitate economic development in the new City of Thunder Bay.

Genesis of the Active Transportation Plan

Introduced in 2007 and adopted by Thunder Bay city council the following year, the vision for the Active Transportation Plan was “for a healthy, environmentally sustainable community where active transportation is a key component of a safe, innovative, integrated transportation system that links where we all live, work and play” (2008).

The plan's first principles—inclusivity, diversity, supportive amenities, connectivity and accessibility—are acknowledged in the city's Urban Design Guidelines (2012) and the four pillars of the city's strategic plan—strong, vibrant, healthy and connected—are well reflected in the plan's implementation details.

Active Transportation coordinator Adam Krupper has worked tirelessly to promote the plan, which, in his words “presents a brave new vision” for transportation in Thunder Bay.

“This transportation plan is for a multi-modal system, a connected network of recreational bike trails and commuter bike lanes to complement the city's vehicular streets, transit routes and sidewalks,” noted Krupper in an interview for this article.

Above: Safe accessible bike lanes are beginning to appear in Thunder Bay



In the four years since it was adopted, elements of the plan have materialized. Dedicated and shared bike lanes run along streets parallel to major arterials, bike racks are installed at all new businesses, and are now a familiar sight on the front of transit buses.



Resident resistance and resolve

However, public perception of multi-modal transportation remains more negative than supportive, despite continued infrastructure funding to adjust right-of-way widths during street upgrades and increase road platform widths in new street design to accommodate bicycles and sidewalks. Letters to the editor in local newspapers cite the dangers of bicyclists on the street to car drivers, the impact of bicycle traffic on traffic congestion and the threat to pedestrian safety.

“Keep bicycles off the streets and on the trails!” they say. “Why try to connect the parks and downtowns when two separate systems co-existed for over a hundred years? What’s the point of providing commuter bicycle routes when everyone drives everywhere in this spread-out city?”

The university student community says otherwise, as students look for convenient low-cost means to get to and from campus. Low-income neighbourhood residents also think otherwise, needing alternatives to driving to get around when

they do not have cars. And health-conscious individuals, who would prefer to be active in all ways, as part of their everyday life in the city, definitely speak out otherwise.

Thunder Bay residents may not be ready for the concept of complete streets, where the street becomes public space with accommodation for both traffic and social interaction. Yet, the idea of redesigning segments of the city’s open space and streets to offer people a broader set of choices for getting around and experiencing the city has some appeal. The Active Transportation Plan promises to build on people’s enthusiasm for the outdoors and civic pride in the city’s extensive parks and open space system by connecting them to the streets, neighbourhoods and downtowns with a variety of transportation options.

Vibrant connected streets in a unified city are the goal of the active transportation initiative, and a healthy active community is the outcome.

Thora Carlidge, MCIP, RPP, is a Development Services planner and Active Transportation Infrastructure Development Committee member in the City of Thunder Bay. The 2012 [OPPI Symposium](#) on September 20 and 21 will bring together planners and other stakeholders from around the province to help move the agenda forward on active transportation and healthy communities.



Making the Healthy Choice the Default Choice

Ontario communities build the way

By Andrea Feller

When it comes to the built environment, many areas in Ontario are demonstrating innovation, integration, and solid, concrete improvements to systems and structures. Not too long ago, when I would talk about changing the built environment, it was clear that it was considered a “nice to do,” a luxury. That perception is starting to change and the understanding of the health need for these innovations becoming more commonplace.

Thanks to the incredible work of planners, engineers, health and other dedicated professionals across many fields, we have evidence building almost daily that poorly designed environments directly affect our state of health and wellness or wellbeing, and that there are realistic solutions.

Health and the built environment

Our sedentary, drive-to and drive-through culture has evolved much more quickly than the human body and mind can or will. We simply are not meant to be so still and so overfed.

Depending on which area of the country you review, around half of all adults are overweight or obese. According to Institute for Clinical Evaluative Sciences data, at its current pace, the rates of diabetes in Ontario would be expected to go from 1 in 18 adults in the '90s, past the current one in 10¹, to one in seven by 2025/2026. The rise in diabetes goes along

with a rise in overweight. Also, pediatricians did not see much, if any Type II diabetes in children during training. Now, physicians who see children are seeing much more diabetes, high cholesterol and high blood pressure in their patients along with increasing overweight and obesity.

The links have also been made between the built environment and body weight and diabetes^{2,3}, and studies are drilling down further to look at causality and the impacts of the built environment on children.⁴ The evidence points most consistently to support utilitarian activity (i.e., active transportation).⁵

While factors for physical activity and weight and concomitant health effects are very complex, the research continues to identify factors around preference, key aspects of healthy built environments, and the need for utilitarian activity. For example, a study by Csizmadia et. al.⁶ showed that those with the highest level of activities have most of this activity during non-leisure time. There are many other health benefits that come from well designed communities, including community and social connectivity, quality of life, decreased injuries, and all of the benefits of decreased vehicle traffic.

Ontario has seen related reports, legislation and policies crossing health, municipal affairs and transportation over the last decade.⁷ Indeed, attention to the built environment is increasing worldwide.⁸

Finding solutions: Niagara context

In 2008, senior leaders at the Niagara Region worked together to recommend and develop a new department to focus on the work that crosses departments, and that requires real integration. The department, called Integrated Community Planning, shows Niagara Region's commitment to real improvement, in a realistic and feasible way within the political and government structures of this two-tier municipality.

In fall 2009, Ontario's Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and the Ontario Professional Planners Institute released *Planning by Design: A Healthy Communities Handbook*. In the spring of 2010, regional council endorsed it as an important tool for planning and decision-making in Niagara.

This process was important for many reasons. It highlighted the abilities of the new department to bring together work that previously was done by three different departments (Planning, Public Works and Public Health), while offering the opportunity to highlight work in the community that exemplified healthy community practices. It directed staff to review regional official plan policies in the context of this handbook, and led to a commitment to keep council informed of advances and opportunities related to healthy communities planning and implementation.

Andrea Feller, MD, MS FAAP, is associate medical officer of health with Niagara Region Public Health. She can be reached at andrea.feller@niagararegion.ca. Andrea is speaking at the 2012 OPPI Symposium on September 20 and 21 where planners and other stakeholders will come together to help move the agenda forward on active transportation and healthy communities.

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Employer Partnerships

Encouraging transit use

By Tamas Hertel

In today's environment, businesses are constantly looking for ways to improve their environmental mandate, show leadership and produce a positive corporate image. At the same time employee retention and attraction continue to be top priorities in running a business. One way that businesses are attempting to address these goals is by providing increased travel options for employees that are viable alternatives to single-occupant vehicle travel.

When implementing programs to encourage employees to use public transit, businesses can reduce parking capacity offered, while showing environmental stewardship. One of the greatest determinants of public transit use is the "first mile/last mile" of the trip; in other words the connection from home to transit and the connection from transit to work. This "first mile/last mile" can discourage transit use by adding a significant amount of time, discomfort and expense for transit riders. This article outlines an innovative initiative addressing this very issue.

The opening of the Toronto Transit Commission's Sheppard Subway line in 2002 brought a high capacity and high frequency



Don Mills subway meets shuttle

transit option for commuters living or working along Sheppard Avenue between Highway 404 and Yonge Street. However, the subway stopped short of a major employment area. The Don Mills Corporate Business Park houses 20,000 employees, yet most businesses are located about a 10 to 30 minute walk from the Don Mills Station. This last segment of the journey for commuters using transit via Don Mills Station consisted of two options: an indirect peak-only transit connection or a long and uncomfortable walk across the



Highway 404 overpass. This has hindered the subway's effectiveness in serving the business park.

The need for a shuttle service to provide employees with an efficient, convenient and comfortable connection between the office front door and the transit terminal has been a topic of discussion since the opening of the Sheppard Subway line. A solution finally came to light February 1, when Smart Commute - North Toronto, Vaughan—the local transportation management association—and five employers in the business park launched the Don Mills Corporate Shuttle pilot project. The shuttle is a privately-run service that operates one 24-seat bus five days a week on a 30-minute frequency for two hours during the AM peak, two hours during the lunchtime period, and three hours during the PM peak (route map image).

The shuttle pilot was made possible through an innovative funding agreement brokered by Smart Commute - North Toronto, Vaughan between the employers, Metrolinx and the City of Toronto. Employees ride the service for free.

While most employer shuttles are provided by a property manager at one specific site, the Don Mills Shuttle provides one of the first examples of a partnership between multiple employers serving multiple locations within the business park. The unique operational model was not without its challenges. Due to the many players involved in its development, facilitation between the five partner employers, service provider (Smart Commute - North Toronto, Vaughan), government supporters (Metrolinx, City of Toronto) and service operator required transparency and cooperation.

In a short period of time, preliminary monitoring has shown this model to be effective. Ridership on the shuttle has increased 33 per cent between the first and second months of operation and 35 per cent between the third and fourth months. Users have reported an unprecedented 100 per cent satisfaction rate with the service. In response, the initial three-month pilot was extended a further three months, with a working group formed to assess options for a permanent service and the potential for increasing service and adding partners.

While it is still too early to determine the shuttle's full potential in attracting employees to transit, preliminary results have shown that 14 per cent of shuttle users would have driven their cars instead of using public transit if the shuttle was not available.

The Don Mills Corporate Shuttle pilot project shows that an efficient "first mile/last mile" connection has the potential to promote transit ridership and employers can be willing and committed partners in such a service.

Dillon Consulting is one of five employer partners in the Don Mills Corporate Shuttle. Tamas Hertel, MCIP, RPP, is Dillon's representative to Smart Commute - North Toronto, Vaughan and is an advisor to the continuous development and improvement of the shuttle. Tamas is a transportation planner with Dillon Consulting Limited and can be reached at thertel@dillon.ca. Hear about other examples of active transportation at the 2012 [OPPI Symposium](#) on September 20 and 21.



Canada Walks

Making Ontario communities walk friendly

By Mandy Johnson

Ontario municipalities will be eligible for a new WALK Friendly Ontario designation in 2013, which encourages and celebrates communities that take steps to make walking safe, convenient and attractive. The initial response is enthusiastic as municipalities increasingly realize that walkable communities are desirable places to live, work, play and do business.

According to a recent study by Toronto Public Health, The Walkable City, residents across the GTHA overwhelmingly prefer walk-friendly neighbourhoods¹. "And we have found the same preference in our recent work with communities in every region of Ontario," adds WFO consultant Mandy Johnson.

A new study released by the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce shows that business is also making the connection. The report concludes: "Walkable environments should be considered economic infrastructure."²

Walk friendly communities are inclusive, welcoming and accessible to all regardless of age, income level or physical ability. This is important to the more than 30 per cent of Ontarians that do not drive. Substituting the everyday short trips made by automobile with walking trips can also reduce

carbon footprints and improve air quality, contributing to municipal sustainability goals.

Planning for walk friendly communities

There are a number of land use components that influence walkability³ including the layout, design and maintenance of interconnected networks of non-motorized sidewalks, paths and trails and the adjacent mix of land uses. These enable people safe and comfortable access to range of services and destinations in an attractive ambiance.

Creating communities that are well connected with quality infrastructure and amenities requires strong land use planning policies that shape the built environment in ways that support walking. For example site plan control requirements can help to create communities that are aesthetically pleasing, with amenities that make walking enjoyable. These can include seating and shade, gathering places like plazas or parkettes, attractive building façades, and landscaping.

These elements encourage people not only to travel through an area, but linger, and stroll, sit, relax, enjoy, and of course,



shop, eat and spend money. The pleasant and joyful experience of walking is also key to developing a sense of place—a deep sense of connection and belonging in the community.

Recognition for municipalities

“Walking is the most natural form of transportation and we sometimes take it for granted,” says project manager Kate Hall. “WALK Friendly Ontario is a way for us to recognize municipalities for their efforts to create more walk friendly spaces and places.”

Through its past experience, Canada Walks has learned about the great work municipalities are doing to make walking a priority, often spread across several departments. Participating in WALK Friendly Ontario will help municipalities document all walking-related programs, projects, and policies in one place, creating a comprehensive resource for staff.

To receive a designation, communities will complete an assessment that measures progress across a range of factors. The process is similar to the Bicycle Friendly Communities program initiated by partner organization Share the Road Cycling Coalition. Website www.walkfriendly.ca offers a wealth of resources. There is ample time to gather a team of stakeholders and plan for improvements prior to the first intake of applications in 2013. For inspiration, see Seattle,

which received a platinum designation from the U.S. walk friendly program.

Find out more about WALK Friendly Ontario at the 2012 [OPPI Symposium](#) on September 20 and 21 in Markham. Mandy Johnson, BA, Physical Education, combines her background in health and fitness with her concern for the environment as an active transportation consultant with the Canada Walks department of Green Communities Canada. She is currently working on the WALK Friendly Ontario project to create more walk friendly municipalities across the province.

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Complete Streets for Canada

Out of the niche and into the mainstream

By Ryan Anders Whitney

Jurisdictions across Ontario are increasingly recognizing that street design directly impacts the vibrancy and health of our communities. Creating streets that cater only to drivers has been linked to a variety of social ills including but not limited to obesity (Frank et. al., 2004), safety (Dumbaugh and Li, 2011), pollution (Kennedy et. al., 2005), loss of pride in place (Freeman, 2001) and traffic congestion. Such consequences are only predicted to increase if streets and cities are built and retrofitted using a business-as-usual approach that gives automobiles dominance over other modes. Simply stated, we are driving ourselves to a reduced quality of life.

To help reverse automobile dominant planning practices and their associated ills, municipalities across Ontario and Canada are increasingly recommending and adopting complete streets policies. These ensure that transportation planners and engineers design streets for road users of all ages and abilities including pedestrians, cyclists, transit users and drivers. Key to a complete streets policy is a balanced approach that works to create a network of continuous infrastructure by ensuring that the entire right-of-way is designed with all road users in mind, not simply applied piecemeal when convenient. It makes an all-users perspective routine and recognizes that a downtown street will not necessarily have the same needs as a suburban street.



Yonge Street at Shutter Street in Toronto
Redesigned as a Complete Street

Growth of the complete streets movement

The Complete Streets Movement is taking hold in municipalities across Canada inspired by the popularity of the movement in the United States. As of July 2012, nearly 400 jurisdictions had adopted or made a commitment to adopt a complete streets policy in the U.S. (National Complete Streets Coalition, 2012).

The first complete streets policy in Ontario was adopted as part of the City of Waterloo's 2011 Transportation Master Plan. Subsequently, a policy was included in the city's draft official plan currently being reviewed by Waterloo Region (TCAT, 2012a). Waterloo is now working towards implementing the policy city-wide.

The Complete Streets Gap Analysis: Opportunities and Barriers in Ontario, released by the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation in April, found that over 40 per cent of the 17 municipalities surveyed across the province already use the



term ‘complete streets’ in at least one of their official planning documents (TCAT, 2012a).

Interest is also brewing at other levels of government across Ontario. For example, the Ontario Ministry of Transportation released 2012 Transit Supportive Guidelines that contain a section on how to achieve Complete Streets (TCAT, 2012a). At the regional level, Niagara Region recently completed a study that found current regional and provincial policy supports the development, adoption and implementation of Complete Streets in the region’s 12 municipalities (Niagara Region, 2012). The likely result of this will be the gradual development of new Complete Streets policies across Niagara’s municipalities.

Complete Streets is on the radar across Canada as well.

Calgary is leading the way having adopted a Complete Streets policy in its Municipal Development Plan (the Alberta equivalent of an official plan) and the Calgary Transportation Master Plan in 2009 (TCAT, 2012a). To turn this policy into routine practice the city is developing interim Complete Streets Guidelines to show decision makers what a complete street would look like on rights-of-way across the city (City of Calgary, 2012).

Other Canadian communities have identified complete streets as a priority when moving forward with policy development. These communities include Victoria, Winnipeg, Moncton, and Charlottetown. Winnipeg’s 2011 Transportation Master Plan, for example, recommends adoption of a city-wide complete streets policy (TCAT, 2012b).

Complete Streets policy implementation

A complete streets policy requires consideration of many different elements to ensure the policy is comprehensive enough to cover all levels of road construction, retrofit and the reconstruction process. There are 10 elements recommended to ensure a policy is comprehensive enough to support implementation.

To put the policy into routine practice, municipalities need training and coordination. It is recommended that an inter-departmental complete streets committee be set up.

The Toronto Centre for Active Transportation intends to continue to coordinate the complete streets movement across Ontario and Canada by providing case studies, policy expertise, news and the latest research on the Complete Streets for Canada website. It is also in the initial stages of launching workshops in 2013 with the Association for Pedestrian and Bicycle Professionals to help communities re-write policy and change internal practices to ensure city-wide implementation.

As complete streets move from policy to practice it will

become clear that the outcome of a well-written policy will be a healthier and more inclusive community. Safe, connected and convenient options to get around by walking, cycling and transit will become the norm and communities that fall behind will suffer as citizen preference increasingly favours livable communities.

To achieve lasting change requires visionary political leaders, an engaged and supportive public, and the know-how and dedication to change current practices. Key to success will be the depoliticalization of complete streets including the disassociation of cycling, walking and transit investments with ‘leftwing’ or ‘rightwing’ politics. Indeed, long-term support from all political corners will be needed to reverse decades of auto-centric planning culture and infrastructure.

Fortunately, the question is already beginning to shift in Canadian municipalities. No longer are they asking ‘why’ they need complete streets but rather ‘how’ can they adopt and implement Complete Streets.

Ryan Anders Whitney is the complete streets researcher and project manager at Toronto Centre for Active Transportation, where he helps communities across Ontario and Canada adopt and implement complete streets policies. He can be reached at ryan.whitney@tcat.ca. Find out more about the Complete Streets Movement at the 2012 OPPI Symposium on September 20 and 21 in Markham.

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Niagara Active Transportation Summit

Shaping communities through collaboration

By Travis Macbeth and Denise Landry

The connections between land use patterns, transportation options/choices, and a community's physical well-being and health are becoming more and more evident. Concerns over physical inactivity, auto-dependency, obesity, and rates of chronic diseases like diabetes are facing many Ontario's communities.

As a fundamental contributor to the shape of our communities, the planning profession has recently made significant strides in addressing these concerns and promoting initiatives for healthy communities, active transportation, and complete streets. These initiatives can help promote a more dynamic, engaging public realm, more social cohesion and interaction, and a healthier citizenry and greener environment.

But planners alone cannot succeed in constructing healthy, active, accessible communities. Greater collaboration among planners, engineers and public health professionals is essential. Traditionally there have been divisions among these professions in education and practice, despite common goals and responsibilities. As was noted in the December 2011 issue of *New Urban News*, this legacy has left public health professionals with little experience in land use planning or decision making regarding the built environment, and with few planners or engineers able to comprehensively analyze the health implications of zoning, land use and transportation planning.

Niagara has, like many communities across Ontario, undertaken inter-disciplinary initiatives advancing active transportation and community well-being. Some recent examples include: staff secondments from the region's Public Health Department to the Integrated Community Planning Department; Healthy Living Niagara writing a guide to support active transportation in official plans; developing a Transportation Demand Management policy framework;

launching a regional transit system in September 2011; and hosting an Active Transportation Summit in Niagara Falls in November 2011.

The Active Transportation Summit in particular exemplified inter-professional collaboration, drawing over 100 participants, including planners, engineers, public health and recreation professionals and elected officials from the region, local municipalities, private consultancy firms, and local stakeholders.

The keynote speaker was Sam Schwartz, who some may recognize as the man who invented the neologism "gridlock!" Schwartz offered many compelling reasons to support active transportation, after all not everyone drives a car, but every single person is a pedestrian throughout their life. He also noted that Niagara is only the third community in his speaking career where planning, engineering and public health professionals were working collaboratively to create healthy communities that support active transportation.

The summit also included small group activities and brainstorming sessions on local Niagara successes as well as the challenges it faces. Some of the more frequently mentioned successes included bicycle and active transportation tourism through initiatives such as the Bike Train, Greater Niagara Circle Route trails, and bicycle mapping and master plan. And while it was acknowledged that some concerns persist, such as linking active transportation to *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, and improving coordination among the many passionate citizens' active transportation groups throughout the region, it was evident from the participation at this summit that active transportation and healthy communities are top of mind among all interrelated professions.

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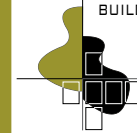
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Annual gatherings to showcase and discuss Active Transportation initiatives underway may become the norm in Niagara Region. The summit and initiatives to date illustrate the interdisciplinary approach the region has taken and paves the way for local municipalities to adopt similar collaborative relationships to create healthy communities.

Travis Macbeth, MA, MES (Pl.) and Denise Landry, BURPI, are planners at Niagara Region and provisional members of OPPI. Find out more at the 2012 [OPPI Symposium](#) on September 20 and 21 where planners and other stakeholders from around the province will come together to help move the agenda forward on active transportation and healthy communities.



Hamilton's The Gore

Pedestrianization pilot project

By *Le' Ann Whitehouse Seely*

The City of Hamilton is converting a 332-metre, three-block stretch of roadway in its downtown core into a place for pedestrians. The pedestrianization initiative is the result of recommendations from a 2008 review of its Downtown Transportation Master Plan. The recommendations were to re-route public transit buses, which once idled in a portion of the three block stretch of road, to a new multi-modal transit facility elsewhere downtown; undertake a study to redesign the area as a pedestrian space; and begin the conversion as a pilot project.

The two-hectare, triangular downtown space at the core of the project is referred to as The Gore. It is unique and quite significant to the heritage and culture of Hamilton. It was set aside by the city's founder, George Hamilton, as public space in 1816 and has been passionately defended as such ever since. However, it is the recent community based planning and design of the space that is truly out of the ordinary.

Community-based planning and design

With an understanding of the deeply rooted significance of the space, Hamilton's Public Works Department developed a design process with public stakeholders at the heart of the decision-making process. The six phase process integrates the Municipal Class Environmental Assessment process, and the city's timeline for streetscape planning and design.

A 30 member Public Stakeholder Group was established with representatives from interest groups, as well as citizens at large. A Staff Stakeholder Group was also set up to have a mechanism in place where issues and ideas identified by stakeholders could be considered by staff during the process, rather than at its conclusion. This on-going two-way feedback allowed items to be dealt with as they came up, precluding the possibility of something insurmountable being brought forward to staff at a point where the public felt it had found a preferred plan.

Gore Master Plan

The first two of the six phase process were considered complete with the review of the Downtown transportation Master Plan and opening of the new multi-modal transit terminal, which allowed for re-routing of buses. Phase three was the starting point of the design process for the Gore Master Plan, however in this phase there wasn't a single sketch produced.

Phase three was dedicated to finding agreement among the public and staff stakeholders concerning the criteria for success.

With agreement from both stakeholder groups, the process moved out into Phase four where design alternatives were considered. The result was a preferred conceptual plan with a unique authenticity and relevance to the people of Hamilton.

Pedestrianization pilot project

Re-routing of public transit buses to a new multi-modal transit terminal on MacNab Street was implemented in 2010. The comprehensive design study was initiated in 2008, with the resulting preferred conceptual plan presented to Hamilton council in early 2010. The pedestrianization pilot project ran through the summer of 2012 on one of the three blocks in the Gore Master Plan area.

The project is currently in Phase five, detailed design development. The purpose of the pilot is to mimic the preferred conceptual plan in a temporary fashion and close the road to through traffic for a limited period of time in order to better understand the impacts of a pedestrianized street. Public Works staff will use that information to develop detailed plans pursuant to implementation of the Gore Master Plan. Although the timing of implementation of the overall Gore Master Plan is yet to be confirmed, Phase six will move the project through to completion.

Le' Ann Whitehouse Seely, OALA, CSLA, CLARB Certified, is a landscape architectural services project manager in the City of Hamilton Public Works Department and can be reached at LeAnn.Seely@Hamilton.ca. Find out more at the 2012 [OPPI Symposium](#) on September 20 and 21 where planners and other stakeholders from around the province will come together to help move the agenda forward on active transportation and healthy communities.



View of the proposed pedestrianized roadway, looking west



Knowledge Exchange Network

Broadening the dialogue

By Sean Norman and Jackie Gervais

In recent years there has been an increasing awareness of the relationship between the built environment, healthy living and well-being and the economic strength of our communities. To broaden and inform the dialogue Niagara Region is facilitating stakeholder engagement to create a web-based knowledge exchange network (KEN).

From a public health perspective, over 40 per cent of Niagara residents over the age of 12 are reported to be inactive (Rapid Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2007). Physical inactivity is a contributing factor in the growing epidemic of chronic diseases related to obesity (such as type 2 diabetes and cancers). The economic burden of chronic disease in Ontario is estimated to be 55 per cent of total direct and indirect health costs (Ministry of Health and Long Term Care, 2012).

The *Provincial Policy Statement* provides direction on land use planning standards by which regional and municipal

governments are to structure their official plans. Many of these land use planning standards include mixed land uses, increased urban density and community design that support active transportation and public transit. This in turn has an impact on residents' physical activity levels, thereby increasing the overall well-being of the community.

Active transportation refers to modes of transportation that are human-powered (e.g., walking, running, cycling, skateboarding, and so on.). It can also refer to any combination of non-motorized transportation with public transit. The health benefits of are well known and understood. There is no debate that active transportation leads to healthy citizens and the overall well-being and vitality of a community. While the specific costs of providing infrastructure and amenities are known, the direct and indirect economic and health benefits can be much more difficult to determine.

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Decision-makers continue to face the challenge of striking a balance between community needs and the current fiscal reality. Thus there is a growing need for an evidence-based, economic assessment of the costs and benefits of active transportation infrastructure to better support the decision making-process.

To address this complex issue, Healthy Living Niagara, in partnership with Niagara Region Public Health, volunteers and community partners developed a strategy to support active transportation. One part of this strategy is the initiation of the project on Economic Value of Active Transportation and the Impact of the Built Environment on Well-Being. The goal of the project is to facilitate the exchange of information regarding the economic value and benefits of active transportation, increase awareness across the community, better inform decision-makers of the potential benefits and further demonstrate how active transportation will contribute to the well-being and vitality of communities in Niagara.

The project is envisioned to be multi-faceted and multi-year, with numerous components and several deliverables leading to the final product: a web-based knowledge exchange network (KEN). The KEN will include an economic assessment model capable of calculating the economic benefit (i.e., savings and/or revenue) that can be realized as a result of providing active transportation infrastructure in the community.

As one of the first steps in the project, Healthy Living Niagara retained Urban & Environmental Management Inc. of

Niagara Falls to facilitate several sessions with a project steering committee and thus engage local stakeholders. Members included representatives from Brock University, Niagara Region Public Health, Niagara Region Planning, Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport, Niagara Region Public Works, Healthy Living Niagara, the local tourism industry, Niagara Sports Commission, local politicians, community groups and special interest groups.

The next phase of the project will continue to focus on citizen and stakeholder engagement. Potential end-users of the KEN will be surveyed to determine how the tool might be used, what would be required of the tool, and what information stakeholders could provide to populate the inputs. By continuing to involve others, the project will build a wider sense of ownership and significantly increase the project's likelihood of success.

Sean Norman is an environmental planner with Urban & Environmental Management Inc. (UEM) in Niagara Falls. Jackie Gervais is a Health Promoter with Niagara Region Public Health. Sean can be reached at snorman@uemconsulting.com and Jackie can be reached at jackie.gervais@niagararegion.ca.

Find out more at the 2012 [OPPI Symposium](#) on September 20 and 21 where planners and other stakeholders from around the province will come together to help move the agenda forward on active transportation and healthy communities. ♦

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Contradiction or hidden reality in rural Ontario?

By Dr. Wayne Caldwell, Dr. Jennifer Ball and Katie Temple

Rural Ontario communities are faced with a multitude of serious issues, not the least of which is limited or negative population growth. In these scenarios, municipal planning is no longer an act of 'growth management' as it often is in urban centres. This situation consequently begs a number of important questions for planners. First, how should we begin to look at and understand these downward population trends? And second, what is the role of the planner in these communities?

Much of rural Ontario, and indeed rural Canada, has been facing population stagnation and decline for years, with little expectation for a dramatic change in the coming years. Between 1996 and 2006, 16 counties and districts in Ontario lost population and the future does not look much different, as the predicted collective growth rate for these areas averages only 0.3 per cent over the next 20 years.

With these realities facing rural regions, the initial impulse of decision makers may be to simply scramble for ways to halt or slow down this trend rather than face the situation from a holistic perspective. Although depopulation is a serious issue and can contribute to other problems, such as declining service provision and labour shortages, it is critical to look more closely at what is happening in the community to understand what is happening beyond the numbers. The first thing that could emerge is the possibility that, despite population loss or limited growth, the community might still have strengths in other areas that can be built upon. There are rural communities and regions in Ontario where this is the case.

In a recent research study conducted through the Rural Planning and Development program at the University of Guelph, a number of case studies and vignettes were developed that examined rural regions and municipalities that stood out as role models in community economic development, even with a stable or declining population. In these rural regions, community leaders were quite successful in focusing on improving the quality of life for their citizens through community and economic development, rather than on addressing depopulation as a singular goal.

This work, however, was not a quick fix to their problems, but rather a longer-term outlook that attempted to make a community more resilient in the face of local, national and global issues. Through processes such as strategic planning and visioning, partnership building, fostering local leadership, building a diverse business sector, leveraging financial capital and involving citizens in major decision making, some towns and regions are slowly working, one step at a time, to create communities where people are not only able to, but want to stay.

One of these areas is Huron County, a region that has had limited population growth for years but remains economically stable. One of its approaches to community economic development has been a strong linkage between its planning and economic development functions. Huron Economic Development Matters offers a unique partnership model between a CED corporation and an upper-tier municipality, as multiple collaborations link staff all the way up to the director level. Citizen engagement also continues to be an integral part of the planning and development process. Another focus in the county is support for its multitude of small and diverse businesses, through building individual capacity with loans, entrepreneurial skills and business management advice.

Another example is the Town of Marathon, a small town of 4,000 in northwestern Ontario. It aims for community economic development that links economic, environmental and social goals and in recent years it has put a high priority on planning for community economic development. Marathon has historically been dependent on its natural resources, both gold and wood, for its economic stability. However, in 2009 it was dealt a difficult blow because of the permanent closure of its pulp mill, which put close to 250 people out of work. The town is now taking the lead in seeking out new options for the mill including development of biofuels, and it is also working towards a model of sustainable community-governance for its local forest.

Are there lessons for planners that can be taken from these case studies? In such communities, it is essential that planning work involve both community development and local economic development. Working with other community leaders and decision makers, planners can help customize a plan that is not a one-size-fits-all development scenario. By using their unique ability to bring together a wide network of individuals and organizations, planners can help establish a community vision that is based on what a community still has, rather than what it is losing.

To access the research reports as well as the case studies and vignettes visit www.ruralplanninganddevelopment.ca and www.waynecaldwell.ca.

Wayne Caldwell, PhD, MCIP, RPP, is a professor in rural planning and director of the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development at the University of Guelph. Jennifer Ball, PhD, MCIP, RPP, is a research associate at the University of Guelph and private consultant/facilitator. Katie Temple, MSc (PLAN), is a graduate of the Masters program in Rural Planning and Development at the University of Guelph and currently practices in Corner Brook, Nfld.

Planning and the new framework

By Greg Suttor

Most of Ontario's upper-tier and unitary municipalities, and Northern Ontario's district Social Services Administration Boards, have started developing 10-year plans for housing and homelessness. Under the new provincial affordable housing framework these must be in place by January 1, 2014.

The scope of the 10-year plans is broad, encompassing the spectrum from market housing to social housing and beyond. The plans must be prepared in consultation with municipalities and approved by councils

This may be old news to some readers, and little known to others. What are the origins of this, the intended scope of these plans, and the implications for professional planners working at the local or regional level?

These plans are a requirement of the new Ontario legislative and policy framework in the *Housing Services Act* and the *Ontario Housing Policy Statement*. The new act replaces the former *Social Housing Reform Act* as the framework governing social housing, while also treading into the ambitious new ground of 10-year plans.

The framework points to questions about the scope of the plans and the relationship to activity under the *Planning Act*. The 10-year plans will need the expertise and input of local and regional planners in most cases. In the best scenario, the plans will foster a fruitful discourse between planners and policy-makers responsible for housing programs, official plans and zoning-by-laws, and other services inside and outside municipal government.

Affordable housing means various things, depending on context and income levels. Affordability of market housing is affected by municipal decisions including infrastructure and *Planning Act* approvals. Affordability in social housing is achieved by non-market operation and subsidies, overseen

since devolution in 2000/01 by 47 designated service managers that are also responsible for most homeless-related programs. (Service managers are upper and single-tier municipalities, the Northern boards, or one municipality among a county/separated city pairing or small county pairing.)

The form of the new *Ontario Provincial Housing Policy Statement* is modelled on the *Provincial Policy Statement* under the *Planning Act*. Unlike the PPS, it does not govern municipal land use decisions that may be disputed at the Ontario Municipal Board and affect billions of dollars of real estate. But the scopes of the two statements intersect. The new 10-year plans for housing and homelessness are intended to span the gamut, from market housing and related land use planning, to homeless issues and related service planning.

Under the *Housing Services Act* and the housing policy statement, the 10-year plan must "address the matters of provincial interest" set out in the HSA and be "consistent with" the directions set out in the HPS. It is to be a strategic long-term plan for affordable housing and homelessness. This has arrived at just the point when the future of funding for social housing and homeless-related programs faces more questions and challenges than at any time in the past decade.

Some of the provincial requirements relate to the process to prepare the plan. It must include "an assessment of current and future housing needs," it must involve consultations, and it must be "coordinated... with all municipalities in the service area." The municipal council of each service manager must approve the plan, which is subject to review by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The responsible municipality must review its plan at least every five years and amend it as it deems fit.

Other provincial requirements relate to the content of the plan. It is to include "objectives and targets relating to housing needs," set out implementation steps and set in motion a process of monitoring and reporting on indicators to be determined. It should include strategies to prevent and reduce homelessness, and identify gaps in related programs. It should contain strategies to improve delivery of and access to affordable housing, and support non-profit and co-op housing in this. The plan should "set out a strategy to generate municipal support for an active and vital private ownership and rental market." It must address various aspects of housing-with-supports for higher-need populations.

Provincial messaging suggests that it will be a matter of best efforts, rather than meeting some ideal standard within the 15 months from now to year-end 2013. The planning process is intended to create a shared community vision

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and move discussions and decisions toward approaches that address housing as a whole system and continuum. Given the great funding uncertainties, most 10-year plans will not be investment plans or service plans. Municipal affairs and housing ministry presentations have referred to “aspirational” plans, recognizing the widely varying capacity and staff resources of service manager municipalities.

Developing these plans will require interdepartmental collaboration in most service manager municipalities. Only this will produce a plan that addresses the spectrum, from market housing to social housing to homeless-related programs. In most cases, plan development is being led by a division or department in the human services area—housing programs, human services planning, Ontario Works, or homelessness programs. In other cases, a planning division/department is leading the process. These plans will also require coordination with other sectors, such as mental health service planning by Local Health Integration Networks.

Involvement of OPPI planning professionals will be important to the success of the housing and homelessness plans in most jurisdictions. The land use planning process has a political legitimacy and impact that affordable housing and homeless programs can only wish for in many communities. When it comes to analysing housing needs, or hiring consultants to do so (if time and resources permit), it is usually planners who have the mandate, expertise and data. Consultations for developing the 10-year plan will need to be coordinated with any consultations on official

plan matters that are happening in 2012 and 2013.

Resources will be available to help with developing the plans. The ministry’s Municipal Services Offices have team leads and housing specialists who can work with municipal staff. The Ontario Municipal Social Services Association, in collaboration with the ministry, Association of Municipalities of Ontario, and others, has set up a resource centre at www.hhrconline.com to provide information and examples for development of 10-year plans.

As these plans are a significant new element in the strategic planning function of Ontario municipal government, each municipality will have to work out an interface between this 10-year plan and other priority setting—official plan, corporate plan, human services plan and economic development strategy. The official plan may be one foundation on which the 10-year plan rests, or vice-versa—but the interface cannot be ignored. This will require senior management buy-in, champions on council, and collaborative upper-lower tier relationships.

The shape and content of the 10-year housing and homelessness plans is likely to vary widely among different municipalities. However, a thoughtful interface with official plans and collaborative involvement of planning professionals will be essential to their successful development.

Greg Suttor is an affordable housing consultant, whose work includes services for the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association. He can be reached at www.gregsuttor.ca.

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Leading practices in public consultation

By Karla Kolli

Planners have always had a responsibility to use consultation best practices to engage a broad spectrum of stakeholders. Recently new provincial legislation and regulations have come into effect making it mandatory that organizations and professionals implement four core principles of accessibility—dignity, independence, integration and equal opportunity. Practically speaking this means planners need to meet the needs of people with disabilities by removing barriers that may limit their ability to become informed and involved in projects within their communities.

According to the Ministry of Community and Social Services one in seven people in Ontario, about 1.85-million people, has a disability. By 2036 this is expected to rise to one in five people in Ontario due to an aging population.

The *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act* (AODA) came into force in 2005. Its overall goal is to make the province accessible by 2025, removing barriers—architectural, communication, attitude, systemic—for people with disabilities and different abilities. Key standards under the legislation include the *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation* (O.Reg. 429/07) which became law in January 2008, and the *Integrated Accessibility Regulation* (O.Reg. 191/11) enacted in June 2011. The draft of the final regulation, which addresses the design of public spaces in the built environment, was recently posted, beginning its 45-day public review period which will end October 1. Updates to the *Ontario Building Code* are still pending.

The *Accessibility Standards for Customer Service Regulation* requires organizations that deliver goods or services to the public or other businesses to develop policies and procedures to break down barriers for people with disabilities and to provide training to staff. All Ontario organizations including governments, not-for-profit organizations and Ontario businesses were to be in compliance with this regulation as of January 2012.

The *Integrated Accessibility Regulation* requires organizations who deal with the public to make the process accessible to people with disabilities including providing accessible formats—such as large print, recorded audio and electronic formats, Braille—and communication supports—including captioning, alternative and augmentative supports, plain language, sign language. This regulation also requires that the web content of public sector and large organizations (those with 50+ employees) conform to the World Wide Web Consortium Web Content Accessibility Guidelines. These guidelines are designed to make web content more accessible for people with disabilities and older people, as well as others. The deadline for compliance with this regulation will be phased in from 2012 to 2021.

Among other resources, the International Association for Public Participation (IAP2) has established six core values, which are intended to represent the foundation of good public participation.

Getting more attuned to the needs of people with disabilities

As consultation practitioners, planners' intentions are always to encourage greater participation in the programs and projects they work on, thus supporting the AODA principles. However, there

are always opportunities to improve, and looking through the AODA lens will enhance the quality of interaction with everyone. The following tips are useful reminders.

Make sure the venues for open houses are accessible. Consider contacting the local paratransit provider to see if it can accommodate trips to the event location.

Include a list of available assistive devices in the notice for public meetings. Consider adding things like magnifying glasses to consultation tool kits. Some municipalities have other assistive devices on hand for public events. Also make sure there are hard copies of display panel materials available to make it easier for someone to sit down and read through the panels.

Have the consultation panel or presentation materials posted on a website at the same time as the event. Electronic formats provide opportunities for people to view the material at a time and place convenient for them. Consider creating and posting an accessible document so that it can be read by people using screen readers, magnifiers or other assistive devices.

Prior to public events, take a few minutes to remind staff how to appropriately interact with people with disabilities. The *Training Resource - Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act, 2005* provides numerous tips including some that appear obvious but are often overlooked.

People with disabilities may need extra time with the presentation materials or in discussions with staff. It is important to have sufficient staff at public events so there is someone who can take the time required to provide respectful service to people with disabilities.

When using websites, iPads and mobile technology tools think about how the content will be perceived. Ask yourself—Is the writing large enough for people to see? Is there sufficient contrast between the text and background? Is the path to the material straightforward?

When making presentations, remember that it is hard to see from the back of the room and it may not be possible to dim the lights. It is important to keep the type size large, use few words and make sure the graphics are simple. Remember to use a microphone so that people can hear what is being said.

Summary

To fulfill the requirements of the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, consultation processes need to use the resources and tools available to ensure that all members of the community have an opportunity to become involved. AODA makes accommodating persons with disabilities the law—but really it just makes good sense.

Karla Kolli, MCIP, RPP, is an associate and planner at Dillon Consulting with a focus on consultation and stakeholder engagement. Karla also manages Dillon's national planning practice. She can be reached at kkolli@dillon.ca.

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A policy void

By Michael Larkin and Michele Freethy



IMAGE COURTESY OF THE AUTHORS

Tecumseh Memorial Gardens, Tecumseh, Ontario

Cemeteries, unlike more traditional land uses such as residential, industrial and commercial, are often overlooked and generally ignored in the land use planning process in Ontario. Land use policy to guide cemetery development is lacking in an environment where demand for cemetery space cannot be met by existing properties. With the aging population, the need to better understand and plan for this use is becoming increasingly important.

The importance of cemetery planning

Cemeteries represent an important component of a community, serving society's need for the memorialisation and accommodation of the deceased. They also provide an integral component of human habitation and can be considered an urban amenity in maturing urban areas. They are a place for society to honour and pay homage to its deceased ancestors, and thus an important link to the cultural and societal heritage of communities.

The aging population in North America has led to increased demand for cemeteries and associated services. Consequently, the need for this use can only be expected to continue. The establishment of cemeteries by religious, ethnic and fraternal organizations only partially addresses this issue. Private cemetery companies contribute to the supply of cemetery space and the accommodation of a diversity of burial options. Collectively, however, the demand for cemetery space cannot keep up with the supply.

In Ontario, the *Cemeteries Act* guides the process associated with the functional aspects of cemeteries— their establishment, altering and closings. The determination of their physical location and design is determined through land use

permissions conveyed under the provincial *Planning Act*. Planning for this use, however, is often overlooked in a meaningful policy context by all levels of government.

The development of cemeteries often conflicts with formal land use planning policy. Provincial policy which favours intensification of uses in urban areas and the preservation of rural and agricultural areas is silent in regards to the importance, and thus the provision of this unique form of land use. Modern cemeteries typically require large properties in the order of 32 - 48 hectares of land. Such properties are generally unavailable within urban areas, or their value renders them unaffordable for use as a cemetery. Furthermore, municipal investment in physical infrastructure renders their use as a cemetery less attractive considering the capital investment in infrastructure required to support urban uses.

Cemetery policies in Ontario

In order to assess the extent of this planning challenge, a study was undertaken which reviewed cemetery policy in Ontario, as articulated through official plans of 46 Ontario municipalities. These included the 10 most populated municipalities in Ontario, all of the municipalities that immediately surround them and the regions or counties within which the municipalities are located. This area represents the primary concentration of population in Ontario, stretching from Windsor to Ottawa, comprising 61.7 per cent of the province's population. The official plans were ranked according to eight cemetery planning criteria—need, planning horizon, location, size, intensification, compatibility, environment and permanency.

Shockingly, only five municipalities achieved a score of 50 per cent or greater and the highest score achieved was 69 per cent. This means that only 11 per cent of the sampled municipalities provided official plan policy that partially considered the development of new cemeteries. Even more disturbing was the result indicating that 34 municipalities (74 per cent of the sample) achieved a score of 25 per cent or less, of which 10 municipalities (22 per cent) did not have any official plan policies respecting cemeteries.

Overall the study determined there is a general lack of appropriate land use policy to guide cemetery development in Ontario. Generally, there is no uniform definition of cemeteries, nor are cemeteries associated with any particular land use. Where cemeteries are identified, they are included in a variety of designations, such as open space/parkland, cemetery, greenbelt, institutional, rural and agricultural. Although the majority of municipalities (78 per cent) recognized cemeteries and/or addressed the need for cemeteries in official plan policies, an understanding of the

need for cemeteries was demonstrated in only 35 per cent of the plans and only 15 per cent acknowledged the amount of land required for cemetery use. Only 2 per cent of municipalities acknowledged the need for a longer term planning horizon for cemeteries and the permanency of cemeteries in their plans and 22 per cent addressed the location of cemeteries as being both an urban and non-urban use. Approximately 50 per cent of municipalities acknowledged the compatibility of uses in relation to cemeteries as a consideration although few adequately address this item (about 6 per cent). Only 24 per cent of municipalities permit/facilitate the intensification of existing cemetery lands and only 16 per cent of municipalities address environmental matters in these policies.

The conclusions of this study reveal the challenge that municipalities and cemetery developers must face when attempting to develop a new cemetery in Ontario.

Filling in the policy gaps

Need must be determined based on an appropriate planning horizon and convention is to apply a 20-25 year timeframe. This is inappropriate for cemetery planning purposes; a horizon of 100+ years is used by the cemetery industry. With the average generation replacement rate acknowledged to be about 25 years, cemetery providers strive to accommodate up to four familial generations. Accordingly, a needs analysis must consider potential shifts in societal attitudes towards death and

cemeteries along with changes within society respecting burial preferences to determine future land use requirements.

An official plan must identify where cemeteries should be permitted and acknowledge the potential scale of development. Cemeteries must be recognized as being both an urban and

rural use and, rather than being associated with a particular designation, they should be permitted in any designation provided certain criteria are met that address the complexities of cemetery development. Official plans also need to ensure that the amount of land required to address the projected need for cemetery land has been appropriately identified. Larger cemeteries, in the order of 40 hectares or more, have become the norm due to the concentration in the industry, the size of modern facilities and cost of development.

The province must take the lead in acknowledging the societal importance of cemeteries and their need to be accommodated in land use policy. A good place to start is with the *Provincial Policy Statement*. As well, the importance of cemeteries must be reflected in municipal official plans. Municipalities must be required to ensure the provision of cemeteries is captured in land use policy documents.

Addressing the challenges of cemetery planning

Most municipalities in Ontario do not consider cemeteries when developing land use policy. While an important

component of the structure of a municipality, this research has identified cemeteries as largely neglected land use in the formulation of policy intended to guide the growth and development of Ontario's municipalities.

Planners generally do not understand this land use. This is reflected in the consideration of need and permanency: Growth projections are undertaken to determine a municipality's land needs and thus ability to accommodate growth. There is generally no corresponding analysis undertaken to assess mortality rates and thus future cemetery needs. Furthermore, cemeteries represent one of the truly permanent forms of land use. Once established, the chance of conversion to another use is virtually nonexistent.

What is required is the formal recognition of the importance of this land use and the necessity to ensure its inclusion in land use policy regime. A consistent approach is required respecting the way cemeteries are treated in terms of land use designation. This would help to ensure that as a land use and essential component of the municipal fabric, cemeteries are acknowledged and accommodated in land use policy.

Michael Larkin, M.Pl., MCIP, RPP, is the principal of LARKIN+Associates Planning Consultants Inc. (LARKIN+). Michele Freethy, M.A, is a land use planner at LARKIN+. LARKIN+ has undertaken a variety of projects associated with the design and development of cemeteries (including various facilities located on cemetery properties) and funeral homes. Further information can be found at www.larkinassociates.com.

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE AUTHORS



Glen Oaks Memorial Gardens, Oakville, Ontario

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Road pricing in the GTHA

By James Jarrett and Jamie Birtles

As stated in Metrolinx's *The Big Move*, the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area is set to grow by an additional two-million residents by 2031 and is already characterized by considerable urban sprawl. As a result, it faces a number of challenges relating to traffic congestion, including lost economic productivity and increased greenhouse gas emissions. Without a dedicated revenue stream to fund major transit investment, which has been lacking over the past three decades, these challenges will intensify and further impede commuting and other travel that underpins the GTHA economy. The key question facing politicians, policy makers and planners is: Can these growth pressures be addressed in a sustainable way? Integrated transportation and land use planning will play a determining role and a framework has been set in place to achieve it through *The Big Move* and the province's *Places to Grow Act*.

The *Big Move* provides a long-term strategy for expanding the GTHA's transit infrastructure. However, a transportation network that meets future needs comes with a significant price tag — upwards of \$50-billion. While the province is expected to contribute a significant proportion of this funding, the remaining investment must be raised through other means. One of the potential mechanisms for this is road pricing.

Road pricing is based on the principle that drivers should pay a direct or indirect cost for using a particular road, or driving within a defined area. This principle has been applied in places as diverse as London, Singapore, New Zealand, the United States, and here in Ontario. In each case the objectives have varied, including the need to tackle congestion, control truck volumes, reduce Single Occupancy Vehicles, or generate revenues to recover the cost of major capital infrastructure.

Political will and public acceptability

Congestion charging is one form of road pricing that has been utilized to reduce the volume of vehicles entering a specified area (e.g., downtown) and encourage drivers to travel by other means, at different times, or by alternate routes. In many cases, congestion charging has generated revenues for transit investment, as demonstrated by the London congestion charge (C-Charge). Drivers face a daily charge of \$14 to \$20 to enter Central London from 7 a.m. to 6 p.m. weekdays. This has led to a 6 per cent increase in bus passengers during charging hours and has generated revenues of around \$430-million annually, with 49 per cent of the funds being used to pay for ongoing operations (2007/08). The proponent, Transport for London, is legally required to re-invest this revenue in transportation improvements, the majority allocated to bus transit.

The introduction of the C-Charge was subject to political debate during the 2000 mayoral election and was a key element of the successful election platform of Ken Livingstone. Perhaps controversially, the scheme was implemented without a public referendum and was subsequently revised to cover a wider area,

extending charging hours and increasing daily cost. In 2010, current mayor Boris Johnson revoked the extended area. Despite initially low support, public opinion has been generally favourable for the C-Charge, as it is simple to understand, is revenue positive after capital and operating costs, and provides a level of transparency regarding the allocation of revenues.

In contrast, the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities was unsuccessful in its proposal for a \$5-billion package of transit improvements to be supported by a congestion charge over an area almost 10 times the size of the existing London charging zone. Although extensive public consultation was undertaken in 2008, the proposal was defeated primarily due to divergent intra-regional interests.

The key message therefore concerns political support and public acceptability. Any future road pricing proposals for the GTHA should obtain political buy-in from the province and affected municipalities. This may be challenging given the mix and number of urban and suburban communities sharing major transportation infrastructure, but GTHA residents and workers need to understand the likely benefits and potential drawbacks of any road pricing scheme.

Making the best use of existing capacity

High-Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes permit single-occupancy vehicles to pay for the use of otherwise restricted High-Occupancy Vehicle (HOV) lanes. HOT lanes may therefore make use of existing infrastructure. This form of road pricing has been successfully implemented in a growing number of U.S. states.

HOT lanes can generate significant revenues depending on congestion levels, pricing structure and the extent to which drivers value their time. Projected revenues for HOT lanes near Houston are over \$1-million in the first year of implementation, while the I-95 HOT lane scheme in Florida has reported annual revenues of over \$9-million (2009/10).

The primary benefit of HOT lanes is that they provide drivers with an option for faster and more reliable travel times. In addition, HOT lanes can improve the overall performance of the highway network by maximizing available capacity and improving traffic speeds on adjacent lanes, therefore increasing overall throughput.

There may be significant implementation costs, as existing infrastructure may require upgrading and there is also a need for additional infrastructure such as gantries, lane barriers and vehicle monitoring and toll collection systems. Furthermore, implementation may require approval from the province or relevant municipalities, while regulations will be needed to permit the collection of toll charges.

However, making better use of existing capacity is a key objective of the *Places to Grow Act* and is a benefit that should resonate well with GTHA politicians and residents. Moreover, drivers are already accustomed to using HOV lanes on highways

such as the 403, 404 and QEW. HOT lanes would help to ensure these highways are used more efficiently, while raising revenue to fund transit improvements. HOT lanes may also improve connectivity between dispersed employment areas across the GTHA.

Indirect and direct charging

Vehicle Kilometres Travelled schemes directly or indirectly charge drivers according to distances travelled. Indirect VKT methods include fuel taxes, where the cost of auto travel increases with greater usage. In Metro Vancouver, the regional transportation agency Translink levies an additional 17-cents-per-litre tax on fuel purchased within its jurisdiction. This has helped to fund major transit infrastructure including extensions to the SkyTrain network. A more direct form of VKT is variable road tolling, as used on the 407 Express Toll Route, which charges drivers a per-kilometre fee based upon the time of travel.

Research suggests that, in response to higher fuel prices, drivers adjust their behaviour over the longer term by driving less or switching to more fuel-efficient vehicles. They may also alter their live-work relationships and locational decisions to optimize travel costs. However, in comparison to U.S. fuel taxes, which are applied at the federal or state level, there is greater potential to avoid a regional fuel tax by re-fuelling outside the region, which has implications for the potential revenues generated.

In Metro Vancouver, the additional fuel tax levied by Translink has been used to bridge the funding gap for major transportation projects; therefore, it is possible that this could be used in the

same manner by Metrolinx. Nevertheless, the long-term sustainability of this revenue stream is uncertain due to the behavioural changes that can result. Similar to HOT lanes, a direct VKT charge, such as variable road tolling, helps to facilitate higher-value trips and manage congestion. However, unlike HOT lanes, the charge is not optional and so drivers may be left with few alternatives, especially if access to public transit is limited.

Integrating transportation and land use planning

Several locations have adopted road pricing to recover the cost of major infrastructure and to achieve wider transportation objectives; however, there are a number of key conditions. The first, and perhaps most important, is that there must be political will. This is highlighted in the contrasting fortunes of London and Greater Manchester, where the presence of a strong political champion proved to be crucial. Similarly, public acceptability will also play a significant role.

However, transportation is only part of the story. By planning for appropriate forms of development in suitable locations, the need for major highway investment can be reduced and the importance and role of transit strengthened.

James Jarrett, MSc, is a transportation and environmental planner in AECOM's Markham East office and is a provisional OPPI member. Jamie Birtles, BA, MPlan, MRTPI, is a senior consultant currently working in AECOM's Manchester (UK) office and is a member of the Royal Town Planning Institute.



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MBTW / WAI ANNOUNCES NEW DIRECTOR MICHAEL C. HANNAY



The MBTW Group, a professional consulting firm providing services in Landscape Architecture, Urban Design, Golf and Leisure Design, is proud to welcome new Director Michael C. Hannay who brings more than 20 years of relevant industry experience to his new role.

Michael's professional experience in Urban Design and Planning includes a history of consulting to both public and private sector clients as well as teaching Urban and Architectural Design. Michael's blend of experience provides him with a strong theoretical background and a hands-on understanding of the opportunities and limitations of both municipal governments and the development industry. His work in the GTA ranges from participation in the development of policy and design studies to the detailed design and implementation of some of the most innovative new communities in the Province of Ontario.

"We welcome Michael's multi-talents, experience and leadership to the MBTW / WAI community," said Mr. Steven Wimmer the Managing Principal for The MBTW Group. "In his new role he will have a pivotal role in extending deliverables to our valued clients."

Over the past 20 years Michael has developed a reputation for planning and designing new communities that promote and embrace an environment-first position through the careful integration of natural systems into urban built environments.

Connect with MBTW/ WAI on LinkedIn or visit their website www.mbtw.com

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LAKELAND DISTRICT

Professional development

By David J. Stinson and Kelly Weste

Lakeland District has been active in offering interesting and timely professional development opportunities. Two very different events were held in June, one in Simcoe County and the other in Cobourg.

Consulting with Aboriginal Communities

Hosted by Simcoe County, Lakeland District brought together 41 local Aboriginal representatives and planners June 7th in a half-day panel discussion to initiate a dialogue concerning the “Duty to Consult” with Aboriginal communities. A pouch of tobacco was presented to Elder Mark Douglas from Rama First Nation, who offered a prayer of welcome to help open the heart and focus the mind of those in attendance.

Douglas was joined by panel members Beausoleil First Nation lands manager Jennifer Copegog, Métis Nation of Ontario consultation assessment co-ordinator Alden Barty and Simcoe County planning director Dave Parks. The discussion was facilitated by David Stinson, and included topics such as what planners wished Aboriginal communities to know about the role of planners, what Aboriginal communities wished planners to know about Aboriginal land use, and the protocol concerning who to talk to when issues arise, among others.

One of the main things we learned from this event was that understanding can only be sustained through the building of stronger relationships. Thanks to Brandi

Clement and Nancy Farrer from the Lakeland District executive, and Bruce Hoppe at Simcoe County, for their assistance in making this event a success.

Active Communities Forum

Also in June the District hosted an Active Communities Forum in Cobourg. The purpose of the event was to engage planners and public health professionals to learn more about how the two professions are working together to create active communities.

The day started with a presentation from Dr. Kim Bergeron who provided an overview of her doctoral research on developing resources to facilitate the collaborative efforts of planners and public health professionals working to create active communities. Bergeron’s research lead to the development of three resources:

- Joint glossary of terms for land use planners and public health professionals
- Policy inventory that outlines provincial government policy that govern both professions
- Coordinated action framework for planners and public health professionals working to enhance the design of active communities.

Lakeland District Rep and OPPI Treasurer Rob Armstrong updated participants on OPPI’s recent Call for Action: Planning and Implementing Active Transportation in Ontario Communities. He also spoke about the Grey Bruce Partnership, which was formed following a Healthy Communities Conference in 2010. As a result great strides are being achieved across Grey Bruce to enhance the design of active communities.

Mandy Johnson and Kate Hall from Green Communities Canada spoke about Canada Walks (www.canadawalks.ca), which is intended to help change the current

paradigm so walkable communities are the cultural and social norm in Canada. Johnson and Hall provided an overview of the efforts being made in Ontario to create walkable communities including the 2010 Ontario Walkability Award of Excellence, iCANwalk Walkability Checklist and Walk Friendly Ontario designation program. They also highlighted the newly developed Walk Friendly Ontario assessment tool, which can be found at <http://walkfriendly.ca/>. The tool can be used to assess six categories: planning, engineering, placemaking, education and encouragement, enforcement and evaluation.

The final presenter was Dillon Consulting Limited associate Sari Liem who provided an overview of work that is being done across Ontario to shape safe active communities through the collaborative efforts of planners and public health professionals. A key focus of Liem’s presentation was the emphasis on the collective efforts of both professions to work to develop public policies to improve population health outcomes. She shared the development of Community Pictures, which provide a comprehensive profile of a community, including demographic make-up, health status data, current initiatives, and policies that have an impact on health and well-being of residents. In addition to quantitative and qualitative descriptions of a community’s “current state” with respect to healthy eating, physical activity, substance and alcohol misuse, tobacco use prevention, and mental health well-being, a community picture reflects the broader social, economic, political, and environmental context that affects the community’s health needs and concerns. Sari said the research, community engagement through focus groups and online surveys, and the review of best practices used to create comprehensive Community Pictures also strengthen the collaborative relationship between planning and public health professionals.

By the end of the forum, it was clear that the design and physical layout of a community can be either a support or a barrier for healthy living. From the

day's discussion it was clear that we need to work together to pool information and resources in the development of joint policy, programs, and projects to engage other professions and decision makers in active community building.

David J. Stinson MCIP, RPP, A.Ag., is an OPPI recognition representative for the Lakeland District and a partner at Incite Planning. He can be reached at dave@inciteplanning.com. Kelly Weste, MCIP, RPP, is the Lakeland District (Peterborough area) program chair and a municipal planning advisor with the Natural Heritage, Lands & Protected Spaces Branch of the Ministry of Natural Resources. She can be reached at kelly.weste@ontario.ca or 705-755-1210.

NORTHERN DISTRICT

Northern collaboration and partnership

By Wendy Kaufman

While there may be fewer OPPI members the further north you go, our networks are strong—and getting stronger. Northern planners have found ways to work together to enhance outreach and engagement.

Each year the Sudbury office of the Ministry of Municipal and Housing hosts a two-day Planning Authorities Technical Workshop in Sudbury. The workshop attracts a wide variety of planning practitioners and decision-makers, and is generally attended by about 100 people from across northeastern Ontario. It offers an opportunity for provincial staff to provide hands-on training and share information on provincial planning initiatives. Complementary to this, the workshop provides a forum to raise awareness and generate discussion on broader planning issues.

At the 2011 workshop, the keynote speaker was Jeff Celentano, MCIP, RPP, who shared his experiences in promoting the importance of sense of place in small, rural and Northern communities. Over his career, Celentano has been involved in a variety of planning and other municipal initiatives in the City of

North Bay and the Municipality of Callander. He challenged the audience to think critically about their communities' assets and built environments, and to leverage planning tools that enhance community character.

The Northern District executive partnered with the ministry in sponsoring a session on OPPI's Healthy Communities Initiative and Planning for Food Systems. Greater Sudbury planner Paul Baskcomb, MCIP, RPP, introduced the session and talked about what it means to be a RPP. Wellington County planner Mark Paoli, M.Sc., MCIP, RPP, gave an overview of OPPI's initiative and Call to Action. Thunder Bay planner Thora Carlidge, MCIP, RPP, AICP, showcased Thunder Bay's work in promoting a sustainable food system.

Based on the success of the 2011 workshop, plans are underway for OPPI to sponsor a session and host an evening social at the 2012 ministry workshop, scheduled for October 23-24. This partnership will help Northern planners promote the importance of good planning and strengthen professional networks.

Wendy Kaufman MCIP, RPP, is the Northern District contributing editor for OPJ and a planner with the Northeastern Municipal Services Office of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in Sudbury.

MUNICIPAL URBAN DESIGNERS' ROUNDTABLE

Focus on downtown revitalization

By Steven Bell

Downtown Oshawa's Robert McLaughlin Gallery provided a spectacular setting for the spring 2012 session of the Municipal Urban Designers' Roundtable. Hosted by the City of Oshawa, the session, entitled Nurturing Change and Revitalization: Putting Urban Design to Work for Downtowns and Communities, emphasized the increasing importance of downtown revitalization efforts.

Highlights of the day included a walking tour of downtown Oshawa followed by a design charrette. Drawing on their knowledge and

MUNICIPAL URBAN DESIGNERS' ROUNDTABLE

Launched in 2007 by the City of Mississauga, the Municipal Urban Designers' Roundtable was initiated as an interactive forum for public sector urban designers and planners to provide a venue for the exchange of ideas, insightful debate and information sharing among Ontario municipalities concerning urban design and municipal service delivery. More than 30 municipalities in Ontario participate in the roundtable, which meets twice a year.

expertise in urban design participants brainstormed and sketched concepts to address issues identified by Oshawa staff. These included contextually-sensitive approaches to infill development, strategies for façade improvement and approaches to public realm design. Participants also proposed ways to ignite street activation and land use and improve pedestrian accessibility. Working groups explored accommodating the new bus rapid transit and light rail lines within existing rights-of-way, in a manner compatible and sensitive to the special qualities and character of the Oshawa downtown.

A special presentation featured Planning Partnership founding partner Dan Leeming, which followed introductions and welcoming remarks from Oshawa mayor John Henry, and Development Services commissioner Tom Hodgins.

Leeming's remarks focussed on a number of highly reflective, critical issues confronting global society—global warming, recent climatic events, human health and socio-economic impacts related to suburban form and auto-oriented development. Leeming highlighted case studies and demonstration projects that spoke to ways in which the planning and design of new communities can embrace sustainability principles and improve quality of life.

The City of Oshawa showcased some of its most exciting urban design initiatives, focussing on key



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downtown developments and policy initiatives. It concluded with a presentation of Oshawa's significant landmarks, attractions, public spaces and institutions.

Organized and facilitated by MUDR's new executive committee the session wrapped up by asking participants to think about ways to improve the roundtable. The results will inform future programming.

Staff representative from the municipalities of Ajax, Brampton, Clarington, Guelph, Durham, Hamilton, Kitchener, London, Markham, Mississauga, Oakville, Oshawa, Ottawa, Pickering, Richmond Hill, Toronto, Vaughan, Whitby and Windsor participated in the session, as well as from Metrolinx, the Ontario Growth Secretariat and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Further information about the Municipal Urban Designers' Roundtable can be obtained by contacting Steven Bell at 905.615.3200 ext 5725 or steven.bell@mississauga.ca.

Steven Bell, MCIP, RPP, CAHP, is an urban designer with the City of Mississauga's Development and Design Division, Planning and Building Department, and is the lead coordinator of the Municipal Urban Designers' Roundtable. The new MUDR executive comprises Steven, alternate coordinator Sean Galloway, MCIP, RPP, City of London, Jana Kelemen, Town of Oakville, and Joanne Leung, MCIP, RPP, Town of Richmond Hill.

PEOPLE

George McKibbin, MCIP, RPP, successfully achieved the advanced credentials: AICP Certified Environmental Planner. This specialized planning designation is granted members of the American Institute of Certified Planners who have at least eight years of environmental planning experience and have successfully completed an examination.

OBITUARY

Rod Robbie, MCIP, RPP (RET.) chairman emeritus of Robbie Young + Wright/IBI Group Architects, the architect who designed the SkyDome and was part of the team that designed the renowned Canadian pavilion at Expo 67, died this year at 83.

Letter to the Editor

Re. Second Annual Planning School Edition

I enjoyed reading about the planning programs, the quality of learning opportunities and with particular interest, University of Waterloo “Student Research Shines.” Alumni always enjoy the updates and our relationship with our planning students and their research.

More than half of the graduating class came together on October 29, 2011 to celebrate its 30th year since graduation. So many memories flooded back as we toured the Waterloo campus. Much has changed in 30 years but many things remain the same—like the fabulous research and curriculum of the planning program, support of faculty and enthusiasm of the students.

The SURP '81 class has formed its own community in the truest sense of the word. What stuck us the most was how everyone had taken their planning degree and used it to empower others. Some through changing legislation for human rights; some through charities and volunteers in not for profits. It was overwhelming to be surrounded by 30 classmates—each has been part of change, each in a quiet progressive way.

Many of us understand that it must have been a special year and wonder if other graduating classes felt the same. A lot of us came to the realization that we have been part of something great and for us it started at the University of Waterloo.

Hopefully your articles will encourage the current students to realize the rewards of their studies and provide the incentive to make the most out of their undergraduate programs.

There are many of us who work hard toward improving the

communities we live and work in, trying to make them better places. This gives us hope that collectively we can make a difference. It is interesting to read in the *OPJ* Planning School Edition how the next generation of planning graduates will continue to make positive changes in people's lives and the communities in which we live and work.

The SURP '81 Organizing Committee is already planning our Reunion in 2016!

—Lee Anne Doyle

Lee Anne Doyle, MPA, MCIP, RPP, University of Waterloo SURP Class of '81 Reunion Committee, is also the City of Windsor's executive director of building/chief building official. She can be reached at ldoyle@city.windsor.on.ca.

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.

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In a quandary

Dear Dilemma,

As a planner, I work for a large municipality. I have worked for this organization for a number of years and really enjoy my job and my colleagues. However, a situation has arisen that is causing me great concern and is making me think about looking elsewhere for employment.

Seven months ago a new planner was hired by the organization. We share a cubicle space. This planner was specifically hired to process development applications including the preparation of staff recommendations to council. My manager indicated that the pool of potential applicants had been particularly strong and this planner had stood out based on past experience. Right from the beginning “Tom” (alias) began asking for my help. At first I thought it was because he was new to the organization and was nervous, wanting to make a good impression. However, soon I began to realize that it was more than just nerves and I began to question Tom’s competence in this area of planning.

Two weeks ago Tom confessed to having no development experience and that he had “stretched the truth” to get this job. I was shocked that a professional would do that. I am concerned about Tom making recommendations to council without the appropriate experience. Now I’m not sure what to do. Should I speak to my manager or should I file a complaint with OPPI? I like this person but I feel strongly that planners must uphold the *Professional Code of Practice*. If I did file a complaint would it be kept confidential? I don’t want anyone to know it was me, especially if this planner was not disciplined. I am starting to think it might be easier for me to find a new job.

—*Searching Workopolis*

Dear Searching,

You have not said whether “Tom” is a Registered Professional Planner. However, whether he is or not, I would suggest you have a frank discussion with your manager. You may want to approach your manager by indicating that a good percentage of your time has been spent coaching Tom and you are concerned that this seems to go beyond settling into a new community and learning the nuances of its planning policies. Depending on the reception you get from your manager (your manager may have noticed something too), you may be able to get into a discussion about Tom’s competence.

If Tom is an RPP, you also may want to discuss the OPPI *Professional Code of Practice*, which states “a Member shall not perform work outside of his/her professional competence.” The Independent Professional Judgment Standard of Practice in the code outlines that a professional

planner should only render an independent professional opinion if the planner has sufficient information and resources, and appropriate training and experience.

You should consider that through the interview process your manager would have spoken to Tom about his experience and probably checked his references. The hiring was the manager’s decision; he or she may have recognized that this planner would gain sufficient experience and knowledge to do the job.

Be prepared to provide your manager with any evidence you have about Tom: did you document the times he asked for your help and/or opinion? Did anyone else overhear any of these conversations? Do you have copies of his unimpressive drafts of documents (before you helped improve them)? Did Tom explain why his references would be misleading or impossible to check?

It would be good if you and your manager agreed on a course of action. If, however, Tom is an RPP and you feel that he has breached s.3.14 of the *Professional Code of Practice* you are obligated under s.6.7.3 of the by-law to report him to the OPPI Discipline Committee. The process starts with a written letter of complaint to the Executive Director, who refers the complaint to the Discipline Committee for a confidential preliminary inquiry. However, if the matter proceeds to a hearing, you would be asked to give evidence.

—*Yours in the public interest*

Dear Dilemma,

I am a Registered Professional Planner working for a municipality that has seen better days. Like many communities in Ontario, it has experienced a significant loss of jobs over the past few years. As a result, the council of this municipality appears to want to forgo good planning for any type of development that might provide jobs.

Developers have recognized this tendency in council’s decisions and are asking council for relief from conditions of approval, such as the provision of sidewalks and setbacks for the preservation of environmental features, even payment for services. At these council meetings, staff members are only permitted to speak if a question is directed to them. The developer may speak and in some cases deliberately misinforms council. Staff does provide a written report but it is difficult, if not impossible, to anticipate all of the matters that might arise in these situations.

Rumour has it that many councillors have close ties to the

development community and yet seldom does a councillor declare a conflict of interest. I believe the public interest is not being served and that I am obligated by our *Professional Code of Practice* to do something. But what can I do? I'm so frustrated I'm losing sleep over this matter.

—*Misinformed*

Dear Misinformed,

Here are some thoughts that may help you get some sleep. I believe there are three factors contributing to your frustration:

- Council members' potential collusion with the development industry
- Your inability to fully inform council with accurate and impartial information
- Council's concept of what is in the best public interest is different than yours.

The answer to the first matter is easy. If this concern is based on rumour rather than any solid information, you cannot and should not do anything about it. It would not be professional. Instead, focus on what you might be able to do to effect a change.

In looking at the second matter, consider how you might successfully achieve "improvement" in your council's procedures that would allow your director or a planner the opportunity to speak after the developer. This would ensure there is an opportunity to identify potential issues and make recommendations in situations that may adversely affect the public interest. If your director agrees, perhaps s/he could have a chat with the council chair and clerk about council procedures and your concerns regarding the implications of developer-requested last minute revisions.

Perhaps at the very root of this matter are differences in opinion. As planners, our primary job is to define and serve the interests of the public. A council decision that does not support a recommendation and refutes your professional opinion is difficult to accept because you understand the probable short- and long-term implications of the decision. However, an RPP's responsibility is to inform council and make recommendations based on comprehensive analysis. Council's responsibility is to make sound decisions weighing all the evidence before it. Assuming you have performed your responsibility to the best of your ability, you need to allow council to do the same. Accept that sometimes you just won't agree.

—*Yours in the Public Interest*

Through this regular feature—*Dear Dilemma*—the *Professional Practice and Development Committee* explores professional dilemmas with answers based on OPPI's *Professional Code of Practice and Standards of Practice*. In each feature a new professional quandary is explored—while letters to *Dilemma* are composed by the committee, the scenarios they describe are true to life. If you have any comments regarding the article or questions you would like answered in this manner in the future please send them to Info@ontarioplanners.on.ca.

Online Mapping Tools

Charting the course

By Robert Voigt, contributing editor

The days of hand applied screen tones, inking, Mylar films, and digitizing tables for generating maps are a distant memory. Web-based services have created new ways to easily and inexpensively make, analyze and distribute maps. In fact the number of mapping-related tools available online is constantly increasing, and so is the amount of raw data available. These online tools are also of a quality that they can be informative, dynamic and novel; making them appealing for planners and the general public to effectively use for communication, analysis and workshops.



Robert Voigt

The public is no longer just the passive reader of mapped information, it is now active in producing maps of the things people find important. Some of these are for more personal



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use while others have evolved into full-fledged map services and tools. Once given the facilities to easily map those things that they are cognitively and emotionally connected to, citizen map-makers have over the past few years significantly changed the landscape of cartography.

What's the score?

The ease with which new spatial data can be generated is increasing with GPS-enabled digital cameras, smart phones, and tablet computers, as is the visual quality and accuracy of these maps. While the end results of these DIY efforts admittedly sacrifice some of the “magic” present in the artistry and refined design techniques of traditional cartography, these new era maps are being used more often and broadly. In terms of planning, this ranges from neighbourhood features and spaces (www.buildingstories.co) and park and trail systems (www.everytrail.com) to active transportation friendly streets (www.cyclistsroadmap.com/eng) and public infrastructure in need of repair (www.seeclickfix.com/citizens). There is now seldom a major planning project that does not have some stakeholder or professional use of freely available/online mapping tools.

Along with the resources to make maps, a related set of tools is being developed to provide users with ways of determining values or measurements relating to the characteristics of a specific location (www.parkscore.tpl.org). For example, many relate directly to determining how active transportation-friendly certain neighbourhoods and communities are (www.walkscore.com). These “scoring” tools are being widely used by the general public and those in the land planning, development and sales industries. With these new mapping and analysis tools come new challenges for professional planners to ensure that discussions are not skewed through their use and that there is sufficient understanding of their limitations.

Does it add up?

On December 17, 2010 an article in the *New York Times* titled “A Physicist Solves the City” highlighted the work of Geoffrey West and his attempts to develop mathematical equations to help describe and explain how cities function. In West’s words, it is “urban science” (<http://nyti.ms/hKRpaV>).

West’s work received much coverage touting its potential. In some cases it was heralded as eventually reducing or eliminating the need for professional planners. This perspective sees a future with technology that includes “iPlanner” or “wikiPlan” that would lack the necessarily nuanced understanding and professional training and ethics for successful and meaningful community planning. While these viewpoints represent the extreme, they do show how potentially appealing it is to some people to develop ways of modeling communities to generate “answers” through equations and reductionism. What is lost in this perspective is recognition of the complexity of the relationships and systems making up our communities. I suggest that at best mathematical equations, logarithms and models have the potential to act more as compasses than road maps. They point the direction, but neither identifies the final destination nor how to get there.

The same is true for the unquestioned use some of the map scoring/analysis tools. For example, declarations about an area’s walkability that are based on the “score” generated with these online tools are often overstated. Essentially, these tools use

algorithms to assess the distance a location is from key amenities and uses, and the population density of the area to allocate a walkability value. Unfortunately, too often the results are then faithfully accepted and repeated without an understanding of the many unseen/unmeasured factors that also directly make an area more or less walkable. Factors that relate to the human experience that the algorithms do not take into account (yet).

What is missing (and recognized by those developing these tools) are valuations that relate to other critically important aspects of walkability, including real and perceived safety, connectivity and convenience of the walkway network, infrastructure maintenance and aesthetic qualities of routes. Yet this aspect of the results is seldom acknowledged when they are brought forward. The effect is that many of the characteristics that directly influence people’s real perceptions of walkability go unnoticed or unspoken in favour of a conveniently available “answer.” If one is not aware of the many characteristics that make a particular street or district more appealing and efficient for pedestrians, simplified online tests can be misleading. Successful policy directions and implementation must take all these details into account.

Unfortunately, when used in this unintended way, the seeming clarity of these tools can result in miscommunication or unrealistic expectations. When the public or elected officials rely too much on broad-scope results, rather than nuanced professional planning practices, significant components may get lost. A successful active transportation network and culture, for example, requires attention to both large scale and detailed elements. Professional planners must take care to not let mapping analysis tools inadvertently dictate the parameters of the discussion, thus eliminating the necessary complexity for the sake of simplicity.

While these tools cannot accurately or effectively account for peoples’ perceptions of spaces, or desired routes, or visceral reactions to sounds, sights and smells—not to mention design details such as the placement of curb ramps, street furniture and pedestrian obstacles—planners can use other methods of mapping and analysis that use first-hand experiences to codify this information. Through keen observations and understanding, planners can work with citizens to document insights with on-the-ground assessments, such as those gathered through walking audits (www.walklive.org/project/walkability-workbook). This can provide the missing information. The key is to integrate, adapt and balance these methods/tools with traditional techniques.

Which way do we go?

Many people look for concrete answers to the questions about how we design, build and manage our towns and cities. This is not just the realm of professional planners, but includes many other people who share our curiosity. Combining this interest with the ability to map the space around us is an extremely powerful process.

The results of online mapping and spatial analysis tools are increasingly brought to us by citizen-planners and elected officials. In the examples above one can see how equally democratizing, powerful and potentially misleading this particular set of online tools can be. However, as with most technology, it isn’t so much about the tools as it is about how they are used. In these terms the professional planner must become informed about their limitations, acknowledge their

usefulness, and inform citizens and decision-makers about important associated information that should be considered. Most critical of all, planners must stay engaged to help with the evolution of the next generation of mapping and analysis tools.

Because of their increasing predominance and powerful capabilities, planners need to have a clear understanding of what mapping tools can achieve and ask: “Can we get there from here, or are we being misdirected by a path that is going unquestioned?”

Robert Voigt MCIP, RPP, specializes in urban design, community health, active transportation, and organizational development. He authors CivicBlogger, a website focused on planning issues. Voigt is a member of the Municipal Urban Designers Roundtable and the OPPI Urban Design Working Group. He can be reached at rob@robvoigt.com, on Twitter @robvoigt, or Google+ and LinkedIn.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Quality Professionals. Quality Practice.

By Marilyn Radman

Consider: When is the last time you engaged in an exercise directed specifically at broadening your professional understanding? Have you ever been offended by a non-registered professional planner referring to themselves as a planner? What do you see as the future status of the planning profession and the professional planner?

Time is of the essence in the planning profession. The built environment, natural environment, economy, society, technology and political landscape are all constantly changing. And this poses a great challenge for Registered Professional Planners and OPPI Candidate (Provisional) Members, who must continuously ensure they have the advanced competencies and capacity to work within the various demanding dimensions of planning practice. Participation in a self-directed program of continuous professional learning helps them do this and the benefits are far ranging—to the public, the professional and the Institute.

Maintaining and exceeding professional competencies ensures that the public can be confident a RPP is a professional, who is accountable and ethical in practice. It means that all RPPs are upholding the requirements of their designation; positively representing OPPI and their fellow RPPs. It ensures that all RPPs are advancing the calibre of planning practice, making it more obvious to all that planning should be a self-regulated profession in Ontario.

When RPPs and Candidate Members report their learning units, it enables OPPI to observe what events are being attended, which areas are of interest and what types of professional development are being pursued. This in turn aids OPPI in



Marilyn Radman

developing future events and education sessions that are relevant to all members. It also provides the data needed for OPPI to position planning as meriting self regulation in the future.

Recognizing the importance of CPL and the need to maintain professional competencies throughout a planner’s career, OPPI will be asking all members to vote in favour of a mandatory CPL participation. This vote will take place in the fall of 2012. In preparation, presentations have been held throughout the province, a webinar has been offered and a guide to the CPL Program has been posted on the OPPI website at bit.ly/L4WPAJ.

Tied directly to mandatory CPL, is OPPI’s pursuit of self regulation for RPPs in Ontario. Mandatory CPL is a norm among most self-regulated professions. The intent of legislation to make planning a self-regulated profession is to enforce universal, professional standards for planners consistent with the broader public good. It will ensure that anyone who calls herself/himself a planner has the requisite skills and competencies, and meets established ethical standards. Self-regulation will recognize and advance the significant role of the planning profession in protecting the public interest. More information on self regulation can be found on the OPPI website at bit.ly/qBt5k8.

OPPI will be developing tools and educational programs to help members keep current with changes and developments in the profession and stay informed about innovations and leading practices. At the same time it will be pursuing stronger legislation to move OPPI from a voluntary, consensual, professional association to a self-regulated profession acting in the public interest. Stay tuned, keep informed, and vote for a strong future.

Marilyn Radman, MCIP, RPP, is OPPI Director of Professional Practice and Development. Marilyn is also the Niagara Region development planning manager. This article was inspired by an article published in the Alberta Planning Journal (Fall 2011/ Winter 2012 edition) written by Eleanor Mohammed, RPP, MCIP, and used with her permission. Eleanor is an APPI councillor and responsible for the professional development portfolio. She is also an urban development associate at Stantec.

SECTION 3 OF THE OPPI CODE OF PROFESSIONAL CONDUCT

The vitality and credibility of the planning profession and of the Institute are reflective of the quality of the Membership. To further the profession, Members will be expected to attain and maintain a high standard of professional competence and conduct, which extends to their relationship with other Members. Accordingly, Members shall:

- 3.1 Take all reasonable steps to maintain their professional competence throughout their working lives and shall respect OPPI’s continuing professional learning requirements as amended from time to time;*
- 3.3 Maintain an appropriate awareness of contemporary planning philosophy, theory, and practice by seeking and receiving professional education throughout a planning career.*

Which will be the next “places to grow”?

Province reviews growth plan forecasts

By Jason Thorne, contributing editor

At the start of every municipal official plan exercise planners must wrestle with one of the most fundamental planning questions—just how much growth should our municipality be planning for? This question is often top-of-mind for members of council as well as for citizens and community stakeholders. The answer to that question drives countless critical decisions, from development charge calculations to land budgets to master servicing studies. Since 2006, the way this question has been addressed has

fundamentally changed in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. That is when the province released the growth plan which, for the first time, enshrined in a statutory plan the population and employment allocations for every upper- and single-tier municipality in the region. These growth forecasts are contained in *schedule 3* of the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, and they remain one of the most often debated provisions of the growth plan to this day.

The very first policy of the growth plan states that the population and employment forecasts contained in *schedule 3* “will be used for planning and managing growth in the GGH.” As a result, over the past six years, the *schedule 3* forecasts have been making their way into upper- and single-tier official plans and, from there, into the plans of the lower-tier municipalities.

The current *schedule 3* is based on 2001 census data and is the result of demographic modelling that took place in 2004-2005. At the time, development of the forecasts was a relatively low key affair. It involved a municipal working group coordinated in part by the Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario, but there was limited interest in the exercise beyond professional planning circles. This can be attributed in part to the fact that when the initial forecasts were being developed, there was no growth plan, and no statutory requirement for the forecasts to be used by municipalities. That all changed with the release of the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* in 2006.

Given the importance of *schedule 3* to local planning efforts, it is no surprise that so many planners, politicians and developers have been eagerly awaiting the results of the province’s first review of the *schedule 3* forecasts.

The growth plan requires the Minister of Infrastructure to review the *schedule 3* forecasts at least every five years. The province initiated the current review of the growth forecasts in 2010, with an examination and consultation on the original methodology with a range of technical experts. While the current *schedule 3* forecasts have proven to be extremely accurate when compared to the 2011 census data, the review of the methodology has resulted in some changes. For the current review, the economic assumptions of the forecasting methodology have been aligned with those of the Ministry of Finance in the recent “Ontario’s Long-term Report on the Economy.” The base assumptions (e.g., fertility, mortality, migration, etc.) that are used in the methodology have also been updated using the latest demographic information, including available data from the 2011 census and 2006 census.

The methodology also looks at a number of factors that affect the allocation of growth among municipalities, such as historic shares of housing and employment types, ability to physically accommodate certain types of

	2006 Census	2011 Census	Growth 2006-11 (%)	2011 Growth Plan Forecast	Difference 2011 Census/Growth Plan Forecast (%)
Region of Durham	583	632	8.4%	660	- 4%
Region of York	930	1,075	15.6%	1,060	1%
City of Toronto	2,615	2,732	4.5%	2,760	-1%
Region of Peel	1,210	1,354	11.9%	1,320	3%
Region of Halton	457	522	14.2%	520	0%
City of Hamilton	525	541	3.0%	540	0%
GTHA TOTAL**	6,320	6,856	8.5%	6,860	0%
County of Northumberland	84	85	1.2%	87	-2%
County of Peterborough	60	58	-3.3%	58	0%
City of Peterborough	78	82	5.1%	79	4%
City of Kawartha Lakes	77	76	-1.3%	80	-5%
County of Simcoe	274	291	6.2%	294	-1%
City of Barrie	133	141	6.0%	157	-10%
City of Orillia	31	32	3.2%	33	-3%
County of Dufferin	57	59	3.5%	62	-5%
County of Wellington	89	90	1.1%	91	-1%
City of Guelph	120	127	5.8%	132	-4%
Region of Waterloo	498	528	6.0%	526	0%
County of Brant	38	39	2.6%	39	0%
City of Brantford	98	102	4.1%	102	0%
County of Haldimand	48	47	-2.1%	49	-4%
Region of Niagara	444	448	0.9%	442	1%
OUTER RING TOTAL**	2,129	2,205	3.6%	2,230	-1%
TOTAL GGH**	8,449	9,061	7.2%	9,090	0%

Comparison of GGH Growth Plan Forecasts with 2011 Census Population Counts

Chart courtesy of Ministry of Infrastructure, based on data from Statistics Canada and Schedule 3 of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2006, as amended.

Chart notes: The Ministry of Finance has forecast the 2011 GTHA population at 6,870,000. All figures in 000s. Growth Plan forecasts rounded off to nearest 10,000 for GTHA municipalities, GTHA Total and Outer Ring Total and to nearest 1,000 for outer ring municipalities. 2006 Census and 2011 Census rounded off to nearest 1,000. 2006 Census and 2011 Census include undercount estimate using 2006 rate for Census Division. Totals may not add up due to rounding.

housing growth, existing and planned infrastructure opportunities and natural constraints.

As part of the review, the ministry has been holding technical meetings with municipal staff to discuss the methodology and demographic assumptions, holding regular updates with groups such as the Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario and the Long-Range Planners of Ontario and convening special meetings and workshops with upper- and single-tier planning commissioners and directors. In addition to getting input from municipal staff, the ministry has also met with representatives from the building and development industry, environmental sector, and others. Aboriginal communities were also informed about the review and their feedback and input was sought.

Of course, what most planners want to know is what happens next. What does the province intend to do with the results of its review? It is widely expected that a growth plan amendment to revise *schedule 3* will be released imminently. The Building Industry and Land Development Association recently reported that the province could be bringing forward a draft amendment as early as this fall, followed by a round of stakeholder consultation. The final amendment to the growth plan would require Cabinet approval.

Any amendment would be expected to include a new set of population and employment forecasts for the years 2036 and 2041. This will allow municipalities to continue planning for the traditional 20-year planning horizon. One thing that is not yet known as of the time of writing is whether the revised *schedule 3* will also include updated figures for 2021 and 2031, which would

impact shorter term land use and infrastructure planning.

The implications for municipal official plan conformity are another important issue. *Section 12(1)* and *12(2)* of the *Places To Grow Act* require municipalities to amend their official plans to conform with the growth plan within three years of it coming into effect. As a result, an amendment to *schedule 3* could trigger a new round of official plan conformity exercises, with a three-year window. However, the minister also has the authority under *section 12(3)* to prescribe an alternative deadline to all or some municipalities. Given the province's recent experience with municipal conformity exercises and the time it has taken for these to work their way through the planning system, it is possible that the minister will opt simply to tie conformity to the new *schedule 3* for each municipality's next five-year official plan review.

Any amendment to the growth plan requires a notice and consultation period. Given the importance of *schedule 3* to everything that planners in the Greater Golden Horseshoe do, it can be expected that this consultation process will garner significant attention and participation across the region.

Jason Thorne, MCIP, RPP, is a principal with the Toronto-based urban planning and design firm planningAlliance, and affiliated practices regionalArchitects and rePlan. More information will be made available at www.placestogrow.ca.



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