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SEVENTH ANNUAL

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Welcome our new Student Delegate

Join OPPI in welcoming Alex Gaio, our 2017-2018 Student Delegate. Alex follows a wonderful line-up of Student Delegates



who have provided outstanding leadership.

OPPI would like to thank Scott Plante for his dedicated hard work, foresight and contributions as the 2016-2017 Student Delegate. Scott, along with his peers on the Student Liaison Committee worked diligently to bring together students, Council and OPPI Members.

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Ryerson University

# Planning for lifelong learning

By Chris De Sousa, RPP



The annual planning school issue of OPJ usually provides an opportunity to report on the activities of students and faculty over the past year and to describe how our curriculum and initiatives produce outstanding urban planning graduates who are great thinkers, great doers, and ready for professional practice. So when a school is asked to write on the theme of “planning school and beyond,” one might expect the article to report on the many ways Ryerson brings the ‘beyond’ into the school through our professionally accredited curriculum, studio-based classes, field courses, job placements, and the many planning professionals that teach classes and guest-lecture in our program. While I could go into great detail about how we bring the profession into the school, the intent of the theme is to consider instead how planning schools are engaging, and can further engage, with professional planners to help them solve planning problems and continue to learn. I must admit that this matters a lot to me because I decided to move from a department of geography to urban planning about a decade ago so that I could more freely and deeply engage with planning practice via my research, teaching and service.

I was fortunate to join Ryerson, which has a very long history of committed engagement with professional planners. Professional planners working in the public, private and nonprofit sectors also benefit from the work of our students undertaken as part of their field placements and client-based studios. This past year, I worked with one of my graduate students to test-out an alternative Masters Research Paper that could be used to assemble, curate and transfer knowledge to practitioners about contemporary planning topics (see article by A. Varajao in this issue). Our school has also opened up its lecture series to planning professionals so that they can use it toward their CPL activities.

The school has been working with Ryerson’s Chang School of Continuing Education on a new Certificate in Local Economic Development that will run starting fall 2017. Through a combination of urban planning and

Chang School classes, full-time students and part-time practitioners graduating from the LED Certificate may apply to receive 20 points towards the 45 points needed for accreditation with the Economic Developers Association of Canada. Professor Pamela Robinson has also worked with Civic Tech Toronto to help create a new professional development course at the Chang School on Digital Government and Civic Tech for government staff.

While these activities are both exciting and encouraging for planners and others active in these subfields, I feel that much more still can be done to improve the connection between planning schools and practicing planners. Figuring this out should be a core priority for OPPI and schools over the next few years, especially as we move forward as a community of planning practitioners and educators to renew and strengthen the Registered Professional Planners Act and the “Planning” brand.

In terms of research, the feedback loop between planners and academics should be strengthened. How could practitioners better access faculty and student research? What research do they believe needs to be conducted to inform their work? What are the barriers to doing this and how can they be overcome? One of the historic challenges academics face for example is that tenure and promotion require professors to publish in peer-reviewed outlets and engage

in scholarly conferences, but in Ontario and Canada, unlike in the United States, the profession does not run a peer-reviewed journal, book press, or something like the APA’s Planning Advisory Service that generates reports on current issues and innovative practices often prepared by scholars in the field.

As for teaching, several years ago OPPI’s Quality Practice Strategy Group and Planning Knowledge Exchange Committee helped develop an excellent Learning Strategy that examined educational topics and learning mediums to help members develop and maintain their competencies as professional planners. How can universities help deliver that strategy as part of



IMAGE COURTESY OF MARK BLINCH

their existing classes or via OPPI's skills-based courses? What are the barriers to doing this and how can they be overcome?

Fortunately, planning educators, like practitioners, are deeply committed to improving the quality and livability of our communities and to making sure that they provide their students with the training needed to become effective practitioners in the real world. It is on the basis of this common mission and goal for the discipline/profession that universities, professional planners and the OPPI

continue to come together to identify and unlock opportunities for Ryerson and other planning schools to keep serving, training and transferring knowledge to planning students both inside and outside of school. As Albert Einstein once noted, "Intellectual growth should commence at birth and cease only at death."

*Christopher De Sousa, RPP, is a member of OPPI and professor and director of the School of Urban and Regional Planning at Ryerson University.*

Ryerson University

## Bright future for planning in Ontario

By Alex Gaio

**A**s a planning student in Ontario, it's an exciting time. The professionalism and collaboration among our Ontario planning schools sets an example for building an interconnected and interdisciplinary profession. As I reflect on the past year, there are a few examples of initiatives that stand out that I wanted to showcase as great examples of building the profession in ways that sometimes go unnoticed.



Every February, a one-day workshop is hosted by Ryerson and Waterloo. It's a chance for students to learn from professors they normally don't hear from, and connect with students they normally don't get the chance to interact with on a daily basis. This year, the organizing team at Waterloo's Planning Student Association, led by Tony Lieu and Jenn Waite, was able to expand student horizons by exposing participants to WSP's airport planning projects, explaining how Londoners were encouraged to talk about their official plan by removing the word official, and tying community health to real-time initiatives.

In the middle of the semester, students from the University of Toronto and Ryerson University attended the Colloque Interuniversitaire Urbain in Montreal, which was inspired by the previous year's RU Planning Expo. The inaugural forum was intended to tear down silos—not only among planning schools but among provinces—and stimulate idea sharing

among students. The result was a commitment from Ryerson, Queen's, U of T, and five Montreal urban planning universities to continue efforts to stimulate dialogue.

I was fortunate to work on a team to develop a School Area and Site Design Guideline for the City of Toronto. Members included Amy Campbell, Nicholas Chan, Victor Cheung, Brianne Della Savia, Kaitlyn Hundt-Lippett, Mitchell Leighton, Michael Morozov, Jan Puzon, and Kenneth Scullion. One of the great things about third year design studio at Ryerson is the post-diploma students from Fanshawe and Mohawk Colleges are able to work together. Collectively, we were able to compile best practices from around the world and collect a library of documents and integrate them into a clear and coherent guideline.

It makes me incredibly excited to know that the future of planning will be in the hands of these dedicated emerging leaders. During closing remarks at the workshop in Waterloo, the organizers noted how the planners (irrespective of alma mater) will all be sitting across the boardroom table from each other in the future. In reality we'll be sitting on the same side of the table advocating for better communities and upholding the highest standards of professional practice.

*Alex Gaio is a student member of OPPI and the OPPI 2017-18 Student Delegate. Alex is a fourth year urban and regional planning student at Ryerson University.*

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# Growth through urban design

By Tamara Nahal & Kristen Harder

**T**hrough the Growing Together: Facilitating Growth Through Urban Design in Nibinamik First Nation studio project, students sought to challenge conventional processes of community growth and design in Nibinamik and offer opportunities for all members, especially youth, to discuss and perhaps re-imagine the meaning and purpose of their homes.

Our partner, Nibinamik First Nation, is a determined community of self-starters. As initiators of the project, they began the conversation around change and asked for support as they envision the future of their community. Therefore, our intent was to find creative ways to stimulate conversations.



Tamara Nahal



Kristen Harder

We developed our visioning strategy to distill personal and community Indigenous values as they relate to housing and provide opportunities for community members to discuss which elements they want to see in the future.

The Visioning Strategy is developed throughout five non-linear phases, with each phase building from or incorporating those prior. For example, Phase I is termed 'Building trust and understanding needs' and comprises activities that build awareness and get to know the community through walking tours and opportunities for storytelling. Each subsequent phase is centred around key goals

and objectives, promoting visioning within one or more of the three physical scales: community, neighborhood, house. Our Visioning Strategy is physically represented by a toolbox—literally!—of simple but meaningful activities, instructions and materials that will be flown to Northern communities to stimulate important conversations about housing.

Merging findings from qualitative research, including a literature review and compilation of urban design case studies, we developed a series of visualization tools: we rendered different housing architecture styles into existing community landscapes to give context to new ideas, created simple sketches of houses with various architectural features, and distilled community design case studies into easy-to-understand plan layouts to discuss neighbourhood design. These visualization tools became the basis for stimulating conversation through activities designed to be fun and engaging.

This project recognizes that Indigenous communities hold local expertise that needs to be explored. Our intent is that the visioning toolbox is embraced, utilized, and further developed by local community champions, removing the need for outside facilitators. Our hope is that this studio creates a legacy of connecting Indigenous communities in partnerships with urban planning and architecture

professionals that draw upon local, technical, and design expertise.

Our studio group continually challenged our biases as Western-taught planning students to ask: How can we plan communities while integrating, not simply acknowledging, Indigenous ways of knowing? How can we play a role in decolonizing the process of planning? We strove to recognize what we did not know, while creating a process that recognizes Indigenous community values, opinions and visions for the future.

*Tamara Nahal and Kristen Harder are recent graduates of Ryerson University's Master of Planning in Urban Development. Kristen is a student member of OPPI. The Growing Together studio group was composed of seven members: Natalia Dmuchowska, Anthony Galloro, Kristen Harder, Lara Hintelmann, Isabelle Kim, Tamara Nahal, and Vincent Racine. The Studio Group worked in partnership with Nibinamik First Nation and Jeff Herskovits, Associate, +city lab. The studio group was supervised by assistant professor Shelagh McCartney DDes, MDesS, BArch, BES.*

Above: Group members testing the visioning activities for the box. Pictured left to right: Kristen Harder, Lara Hintelmann, and Isabelle Kim.



**Question the predictable  
Stand for innovation  
Change the landscape**





# Partnering for success

By Clarence Woudsma, RPP

**B**y its very nature, planning is an academic discipline with an applied focus, demanding that the academic realm be inextricably linked with the practice realm. At the University of Waterloo, the connections between planning school and planning community embody the strength of these links. They take on many forms and give OPPI members opportunities to get involved in diverse ways: applied planning research, educating the next generation of planners, or pursuing their own professional development through courses and degrees.



Our undergraduate and graduate curriculum feature capstone courses that are designed as community planning projects. Our clients are drawn from the private and public sectors and include everyone from large municipalities to individual consultancies. They bring forward their needs such as site redevelopment, review of tools, thematic audits

or market/policy assessments. The subject areas include planning for healthy communities, transportation, heritage, housing, environment, demographics, economic development, age-friendly design and urban design.

Beyond the commitment required for project courses, there are many other opportunities for practicing planners to connect with the classroom. Most courses in our program feature guest speakers at some point through the term. Building on the partnership theme, it really adds tremendously if the students can experience learning directly from those professionals involved. Similarly, nothing causes you the professional planner to solidify your understanding and opinions on matters like having to stand in front of a class of eager students and explain things! And, you'll likely end up receiving questions you never thought of either—such is the nature of fresh perspective from those immersed in studying planning.

Other opportunities that regularly occur in our classes are the participation of planning professionals as judges or critics. The preparation may be less for you the professional but the nature of the partnership is the same—professionals willingly sharing their experiences and perspective with students who are forming the foundations for their careers. In these cases, there is a specific site design or project on which an outside professional is asked to critically comment. It is an important validation of the students understanding and perspective, while again challenging your own perspectives and understanding.

If you're keen to more formally partner with us in terms of your own professional advancement and learning, we have a range of options available. Our Masters of Planning (non-accredited) recently launched as a fully online professional degree tailored for those with planning work experiences and seeking an advanced degree. We've developed the program and the courses with the working professional in mind, managing the core topics with an emphasis on skills upgrading and key trends in planning. The courses are designed and delivered by our RPP-designated faculty complement. For those unsure of the commitment to a Master's degree, we also offer a Graduate Diploma in Planning (four courses), which allows you to receive recognition for successfully completing challenging graduate level courses and expanding your own CPL.

At universities, fostering continuous professional learning opportunities with our professional planning colleagues is an essential part of our success. If you'd like to explore these opportunities, I would encourage you to pick up the phone and connect with your local planning school!

*Clarence Woudsma Ph.D., RPP, MCIP, is a member of OPPI and director of the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo.*

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# Engaging through smart public spaces

By Nicole Yang

Leveraging technology in the design of public places creates dynamic spaces that bring people together. I had the unique opportunity to apply my planning knowledge and affinity for public spaces to developing an entrepreneurial venture that creates smart pop-up art installations for local governments.

My venture, rePUBLIC, offers a new way to experience public spaces using a location-based app and public Wi-Fi. Users can change elements of pop-up art installation to bring their personality into the space. Imagine discovering a light installation crowded by many visitors, and being able to change colors and animations using the app in real time while other visitors are also interacting with the installation. In this way pop-up art installations are customizable, scalable, considerably more affordable than traditional public art commissions, and replaced on a regular basis with new designs.

rePUBLIC reinvents the mobile phone as a tool to interact with our physical environment, create partnership opportunities with local governments, businesses and artists, and open up public assets to playful experiences. We anticipate our soft launch to be in Waterloo this summer.

In the process of developing rePUBLIC, I engaged with municipal councillors and staff to secure pilot sites,

established a team of interdisciplinary students to develop a prototype, and obtained funding for prototype development. Municipal councillors and staff demonstrated interest in my concept based on its potential to reduce public space maintenance costs and create places that attract youth. I learned that while the benefits of public space investment are broadly understood, implementation is the challenge due to finite municipal resources and proponents having to bear the onus of substantial financial liabilities. There are few incentives for bringing forward new ideas to enhance social inclusion in public spaces.

Activating public spaces through leveraging technology is a significant placemaking opportunity and investment in community vitality. With rePUBLIC, I hope to reconnect the public to their urban environment and fulfill the role of planner as a curator of the city. I had not considered the possibility of planners being entrepreneurs before, but I have found myself pleasantly surprised by this opportunity to carve out a potential career path that supports my passion for public spaces.

*Nicole Yang is a fourth year planning (co-op) student at the University of Waterloo. She is currently completing a four-month work term with the Town of Comox in British Columbia.*



ILLUSTRATION COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

# Finding my way into urban design

By Niranjan Rajevan

Planning is a broad discipline with an array of areas in which one can choose to focus. I decided to pursue a career in urban design as it focuses on the design of our cities and systems and not specific structures.

By second year in the planning program at the University of Waterloo, I acknowledged my interest in urban design and enjoyed the studio courses as well as the practicality of working on actual sites. I also discovered that I have a keen interest in working with design software such as Adobe products, AutoCAD, Google SketchUp, and rendering software to create various maps, renderings, perspectives, visual reports and final panels. Through my courses I had the opportunity to work with site revitalizations in uptown Waterloo, Lancaster Kitchener, Yorklands Green Hub in Guelph, and Preston and Hespeler Cambridge.

In my previous co-op term, I worked as a Research Assistant with UW's Faculty of Engineering where I enjoyed creating LRT stations using Autodesk Revit and learning the technicalities in creating stations in transportation

engineering and planning. In my current co-op term, I am a rail designer assistant with WSP, where I am enjoying learning and using the hard and soft design skills needed to create rail networks for many transportation agencies such as Metrolinx, TTC, VIA Rail and YRT. This position is also helping me realize that I have an interest in working in the area of consulting.

To conclude, I have gathered an abundance of value and enjoyment from the planning co-op program at UW and will highly recommend this program to anyone that wants to discover their true passion in planning as it can be challenging to discover on your own without the education and work experiences through co-op. I would also strongly recommend UW's Urban Design specialization for any students that want to pursue an urban design or related career in planning.

*Niranjan Rajevan is a student member of OPPI and a fourth year honours co-op planning student at the University of Waterloo specializing in urban design.*



PHOTO: OLIVER FORREST FRAYNE

# Cultural heritage landscapes

By Rebecca Koroll & Michael Drescher

The Ontario Provincial Policy Statement 2005<sup>1</sup> directs that municipalities conserve significant cultural heritage landscapes. This requires identification, evaluation of significance and determination of the extent to which landscapes are valued by the community. The Heritage Resources Centre at the University of Waterloo has partnered with the Architectural Conservancy of Ontario to complete a cultural heritage landscapes study focused on rural townships in Waterloo Region.

One of the main research outcomes of the study will be an assessment of the relative effectiveness and efficiency of four participation methods: one-on-one interviews, photo-voice, community action kits and an online web-based survey. These methods will be carried out in areas that contain rural, hard-to-reach and culturally diverse populations, as well as current and past residents, business owners and key stakeholders. Given this diverse demographic make-up, the four engagement methods were chosen based on their innovation in engaging the public, as well as their expected feasibility, efficiency and efficacy.

The second main outcome of the study is the identification of candidate sites to be considered for designation as cultural heritage landscapes in the rural townships. Each participation method solicits information about geographic locations, values

and importance of landscapes to various degrees of depth.

This study is being funded by partner organizations and the Mitacs Accelerate program, a national, not-for-profit organization that connects academic research with partner organizations to support industrial and social progress. Mitacs allows graduate students to use their research skills for the benefit of a partner organization and gain practical work experience. Advantages for the student researchers include real-world experience and professional development opportunities, and for the partner organization access to leading edge research skills and developments.



Rebecca Koroll



Michael Drescher

*Rebecca Koroll is a student member of OPPI, CIP, APA and is a second year masters student in the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo. Michael Drescher is a professor in the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo and director of the Heritage Resources Centre.*

## Endnote

- <sup>1</sup> Government of Ontario, Provincial Policy Statement 2005 issued under the Ontario Planning Act Part III. Accessed September 1, 2016. <http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page1485.aspx#2.6>

# The benefits of infill development

By Sydney Bailey

Infill development has become a solution to many challenges related to suburban living, often resulting in improved neighbourhood diversity and increased affordability. However, misconceptions remain concerning how intensification will affect local communities.

Recently, I have been researching this subject as a planning assistant for Better Neighbourhoods Inc. Being completely surrounded by vineyards and the Ontario Greenbelt, St. Catharines has been facing a unique challenge whereby city expansion is no longer an option to address its increasing population. Although infill development provides a valuable tool for managing growth, there is considerable resistance. My research focused on the economic sustainability of infill development and how planners can use this information to gain the support of local homeowners.

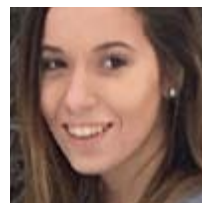
The research involved analyzing neighbourhoods of varying characteristics, such as diversity, unit supply and tax

assessment, to view how each has been performing economically. Findings showed that the neighbourhoods with greater diversity performed better economically overall.

Additionally, they were found to have a larger amount of unit supply and there was no evidence that property values decreased due to infill development. The study demonstrated the positive impact infill development can have, if done well.

Infill development provides economic benefits to our communities. It allows for a greater supply of housing and assists with growth management when

land is limited. If these benefits are better understood, individuals would have a more positive outlook towards infill development and its impact on their local communities.



*Sydney Bailey is a student member of OPPI and the recipient of the 2017 Ronald Keeble Undergraduate scholarship. She is going into her fourth year of Urban Planning at the University of Waterloo with a specialization in urban design.*



# Bringing clarity to correlation

By Ben Crooks & Kevin McKrow

As almost every undergraduate student knows, your statistics professors will stress one key detail during their lectures: correlation does not equal causation. They will repeat it extensively and deduct marks when you inevitably commit this statistical fallacy. However, it takes a real world case study to truly understand why this is so extensively emphasized in academia and the planning profession.

To demonstrate this we collected absorbed single-detached house price data from Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation<sup>1</sup> and reviewed site plan control application fees from Ontario's 10 largest municipalities.<sup>2</sup> Our null hypothesis was that there is no correlation between house prices and site plan application fees. Our alternative hypothesis was that the variation in house prices can be partially explained by site plan fees. To test these hypotheses, we conducted a standard linear regression.

We set site plan application fees as the independent variable for three reasons. First, site plan control is often done concurrently with other development applications. Second, fee schedules are readily available online. Finally, other applications (e.g., zoning by-law amendments) are not necessarily triggered for the construction of single-family dwellings, as the existing zoning may permit such forms of development.

Regression models are typically evaluated based on their correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) and  $r^2$ . Our regression resulted in an  $r$ -value of 0.83, which is interpreted as a strong, positive, linear relationship and the  $r^2$  was 69.2 per cent (our results were statistically significant at the 5 per cent level). This means that 69.2 per cent of house prices is explained by site plan control fees.

But is this a sound conclusion to make? Should municipalities immediately lower their planning fees to address ongoing affordability issues? To answer these

questions it's important to consider what other factors can explain variation in house prices. Among these unconsidered factors are the restriction of supply by the Greenbelt, strong population growth in the province and ongoing low-interest rates.<sup>3</sup> Each of these may also result in statistically significant relationships with housing prices, and when combined with each other through a multiple linear regression may better reflect the underlying conditions that drive market values.

Whether you are a planning student or a professional practitioner, statistical analysis is a powerful tool, but caution needs to be taken to ensure correlation is not misinterpreted as causation. Our research resulted in a statistically significant correlation between two variables, but relying solely on the results presented would result in misinformed policy decisions that are unlikely to cool an overheated housing market. Nobody is above continual learning; when in doubt, take the textbook out.

*Ben Crooks and Kevin McKrow are student members of OPPI and third-year undergraduate planning students at the University of Waterloo.*



Ben Crooks



Kevin McKrow

## Endnotes

- 1 Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation. (2017). Housing market information portal. Retrieved from <https://www03.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/hmiportal/en/>
- 2 Site plan application fees were retrieved from the public websites of studied municipalities during the month of February 2017.
- 3 Posadzki, A. (2017, April 8). Experts weigh in on hot Toronto house prices. Toronto Star. Retrieved from <https://www.thestar.com/business/2017/04/08/experts-weigh-in-on-hot-toronto-house-prices.html>



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# Planning school and beyond

By Dave Gordon, RPP

Queen's University has supported post-graduation professional learning for planners and related professions since the 1950s. In the post-war period, there was an urgent need to train civic administrative staff and municipal engineers on the basics of community planning, since there were no planning schools, and perhaps five practising planners in the country in 1945. The Queen's Institute of Local Government established special summer education programs to train municipal staff in planning and provided planning education for municipal engineers.



The university expanded to full-time education of professional planners with the 1970 founding of the School of Urban and Regional Planning (SURP). SURP continued its summer school of planning into the 1970s but there was less need for retrofitting as the graduates of Canada's planning programs poured into the field in the decades that followed.

As these new departments and consulting firms grew in size and complexity, senior planning staff required more training in management, program administration and strategy. Two programs at Queen's continue to address these needs. The part-time, mid-career [Professional Masters in Public Administration \(PMPA\)](#) program of the School of Public Policy can include a special concentration in [Indigenous Policy and Governance](#). The [Public Executive Program](#) of the School of Business prepares mid-career professionals for the most senior appointments. These programs have educated hundreds of municipal department heads and senior executives / deputy ministers of the provincial and federal governments. Planners who aspire to leadership and top management positions within their organizations may wish to consider them as capstone programs in a life-long learning strategy, developed in collaboration with their employers.

The School of Urban and Regional Planning's flagship [MPL program](#) concentrates in environmental services, health & social planning, and land use & real estate. The school offers a lively seminar series that is open to planners and the public in southeastern Ontario, recently including Antonio Gomez-Palacio on "What they don't teach you in planning school," Robert Allsopp on Ottawa height controls, Preston Schiller on sustainable planning in Vauban and [Julia Markovich](#) on the new book: *'I was the only Woman': Women and Planning in Canada*.

However, SURP's principal continuing education and professional outreach programs are delivered at the

international and national level. Our largest international training program is for professional land planners from China, through our [China projects teams](#). The program has trained hundreds of senior Chinese land use planners over the past 20 years, and in exchange, scores of Canadian planners and SURP graduate students have experienced CIP study tours, internships and projects in China.

In Canada, SURP is the home of the [Queen's Real Estate Roundtable](#), which offers executive seminars on commercial real estate issues in the private sector, mainly delivered in Toronto. Upcoming seminars include Real Estate Capital Markets and a Vancouver roundtable. SURP is also the home of the [National Executive Forum on Public Property](#), a non-profit organization for promoting best practices and research in public land management and development. Forum members include senior executives from eight federal departments, 12 provinces/territories, the nation's seven largest cities and public development corporations such as the Canada Lands Company, Waterfront Toronto and the Calgary Municipal Development Corporation. Their annual conferences include valuable public sessions—this year's [Vancouver symposium](#) is on sustainability, resiliency and climate change; while last year's Québec conference addressed heritage preservation.

We encourage planners across Canada to take advantage of these learning opportunities as part of a program of continuous professional development.

*Dr. David Gordon, FCIP, RPP, AICP, P.Eng. is a professor and director of the School of Urban and Regional Planning in the Queen's Department of Geography and Planning.*

Above: Dr. Julia Markovich introduces Sue Hendler's book to a crowd of local planners, residents and students. Photo by Andrew Carroll, Queen's University Communications



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# Exploring cities

By Emily Goldney

**M**y interest in pursuing career in planning was sparked by travelling. Over the past three years, I have worked and studied in five different cities across three continents. Through exploring Canada, Europe, and Asia I discovered different cultures and different ways of living—an experience which instilled in me a desire to learn more about what makes towns and cities work.

When I was 20, I moved to Grenoble, France to study for six months. I was amazed to experience life in a high density, compact city. The proximity of amenities, abundant active transit options, and sheer amount of life in the streets was the polar opposite of the auto-dependent 1980's suburb where I grew up. The more I travelled, the more I became interested in what makes cities work. So when I returned to Canada, I decided to complete my undergraduate honours project on urban sprawl. As it was during the 2015 Co-ordinated Land Use Planning Review in Ontario, my project focussed on policy and planning mechanisms to combat sprawl in the Greater Golden Horseshoe region.

After taking some time to acquire some real-world work experience, I decided that it was time to go back to school, and I am currently pursuing my Masters of Planning through the School of Urban and Regional Planning at Queens University.

Furthering my interest in sprawl management, my master's research will build on previously completed work under the [Canadian Suburbs](#) project led by Dr. David Gordon. The project research team developed models to

define and classify suburbs, then applied these models to Statistics Canada 1996, 2006 and 2011 census data to estimate the number and proportion of Canadians living in suburbs in all 33 Canadian Census Metropolitan Areas.

For my research, I will apply this same method to the recently released 2016 census data for the Ottawa-Gatineau CMA to determine if and how suburban growth in Ottawa is changing. Suburbs are a unique urban form, with planning considerations distinct from those of urban cores and rural areas.

Knowledge of suburban populations and growth rates is therefore essential for effective planning and growth management. Furthermore, modern planning approaches now recognize the environmental, social and economic benefits of compact development. Accordingly, the City of Ottawa has developed a variety of policies and programs to encourage and support residential intensification. My research will also examine the effectiveness of Ottawa's policies in promoting compact development.



*Emily Goldney is a student member of OPPI and a M.Pl. 2018 candidate at the School of Urban and Regional Planning at Queen's University. She is the recipient of the 2017 Gerald Carrothers Graduate scholarship. Emily is looking forward to beginning her career as a professional planner.*

Photo: Emily in London, England, one of her favourite cities in the world

# The importance of forecasts

By Cameron Macdonald

**S**o much of what we do as planners is based on projections and forecasts. When these projections are wrong, or when events occur that dramatically alter the course of a community's growth and contingency plans do not exist, it can have severe impacts. Because of this, it is imperative that we are as accurate as possible with our forecasts, while at the same time being honest about our communities' prospects for the future.

A recent trip to Philadelphia showed first-hand the importance of forecasting, and the negative impacts associated with inaccurate projections. Having grown markedly through the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, Philadelphia's population peaked in the 1950s with just over 2-million people. The city's 1960 comprehensive plan forecast this growth would continue, projecting a city of

2.3- to 2.6-million people by the 1980s. In reality, the 1960s marked the beginning of the precipitous decline of the city's population to a low of 1.5-million residents by the year 2000. To make matters worse, the city's planning department failed to substantially acknowledge this declining population until near the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with plans as recently as the 1980s continuing to project either a stable or growing population.

Today, the city has started its rebound and has continued to grow, albeit rather slowly, since the turn of the century. However, the impact of these misguided plans remains evident throughout the city,



particularly with the abundance of vacant land and abandoned buildings.

This raises two questions: how did planners get the projections so wrong, and why did it take them so long to recognize their mistakes? A big part of the answer lays in what Popper and Popper (2002) claim is a bias for growth in the field of planning.<sup>1</sup> As planners become strongly invested in the communities in which they work, it becomes increasingly difficult to imagine potential scenarios in which their communities do not thrive. This makes it harder to plan for less desirable situations, such as missed growth targets, or a declining employment base.

While the history of Philadelphia is invariably different from the situation in many Ontario communities, there is

still an incredibly valuable set of lessons to be learned. Most importantly, planners need to take the time to recognize their own individual biases when it comes to their communities, and to be open and honest about all potential future scenarios, even if they are not entirely desirable. In doing so, planners will be able to better prepare their communities for the future.

*Cameron Macdonald is a student member of OPPI and recent graduate of Ryerson's School of Urban and Regional Planning.*

Endnote

<sup>1</sup> Popper, D.E. & Popper, F.J. (2002). Small can be beautiful: coming to terms with decline. *Planning*. 68(7). Pg. 20-23.

Ryerson University

## Connecting research and practice

By Ashley Varajão

**M**any accredited planning programs offer the opportunity for graduate students to explore current events or trends through a major research paper.

This is independent and original research that investigates topical issues. Students become well versed in their chosen topics as they delve deeply into their research over many months, engaging government, professional, and academic resources, as well as collecting primary data.

Several years ago, my advisor Chris De Sousa, RPP, and members of OPPI explored ways in which the academic community could become more involved in the assembly and transfer of research knowledge to planning practitioners. Although the original intent was for faculty to focus on their research specializations, we thought to test the potential of using major research papers to transfer knowledge.

In my own paper, “[Defining Accessibility: A snapshot of accessibility planning and a review of practice in Ontario](#),” provides a resource to planners who wish to develop a basic understanding of the field. It includes an extensive annotated bibliography which includes relevant policy, design

principles—barrier free and universal—and disability specific literature—hearing impairment, visual impairment, mobility, age friendly communities and dementia-friendly design.

Accessibility planning or consulting is a varied and robust profession. The 12 participating professionals provided insights into defining accessibility and identifying successful inclusive projects. Also they highlighted the potential for harmonized standards and outcomes, and the barriers impeding the prioritization and broadening of accessible outcomes. Of particular note during the interviews, participants were nearly unanimous in their identification of education as a significant barrier to achieving accessible outcomes. They said that planners have a tendency to not consider a range of abilities which has resulted in exclusion or consideration being given for only certain user groups.

Future major research papers could do more to facilitate the transfer of knowledge to practitioners. They could provide innovative recommendations to further advance planning practice.

*Ashley Varajão BA, MPI is a student member of OPPI and recently completed her Master of Planning from Ryerson University. She currently practices as an urban planner with the St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA.*



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# Revealing the ravines

By Ashley Varajão, Christina Borowiec, Grant Mason, Laura Brown, Sean Nash & Teresa Liu

Within the Master of Planning program at Ryerson University's School of Urban and Regional Planning, we are in the enviable position of having the opportunity to work on a plethora of unique studio projects that have significant social and ecological impacts on our cities. This past winter, City of Toronto Planning, and Parks, Forestry & Recreation staff presented our team with the task of creating a landscape connectivity plan for the city's ravine system.

Largely undiscovered and underappreciated, the ravines are the physical soul of the city and define its landscape. There is no other city in the world with as extensive and integrated network of ravines like Toronto, which boasts over 10,500 hectares of greenspace and wilderness. Erosion has carved out the ravines like serpentine canyons through the landscape. Geologically speaking, the ravines are a relatively new creation, a fact confirmed by ongoing erosion and mudslides.

As Toronto experiences unprecedented growth and space becomes increasingly limited and costly, there is an opportunity to connect the city to the ravines in a manner that protects the ecological and hydrological functions of the ravines. The purpose of our studio project was to help activate some of the proposals of the city's Ravine Strategy by presenting opportunities for connection into the ravines for people, and between the ravines and other natural spaces for other species.

In this studio, we considered the perspectives of people and wildlife holistically in order to identify where better connections to the ravine system are needed. Physical connections were examined for wildlife, and both physical and mental connections were considered for people. Connection proposals include new trailheads, bridges, greenways, and wayfinding projects. Initially, our team was asked to identify city-wide connections. During the second phase of the project, Black Creek became the focus of recommendations in order to align with a city planning study, Keele Finch Plus.

Needless to say the ravines represent a complicated space with competing interests and needs. The notion of a project dedicated to the exploration of enhancing wildlife connections

would not have been proposed in planning schools 20 years ago. This shift in perspective towards environmentalism and holistic planning presents an exciting moment in planning practice. As a result we were challenged to balance the needs of people, which has been the traditional emphasis in planning education, with those of wildlife.

We had the opportunity to move beyond theory and in-class studies to pursue experimentation, experience and engagement. The nature of the ravines' complex interactions with both humans and wildlife highlighted the fact that quantitative and qualitative information are equally valuable. As young planners it is a humbling experience to learn that our profession alone cannot dictate what is best for a community. Instead, planners must immerse themselves in the local context and engage with the public.

This project is helping to propel us into planning practice. It has provided us with an opportunity to work with planners and other professionals on a very relevant initiative, and given us insight into how to balance various issues that we are likely to encounter in the future. It has also helped to expand our thinking about the city and the planning profession itself.

*Ashley Varajão, Christina Borowiec, Grant Mason, Laura Brown, Sean Nash and Teresa Liu are recent Master of Planning graduates from Ryerson University's School of Urban and Regional Planning. Their studio project, Ravine Xing: A Landscape Connectivity Plan for Toronto's Ravine System, was supervised by Dr. Nina-Marie Lister. Ashley, Christina and Teresa are student members of OPPI.*



Ashley Varajão, Christina Borowiec, Grant Mason, Laura Brown, Sean Nash & Teresa Liu. Photo by Grant Mason

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# Active transportation beyond the Greenbelt

By Danielle Culp, Neil Loewen & Raktim Mitra

In response to the growing demand for safer, healthier and more sustainable environments, urban planners are advocating for active modes of transportation. While much work has been done to highlight active transportation projects in the urban context, smaller municipalities are often overlooked. This article examines the key challenges and opportunities for rural and smaller communities “beyond the Greenbelt” in relation to active transportation planning.



Danielle Culp



Neil Loewen



Raktim Mitra

The *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* identifies areas where intended growth should occur, and 15 of the 21 jurisdictions identified are small rural municipalities located in the outer ring of the Greenbelt. These municipalities have lower proportions of youth, and higher proportions of people aged 50 and older, as well as lower median incomes, when compared to large cities within the region.<sup>1</sup> Many of these municipalities have developed pedestrian and cycling plans and incorporated active transportation into existing policies; however, day-to-day travel by residents is still largely car dependent.

The research team explored the challenges to active transportation planning by surveying and interviewing municipal staff in the GGH. The results are documented in the recent publication, “Active Transportation Planning Beyond the Greenbelt,”<sup>2,3</sup> which highlights 13 rural, suburban and urban projects that demonstrate ways in which challenges to active transportation planning can be met in differing contexts. Some of the findings are highlighted below.

**Resources**—Funding to hire staff can critically improve a municipality’s capacity to implement active transportation planning and related programming.<sup>3</sup> Further, by increasing and expanding training and education among different departments, it can strengthen the planning process and improve the capacity of municipalities to undertake active transportation projects using existing resources.<sup>3</sup>

**Public Support**—Securing public support is a key challenge faced by many smaller municipalities. This is partly due to the fact that the majority of the road network is designed with cars in mind, which has fostered attitudes that favour driving over other, more sustainable transportation options.

**Liability**—The risk of injury to road users poses real concerns for municipalities and can sometimes be a deterrent from building active transportation infrastructure.

**Design**—Designing spaces that improve conditions for pedestrians and cyclists often requires compromise between transportation modes in terms of design. For example, the removal of parking to accommodate bike lanes is often proposed, but opposed by local residents. However in order to balance the needs of various road users and communities, trade-offs may need to be made such as narrowing lanes instead of removing them.

**Environment**—Both the natural and built environments create unique challenges for active transportation in smaller and rural communities where destinations tend to be farther apart than more urban settings and winter conditions can exacerbate active transportation.

**Authority**—Upper and lower-tier governments often share jurisdiction over roadways and other services, which can be challenging. For example, many counties in Ontario are not responsible for providing recreational facilities, making it difficult to justify construction of multi-use trails or cycle paths.

Active Transportation Planning Beyond the Greenbelt,<sup>3</sup> was a collaboration between the Toronto Centre for Active Transportation, Ryerson University and the University of Toronto.

*Danielle Culp is a student member of OPPI and a masters student at Ryerson’s School of Urban and Regional Planning. Neil Loewen is a planner at Urban Strategies Inc. Dr. Raktim Mitra is a candidate member of OPPI and an assistant professor of Urban and Regional Planning at Ryerson University.*

## Endnotes

- 1 Hemson Consulting Ltd. (2012). Greater Golden Horseshoe Growth Forecasts to 2041: Technical Report. Retrieved from: <http://www.hemson.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/03/HEMSON-Greater-Golden-Horseshoe-Growth-Forecasts-to-2041-Technical-Report-Nov2012.pdf>
- 2 Smith Lea, N., Mitra, R., Hess, P., Loewen, N., & Culp, D. (2017). Active Transportation Planning Beyond the Greenbelt: The Outer Ring of the Greater Golden Horseshoe Region. Toronto: Clean Air Partnership.

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# Planning school and beyond

By John FitzGibbon, RPP

The University of Guelph School of Planning and Development has two accredited planning programs. The Canadian program focuses on the planning issues and processes that are unique to the more rural and remote areas of the province and Canada. The international program focuses on developing nations, but also on comparative policy analysis and enhancing a global understanding of the challenges other countries face and what we can learn that is of relevance to the Canadian context.

The M.Sc. programs are a first professional degree which provides both a focus on rural, regional and remote areas and the fundamental skills, knowledge and experience necessary to move on to full accreditation. Our current contribution to lifelong learning in the profession is our MPlan degree. The MPlan degree is a one-year program consisting of six courses and a major research paper. It is designed for those who are already working in the planning field but are seeking to either broaden their perspective and scope of learning, or develop a new area of specialization, such as policy planning and implementation or program and project evaluation.

The MPlan degree is a flexible program that has only one compulsory course, one which focuses on the study of policy both sector-specific policy and the role of the professional planner in the policy development and implementation process. The other courses in the MPlan program are set out through a consultative process between the faculty adviser and the student. Through the use of the

internet we have students enrolled in the program not only from Guelph and southern Ontario but from the west coast, Nunavut and the Maritimes.

Our offerings of short professional development courses and workshops are currently being revised as we undergo significant changes in our faculty due to retirements. We will continue to offer short courses on program evaluation, participatory planning, community-based planning, environmental impact assessment, environmental risk management and community economic development (Ryan Gibson). We expect to add workshops in natural resources based community planning (Nick Brunet), First Nation and Aboriginal community planning (Sheri Longboat), comparative policy analysis and social services planning.

We are also contemplating the development of a summer institute in which we would offer a number of two-day workshops on our areas of expertise. This would allow a professional planner to undertake two to three workshops in a week (arranged as part of a one-week educational leave from employment or a planned holiday, which would include an intensive learning experience).

The expertise of our faculty is clearly related to research and the exploration of the issues faced by the planning professionals. Faculty explore and find new ways of addressing old problems as identify new issues before adverse consequences are generated.

Many members of faculty are also planning practitioners, either through consulting or through (unpaid) outreach to communities in need. These initiatives not only keep faculty current but also keep them grounded and experienced in innovative practice. While bound by the ethics of professional practice, faculty are also advocates for specific issues for specific communities and for non conventional practice. For faculty learning is an inherent part of our practice as much as it is for the non academic practitioner. Teaching is a natural outcome of that part of our practice.

We do have much to offer the profession and clearly the profession has a lot to offer the academic practitioner.

*John FitzGibbon, RPP, is a member of OPPI and a faculty member in the planning program at Guelph. His special area of teaching and research is in community based natural resources management (with a focus on water resources, environmental law and policy and agri-environmental management).*



John FitzGibbon



Nick Brunet



Sheri Longboat



Ryan Gibson



# Insights into Muskoka

By Katherine Howes

A group of University of Guelph Rural Planning and Development students made the 2-hour journey north into Muskoka in mid-March to learn about the challenges Muskoka planners face. While facing some unique challenges, Muskoka is also addressing similar issues as the rest of rural Ontario including an ageing population and youth outmigration. The lessons from this trip can be summarized into two themes: planning in Muskoka is a perpetual balancing act and Muskoka planners, albeit rural planners in general, must do more with less.



Muskoka District faces unique challenges as it lies at the juncture between the southern mixed forest and the northern boreal forest, and between northern and southern Ontario. Hence the planners must balance waterfront development pressures and natural heritage preservation, southern development pressures and northern development issues.

The District of Muskoka's population is comprised of 42 per cent permanent residents and 58 per cent seasonal residents. These diverse socioeconomic populations can sometimes create a polarizing dynamic in parts of the



region. For permanent residents, Muskoka planners tend to concentrate their efforts on issues such as downtown revitalization, age friendly planning and economic development strategies. For seasonal residents, they focus on environmentally sound development strategies for waterfront properties and planning for an emerging creative class.

Rural regions, like Muskoka, tend to have fewer planning staff and available resources than their urban counterparts, but must still deliver the same services to their residents. A crucial aspect of the Muskoka planners' role is balancing various perspectives by finding common ground among stakeholders. As two of our presenters said "know your context; bring emotion, passion and respect; don't pigeonhole yourself; and if it's wrong, fix it—even if it's the PPS."

*Katherine Howes is a student member of OPPI and CIP. She is in her first year of the MSc of Rural Planning and Development Program at the University of Guelph.*

Above: Meeting with Anne McCauley of the Muskoka Lakes Association (taken by Paul Kraehling, used with permission)

# Revitalizing Howick

By Alex Petric, Jessica He, Miriam Bart & Nick Sully

As Ontario's demographics continue to shift, rural communities present great opportunities for planners to contribute to social and economic development. The skills that planners possess are crucial for sustaining vibrant communities in areas affected by globalization and youth out-migration.

We and our fellow students in rural planning at the University of Guelph learned this lesson first-hand as part of a field project for Dr. Wayne Caldwell's Planning Practice course. While our classmates worked in the areas of Seaforth, Grey County, and the Golden Horseshoe, our group of four travelled to Howick Township in Huron County to investigate potential initiatives to revitalize the township's downtown areas.

We learned that the local economy, traditionally rooted in agriculture and simple manufacturing, has shrunk in recent decades, leading residents to move to larger cities for work. Some new residents have been attracted by low housing prices, but they often commute to nearby Listowel and Kitchener-Waterloo for work and find it difficult to

integrate into the local community. The need for intentional economic and community development in regions like Howick is clear.

We travelled through Howick's three villages—Fordwich, Gorrie, Wroxeter—to gain an on-the-ground perspective, survey the assets which the area possesses, and speak with local residents. We discussed the potential for the township



Alex Petric, Jessica He, Miriam Bart, Nick Sully



to support businesses by beautifying the downtown areas, improving the way-finding system, and developing a recreational trail along the nearby Maitland River. After independently researching these topics, along with funding mechanisms, we compiled our findings into a report that also included our reflections on our experience in Howick.

While the challenges faced by Howick and similar areas will not be solved overnight, there are reasons to be optimistic. For example, we had reported on the apparent lack of communication among the township's three villages.

This led to a meeting of representatives from the three villages to discuss plans to co-ordinate their efforts to improve the economic and social conditions in their villages. We are grateful to have had the opportunity to work with Howick Township, and we are eager to see how it evolves in the future.

*Alex Petric, Jessica He, Miriam Bart and Nick Sully are student members of OPPI and M.Sc. students in Rural Planning & Development at the University of Guelph.*

York University

## CPL coming soon

By Jennifer Foster, RPP

Given the intensely interdisciplinary nature of York University's Planning Program, its rooting in social and environmental justice, it is not at all surprising to find courses and workshops that focus squarely on the most pressing contemporary challenges of planning.

In the coming year, York's Faculty of Environmental Studies will be develop a program of Continuous Professional Learning that will be accessible to all OPPI members. These opportunities will combine workshops, lectures, walking tours and dinner discussions. We will build on our unique strengths in social and environmental justice, to ensure that each session offers insights into the most pressing challenges of contemporary planning. Stay tuned!

Through the 2016-17 academic year, York hosted three advanced workshop-based courses that combine theoretical studies with applied experience working in real life settings. Each included public presentations and community symposia to disseminate project findings and incorporate feedback. The focus of the Planning in Toronto Workshop was Black Love Matters. This workshop incorporated students and community members to actively understand and build planning knowledge on issues central to the Black community and the Black experience in Canada. The Critical Planning Workshop focused on growth boundaries, land markets and housing in South Africa. Students had an immersive experience in Johannesburg, where they connected with academics, planning practitioners and activists to learn about urban growth and sprawl in an

African context. And the Environmental Planning Workshop focused on natural, social and economic systems regeneration in Mississauga.

York Planning Program faculty members continue to conduct advanced research focusing on a range of issues, including public housing redevelopment; strategic environmental assessment; place-based urban policy and public transit; wind energy; indigenous knowledge systems; exurban planning; immigration, multiculturalism and citizenship; fuel transportation; sub/urbanization; urban environmental justice; environmental conservation in the Neo-tropics; community development food system planning; community-based water management; the history and theory of architecture, urban design and planning; habitat creation; and post-industrial greenspace in cities.

Thanks to the York Planning Program's alumni association, MYPAC, students had the opportunity to learn about ongoing planning issues and practices through Lunch & Learn sessions led by York graduates. In 2016-17, for instance, York students participated in sessions at Toronto City Hall (led by alum Oren Tamir) and the Environmental Land Tribunal (led by alum Evelyn Dawes).

*Jenny Foster, RPP, MCIP, is member of OPPI and the coordinator of York University's Planning Program. She is an associate professor in the Faculty of Environmental Studies, and coordinator of the Urban Ecologies Program.*



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# Influencing behaviour

By Darren Pigliacelli

As a constant observer of urban environments, never have I experienced such a complete urban environment like the French Quarter in New Orleans, where the design and character of the urban setting appears to have such a positive effect on the feelings and behaviour of the people within it.



On a recent trip to New Orleans, it was interesting to observe the change in behaviour when transitioning from the French Quarter to the neighbouring urban environments, which were designed around the automobile. In the French Quarter people appeared to feel safe and behaved in an open manner. In the automobile-oriented surrounding areas people appeared to feel unsafe and behaved in a more defensive and aggressive manner.

These positive and negative effects that urban design can have on human behaviour require careful study.

*Darren Pigliacelli is a Student Member of OPPI and a member of the OPPI Student Liaison Committee. In the fall he will be starting the second year of his Masters of Urban & Regional Planning at York University.*



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# SLC case competition

By Patrycja Jankowski & Brandon Stevens



This past March student teams from each accredited planning program in Ontario competed in the annual OPPI Student Liaison Committee Case Competition at the University of Toronto. The teams had the day to work on the Meaford waterfront redevelopment case study. This was followed by a short presentation to a panel of RPPs—Rob Armstrong, Christine Furtado and Meghan Bratt.

Our team, representing York University’s Masters in Environmental Studies, proposed the best solution for the Municipality of Meaford. The team comprised three first-year students (Alex Gatien, Brandon Stevens and Jennifer Spalton) and three second-year students (Charles Ng, Brendan Rice and Patrycja Jankowski).

In accordance with the goals of the Meaford Official Plan, we narrowed our choices by eliminating ones that didn’t encompass the following criteria: celebrate Meaford’s heritage, enhance economic benefits, and not take away from Meaford’s downtown.

We focused on Meaford’s history of apple picking (as outlined in the town logo) by encouraging a cidery, which has become increasingly popular in Grey County. We proposed an inn with architecture similar to Blue Mountain Village because we felt this would address the municipality’s concern for tourism while keeping the integrity of its existing character. To further support growing tourism, we recommended a welcome centre architecturally based on a traditional Ojibway Waginogan structure, acknowledging the Indigenous history. Finally, we included housing to accommodate

Meaford’s growing population. We proposed townhouses and stacked townhouses with close access to community amenities and greenspace.

To create a four-season destination, a beach was proposed with an extended waterfront trail for walking and biking in the summer, and warming stations along the route in the winter to make skiing and snowshoeing more comfortable. We also proposed a woonerf to foster a sense of community and to provide a space for residents to gather and connect. This would create a walkable and safe space for pedestrians in the summer with the ability to close the road off completely for street festivals, and in the winter to accommodate vehicular traffic to support businesses.

Our central focus was to incorporate Meaford’s rich history and culture into the waterfront redevelopment plan. The judges acknowledged that the inclusion of all histories was the key reason why the proposal by the York team was chosen to be the best fit for Meaford.



Patrycja Jankowski



Brandon Stevens

*Patrycja Jankowski and Brandon Stevens are student members of OPPI, and are in York University’s Masters of Environmental Studies planning program. Patrycja graduates this year and Brandon is in his final year.*

Above: The winning team and the judges



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# Resilient practices in everyday life

By *Natasha Petzold*

**W**e are at a moment in time where global landscapes, both urban and rural, are experiencing regular transformation due to climate change. There has been an increase in frequency and intensity of large storm events that have had devastating outcomes for our environment and ourselves. Over the next several years, cities will inevitably have to cope with challenges that they were never built to accommodate, and it is up to us as planners, city builders and innovators to find a way to live harmoniously with the unpredictability of environmental shocks and stresses, while ensuring an equitable life for citizens. As young planners, we will likely face complex large-scale environmental and socio-economic challenges throughout our careers. Thus, integrating a regenerative sustainability and resilience lens into everyday practice has become something that we cannot ignore.



In December 2013, the Rockefeller Foundation created an organization called *100 Resilient Cities* to motivate education, innovation, and action around building cities to become more resilient at a global scale.<sup>1</sup> Each year, 100 Resilient Cities selects a group of cities that demonstrate the potential to be leaders in resiliency (for both the short and long term). In 2016, Toronto was selected to receive the 100 Resilient Cities grant and begin the mission of creating its own resilient action plan.<sup>2</sup> Over the next several years, Toronto will hire a chief resilience officer, write a resilience action plan, and access knowledge and best practices, relationships and partnerships from a network of cities.

In an extensive review of one of the first resilience action plans, the Resilient Oakland Playbook,<sup>3</sup> I highlighted five key findings:

One, identify the community organizations that are currently doing vital work in the city, then invest in those organizations to expand their reach. These community organizations function as a bridge between the public and municipal government, often having acquired the local knowledge that enables them to understand the support and services a particular community needs.

Two, seek out funding sources. Oakland was able to combine several grants, awards, and other financial programs to make the biggest impact possible. This increased the global recognition of sustainable and resilient efforts in Oakland, and enabled the city to implement many successful actions such as retrofitting older homes and developing a green infrastructure plan.

Three, establish timelines for each resilience goal to

motivate action, while prioritizing tasks and ensuring meaningful change is occurring. Timelines help to communicate to the public that the municipality is approaching the resilience action plan proactively. This motivates citizens to become involved and invested in the process.

Four, incorporate a realistic and digestible series of goals. Although it is admirable to have high expectations for a city and its potential to become more sustainable, if the goals are too ambitious (or not ambitious enough) the plan will not be successful. Producing a document that is written for a general audience will allow the public to support the goals and adopt a resilience lens in their everyday lives as well.

Five, recognize and celebrate the unique culture of each city. Resilience is not a one-size-fits-all strategy. Recognizing the particular culture, environment, and nuances of a city before creating the action plan can allow it to be better received and more effective over the long term.

Possibly the most vital idea that came out of this research was the playbook's contribution to improving the social enterprise and environmental resilience by recognizing the value of grassroots community organizations.

Provincial policies that guide growth and development in Ontario are increasingly attentive to the importance of resilience and planners are at the forefront of adapting resilience into everyday practices, as well as communicating them to the public. Using the Oakland example, we can empower members of the public to be leaders and innovators in making our cities resilient to acute climatic shocks and long-term socio-economic stresses that weaken the fabric of our cities.

*Natasha Petzold is a student member of OPPI and a candidate of the Master of Science in Planning program the University of Toronto. She is a member of OPPI's Student Liaison Committee.*

## Footnotes

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# Connecting scholars and practitioners

By Jeff Biggar, Tim Ross, RPP & Julie Mah, RPP

Are universities supplying professional planners with research that informs their needs? How might we improve collaboration between planning academics and practitioners? Guided by these questions, we undertook research examining the role of PhDs in non-academic planning careers. In particular, we considered connections between PhD planning programs and the profession.<sup>1</sup>

As PhD students in planning who are also registered professional planners, candidate members, or working in the field, we straddle both worlds: academic research and non-academic practice. Indeed, we know that academic faculty who work in professional practice wear multiple hats.<sup>2</sup> Our research identifies a gap between academic research and the needs of practicing professionals, and considers what role PhD students may play in bridging it.

We asked senior-level planning practitioners working in public and private sectors across Canada about their perceptions of PhD students (and graduates) contributing to practice. We also asked PhD students about their planning program designs and interest in working outside academia. Generally, we found that practitioners perceive academia and practice separate from one another. Based on our survey, practitioners consider the work of PhDs to be separate from practice; their work was deemed “too academic” or “too removed from the everyday to be effective.” Similarly, others suggested that many PhDs do not orient their work toward practice. To be relevant, PhDs must independently establish themselves outside of the university via professional credentials and/or rethink the aim and application of their research. Some practitioners observed that practitioners often identify planning problems differently from academic planners.

Surveyed PhD students provided a marked contrast. They were keen to explore partnership opportunities with planning firms, municipalities, and other planning organizations. In fact, the idea of developing a joint research project with outside

partners aligned with many students’ career aims—not surprising given that some have worked (and do work) as planning practitioners, while others aspire to do so upon graduating. Partnerships can provide a basis for considering planning problems in a new light.

Academics can devote more time and resources to exploring an issue in-depth, and are well-positioned to bring unique historical, theoretical, and/or methodological perspectives; whereas practitioners bring pragmatic, useful knowledge of everyday planning processes that are imperative to engaging planning problems. Let’s not underestimate the value of independent research in a world of client-driven understandings of problems. At the same time, in academia, let’s welcome practitioner input when designing planning research problems.

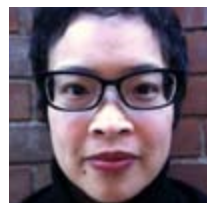
*Jeff Biggar is a student member of OPPI, a PhD Candidate in Planning at the University of Toronto and an independent planning consultant. Tim Ross, RPP is a member of OPPI and a PhD Candidate in Planning at the University of Toronto. Julie Mah, RPP, is a member of OPPI and a PhD Candidate in Planning at the University of Toronto. A special thanks to Ewa Modlinska, Austin Zwick, and Kelly Gregg for their contribution to this research project.*



Jeff Biggar



Tim Ross



Julie Mah

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**OBITUARY**

**Don Maciver RRP, MCIP, 1950-2017**

It was with great sadness that we learned Don Maciver passed away. The retired Rideau Valley Conservation Authority director of planning had a remarkable 38-year career with the authority. He developed the planning and regulations program and established working relationships with federal, provincial and municipal partners that laid the foundation for the environmental planning work that the authority continues to do today.



The quintessential professional in everything he did, Don was passionate about his work and was a proud member of the Ontario Professional Planners Institute. He volunteered for several years on the OPPI Awards and Scholarship Committee.

Don was a colleague, leader and mentor to many, a champion of the

natural environment and an unwavering supporter of the work of conservation authorities. His commitment, generosity and kindness showed in every aspect of his life. He will be missed.

~ Glen McDonald

**EASTERN DISTRICT**

**Urban workshop a success**

By Stephen Alexander, RPP (Ret.)

The Eastern District Leadership Team's annual urban workshop included professional planners engaging participants in a range of topics. These included heritage planning, animating streets and the Ottawa LRT connectivity study (the

LRT is currently under construction). Also presented was a U.S. Multi Modal Network Guide and practical examples of techniques for bike system implementation in the Ottawa area. As always, the event provided participants with a great opportunity to accumulate important CPL hours. For those in Eastern Ontario looking for upcoming events check out the OPPI website.



Stephen Alexander, RPP (Ret.) spent most of his career with the City of Cornwall until his retirement in 2015. He remains active on the Eastern District Leadership Team.

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OPPI 2017 Conference Speaker

# The missing link

By Enid Slack

Cities across Canada have welcomed recent announcements of more federal infrastructure funding—more funds are surely needed to maintain existing infrastructure in a state of good repair as well as invest in new infrastructure. But, is federal funding the best way to pay for infrastructure? For governments to operate efficiently, it is important to establish a clear link between expenditure and revenue decisions—simply stated, those who make expenditure decisions should also make revenue decisions. This linkage between expenditures and revenues, essential for accountability, is lost when the federal or provincial governments provide transfers to local governments.



How should infrastructure be funded? The source of revenue should match the type of expenditure being funded. User fees, for example, play an important role in paying for public services with private good characteristics (such as water, sewers, garbage collection and disposal, transit, and some recreation). They not only produce revenue for local governments, they promote economic efficiency. Under-pricing, or providing services for free, results in over-consumption and often in subsequent ill-advised investment. For example, when subsidized roads become crowded, the political pressure to expand them becomes greater. Proper pricing would reduce the demand for roads and the need to build more of them.

Services with public good characteristics (such as fire protection, neighbourhood parks, local streets and street lighting) generate collective benefits that cannot easily be assigned to individual beneficiaries, making it difficult to levy specific fees or charges. Instead, some form of local benefit-based taxation such as the property tax is appropriate. Land value capture taxes are a form of property tax that can be used where infrastructure increases land values; development charges are appropriate for growth-related capital costs associated with new development.

Borrowing is appropriate to pay for assets with a long life that benefit future residents: those who enjoy the benefits over time also pay the costs. Public-private partnerships (P3s) where the private sector gets involved in some or all aspects of designing, building, financing, maintaining, and operating a facility work for large-scale projects where there is a revenue stream. However, borrowing and P3s are financing tools rather than funding tools, in the sense that municipalities still need to raise revenues to pay back what they borrowed or make availability payments to the private sector (if there are no user fees).

What is the role for federal and provincial transfers? Transfers are appropriate for infrastructure with benefits that spill over municipal boundaries but where local provision is still desirable or

for infrastructure that is in the national or provincial interest. Relying too heavily on transfers can be problematic, however, because they are rarely stable and predictable—the next government may have different ideas about municipal infrastructure, for example. Transfers do not encourage municipalities to be efficient or price services correctly, and they reduce accountability.

To sum up, it is important to link decisions on revenues with decisions on expenditures and the choice of revenues should depend on the characteristics of the expenditures being made. This link will result in infrastructure for which people are willing to pay, and efficient and accountable local governments.

*Dr. Enid Slack will be a keynote speaker at the 2017 OPPI Conference. She is the director of the Institute on Municipal Finance and Governance and an adjunct professor at the Munk School of Global Affairs at the University of Toronto.*

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# Co-management through planning

By Frank McKay & George McKibbin, RPP

In the early '80s, Stanley Shingebis, a member of Osnaburgh (now Mishkeegogamang) First Nation was arrested in Pickle Lake. He became a quadriplegic between his arrest and release from custody. The arresting officer was charged with aggravated assault and acquitted in Provincial Court. In discipline proceedings under the *Police Act*, the officer was reduced in rank for a year. The incident called for a public inquiry.

The Osnaburgh-Windigo Tribal Council Justice Review Committee recommendations promoted healthy, strong and vibrant communities. The committee surveyed socio-economic, health, education, and housing factors and met community members and service providers. It concluded the absence of a secure viable land base explains all or most of First Nation peoples' problems associated with the justice, health, well-being and socio-economic conditions.<sup>1</sup>

This article evaluates the actions the Windigo First Nation Council took to implement the Justice Review recommendations.<sup>2</sup> It assesses whether planned actions achieved healthy, strong and vibrant communities and helped members raise families, build homes and community institutions, and earn livelihoods. Windigo's efforts focus on community planning and this focus led to its use of the *Far North Act*.

## Evaluation

John Friedmann<sup>4</sup> characterizes planning using four criteria: social reform, social learning, policy analysis, and social mobilization. The following is our assessment of the implementation of the Justice Review's recommendations using Friedmann's criteria within the context of the *Far North Act* implementation.

### *Social Reform—advocacy to improve the lives of reserve residents*<sup>5</sup>

Before 1985, Ontario provided little recognition of First Nation peoples. No legal or policy measures were in place to involve First Nation's members and communities in Ontario Crown land decision making.

In 2010, the *Far North Act*, drafted with the assistance of the Windigo, became legislation. Its intent "is to provide for community based land use planning in the Far North that directly involves First Nations in the planning..."<sup>3</sup> Its objectives include: a planning role for First Nation communities; protection of areas of cultural value and ecological systems; maintenance of biological diversity, ecological processes and carbon sequestration; and sustainable community economic development.

Properly implemented, the act provides for co-management. Since its enactment, two Windigo communities prepared and, together with the Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry, approved a community land use plan (Niigaan Bimaadiziwin – A Future Life" July 2011). Other plans are in preparation.

The *Far North Act* provides for co-management of Crown lands within over 40 per cent of the province. The ability to co-manage through planning creates hope and increases confidence among

communities. Progress is being made but social reform remains a work in progress.

### *Social Learning—the way planning is embedded in the practical experience of community members*<sup>6</sup>

The *Far North Act*'s implementation displays evidence of social learning by Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry planners and community members involved in plan preparation. However,



Frank McKay and George McKibbin

while plans are being prepared and approved, independent technical and legal advice isn't available to participating communities. Also, there is little evidence provincial staff are prepared to co-manage plan implementation or amend their programs to become consistent with approved plans.

The absence of independent advice for First Nation peoples during plan preparation, approval, and implementation poses a critical limitation where sustainable development and infrastructure are concerned. This absence may be a fatal flaw because infrastructure development is critical to sustainable remote communities. The province needs to make available independent technical advice on infrastructure development.

### *Policy Analysis—problem solving*<sup>7</sup>

Provincial ministry policy analysis is abstract and the subject matters addressed are program oriented. First Nation communities residing in the Far North are imbedded socially, culturally and economically within biophysical environments in ways not recognized or addressed by provincial interests.

Traditional land uses involve a functional purpose (e.g., gathering food) and a relationship between the user and the land guided by culture, ethics and spiritual values.<sup>9</sup> This relationship encompasses a sense of how the community exists in the landscape for the purposes of food security (e.g., fishing, hunting, berry picking and medicinal plants), maintaining spiritual values (e.g., a religious site and numerous grave sites), ethical standards (e.g., shared access and harvesting arrangements) and community life (e.g., livelihood and community housing, services and infrastructure). This relationship is integral to vibrant, healthy and strong communities.

Policy needs to be measured in terms of how effective it is at enabling safe, productive and healthy lives in remote communities. Is it easier for a family to feed, clothe and house children? Is it easier for individuals and families to build and maintain homes and community institutions? Does planned action lead to employment of each individual's skills and abilities?

Windigo First Nation Council wants to improve its members' quality of life. Provincial ministries are not working effectively with communities to provide necessary infrastructure, renewable energy and sustainable development to improve living conditions. Proper policy analysis has not been achieved to date.



*Social Mobilization—collective action and advocacy to achieve social change and learning<sup>8</sup>*

Successful implementation of community plans requires mobilization within and across all levels of government as well as community input. A review of multi-modal transportation planning to implement the *Northern Ontario Growth Plan*, for example, illustrates little understanding of the *Far North Act* and approved community plans. However, responses to Windigo First Nation Council's comments on multi-modal transportation suggest a healthier and more robust understanding of community plans may emerge.

### Conclusion

The *Far North Act* provides for community land use planning to be done in a manner consistent with Aboriginal and Treaty rights in Section 35 of the *Constitution Act*.<sup>10</sup> Traditional territories were not ceded to others for use and benefits are to be shared. Unfortunately, co-management has not yet been achieved.

*Frank McKay is the Windigo First Nations Council Chair and Chief Executive Officer. George McKibbin, RPP is a member of OPPI and an adjunct professor in the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, Ontario Agricultural College, University of Guelph. He has provided planning advice to Windigo First Nation Council and its member communities since 1985.*

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# Institute for New Suburbanism

By Dave Hardy, RPP

The suburbs are often overlooked by urban policy. Yet, most people in North America live in suburbs. Planners across Ontario can benefit from innovations in suburban thinking at regional and global scales. This is what the Institute for New Suburbanism is all about.

Launched in fall 2016, the institute offers lectures about the theoretical ideas, specific designs, and current conditions in local suburban regions to which new suburbanism ideas can be applied.

New suburbanism is a philosophy and flexible planning approach with five defining elements:

**Narratives**—It encourages planners to think beyond standard narratives, oversimplifications and stereotypes of suburbia, and to analyze and understand the nuance and complexity that exists in the suburban landscape.

**Parallel Strengths**—It asserts that a strong city and region needs a strong core, strong suburbs and strong rural areas. Conventional thinking tends to hold that strong investment in the core will result in trickle down benefits to suburban and rural areas. New suburbanism holds that core area problems are not going to be solved without strong suburbs and rural areas. Parallel core, suburb, rural investments and policy initiatives are essential for strong regions.

**Flattening**—New suburbanism observes that as global cities grow, they flatten, a process by which suburbs become more like their core areas and core areas become more like their suburbs. This flattening

leads to conditions whereby urban and suburban areas are more similar than different (e.g., higher density in the suburbs, big box retail in the core). In response, we need to plan for the suburbs as having a hybrid of urban and suburban characteristics.

**Design**—It asserts that as suburban areas develop, planners and architects need to advocate the best architecture, design and planning of built form that supports quality of life through the full life cycle of residents.

**Learn**—It advocates that as older inner and outer suburbs redevelop, planners have an opportunity to learn how suburbs are responding to change over time so as to provide lessons for planning new suburbs.

New suburbanism is about changing the narrative about suburban life. The suburbs are well planned communities and people love to live there. The suburbs do not need to be fixed or retrofitted. They need planners and architects to deliberately thinking about how we plan for domestic, employment, public, retail and car space.

*Dave Hardy, RPP is a member of OPPI and CIP. He is the principal of Hardy Stevenson and Associates Limited and the executive director of the Institute for New Suburbanism. For news and event updates email [info@newsurbanism.ca](mailto:info@newsurbanism.ca).*

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## Canadian Wildlife Service

# Natural heritage planning

By Michael Wynia, RPP & Graham Bryan

Municipal planners are being called upon to take a much more comprehensive and integrated approach to natural heritage planning when reviewing and revising official plans.

The Ontario 2011 biodiversity strategy established an ambitious target—by 2015 natural heritage system plans and biodiversity conservation strategies would be developed and implemented at the municipal level. Subsequently, the 2014 *Provincial Policy Statement* emphasized the importance of natural heritage planning. However, as of 2015 the Ontario Biodiversity Council reported that less than 30 per cent of municipalities had identified natural heritage systems in their official plans. The recently released provincial plans have reinforced the requirement for natural heritage systems planning.

If you are facing the task of developing a natural heritage system for your municipality, you will find the Canadian Wildlife Service has provided planners with two complementary products to assist in the development of municipal natural heritage systems. The habitat

guidelines provide aid in determining the amounts and types of habitat to incorporate into a healthy natural heritage system, and the biodiversity atlas identifies places of interest based on biodiversity value which can form a component of a natural heritage system.

## The How Much Habitat is Enough?

These guidelines focus on the lower Great Lakes and Mixedwood Plains Ecozone of southern Ontario and are intended to assist land use planners and conservation practitioners in restoring and protecting wildlife habitat. The 21 habitat guidelines describe the minimum amounts of wetland, forest, riparian and grassland habitat needed to help support populations of wildlife. They include a variety of management targets such as maintaining 30 to 50 per cent minimum forest cover, maintaining the greater of 10 per cent wetland cover per watershed or 40 per cent of historic wetland cover, maintaining 75 per cent of the length of a stream naturally vegetated, maintaining less than 10 per cent impervious cover in a watershed, and maintaining average grassland patches of greater than or equal to 50 hectares.



The guidelines offer guidance on the following matters of provincial interest: 1) Protection of significant wetlands with respect to percentage of wetlands in watersheds and sub-watersheds, wetland location, the adjacent lands, wetland area, shape and diversity, and wetland proximity. 2) Protection of significant woodlands with respect to per cent forest cover, area of largest forest patch, percentage of the watershed that is forest cover 100 metres from edge, forest shape, proximity to other forested patches, fragmented landscapes and the role of corridors and forest quality. 3) Restoration of natural heritage systems with respect to wetland restoration. In addition, the guidelines provide a resource with respect to the *PPS 2014* requirements related to the protection of significant wildlife habitat and to the identification, maintenance and restoration of natural heritage systems.

### How Much Disturbance is Too Much?

For those in the southern boreal shield, there is a companion document—How Much Disturbance is Too Much? While currently in draft form, the document is available on request from the Canadian Wildlife Service.

This guideline is fundamentally different from the southern Ontario guideline since the portion of the province in the southern boreal shield is a relatively intact landscape in comparison to the highly fragmented landscape of southern Ontario. In this landscape there is a greater opportunity to protect and conserve, not just restore.

These guidelines emphasize the identification and conservation, respectively, of regional and local habitat mosaics that capture a relatively high diversity of habitats in a predominantly natural state, subject to low levels of human disturbance. It recommends that the habitat mosaics should cover at least 50 to 60 per cent of their respective jurisdictions. This approach is dependent upon the conservation and preservation of a habitat mosaic that exhibits high habitat diversity, has uncommon and representative habitats, consists of large patches, incorporates a range of forest age classes and is connected and relatively un-fragmented.

### CWS Biodiversity Atlas: Southern and Central Ontario

The two guidelines form the basis for a new product being developed by the Canadian Wildlife Service. This draft mapping product identifies and formulates a science-based approach for identifying areas of the highest biodiversity value for southern Ontario and the southern portion of the Canadian Shield. It provides a geospatial representation of species richness, migratory bird densities, habitat extent and quality. The maps were created to aid in understanding the distribution of species and habitats, share

information with others, and help facilitate the conservation of important natural places by providing guidance on places of high biodiversity value.

The atlas for southern Ontario is a result of a geospatial analysis of 12 biodiversity elements to which were added 20 landscape and habitat condition criteria for forest, wetland, riparian and grassland. For example, wetland cover per watershed, riparian natural cover, forest cover per watershed, representation/diversity, size of open country patches and forest connectivity, old growth/interior forest and wetland proximity. Based on these criteria, scores were assigned to each study unit and the highest scoring study units (top 25 per cent) were combined with species at risk and migratory bird criterion, and aggregated into high biodiversity areas to create a map of southern Ontario's high value biodiversity areas.

The atlas provides data on a variety of key natural heritage system considerations and can be used to progressively combine scores to explain more and more about the biodiversity of an area including such factors as the location of the highest quality forests, important areas for migratory birds and species at risk, the location of forests with multiple high values and areas of highest overall biodiversity value based on the Canadian Wildlife Services' biodiversity portfolio.

Similar to the guidelines, a different methodology is used for the southern Shield area of the province to recognize the different planning context in this landscape. Here the emphasis is on a geospatial analysis of levels of human disturbance and the identification of places of least disturbance and greatest value for retention in a natural condition. Eight human influence criteria covering four categories of disturbance—transportation infrastructure,

human settlement, human land use change and power infrastructure—were used.

The atlas includes fine scale landscape mapping, to complement locally developed natural heritage systems, for high value biodiversity areas. While some caveats apply, the high value biodiversity areas can be used as a layer to integrate into connectivity/linkages analysis between and among natural heritage features and to identify sites of potential conservation interest. This can assist in maintaining the long-term ecological function of biodiversity.

*Michael Wynia, RPP, is a member of OPPI and CIP and is a partner and senior planner at Skelton, Brumwell and Associates. Graham Bryan is the manager, Protected Areas for the Ontario Region, Canadian Wildlife Service. More information about the guidelines and atlas can be obtained at [www.krystawynnatureblog.com](http://www.krystawynnatureblog.com) and [www.ec.gc.ca](http://www.ec.gc.ca).*



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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

# Life-long learning

**L**earning. It is what we do as students. Successful learning at an accredited planning program is a key step in the journey to becoming an RPP. However, professional learning is not something that can be completed on one day or over the course of just one year. Continuous learning is a cornerstone of being a professional. It is a lifelong endeavour. It is important to our credibility with the public and decision-makers. Learning is part of the OPPI culture and is embedded in our legislation and our Standards of Practice.

The Registered Professional Planners Act, 2017, if passed, will raise further awareness about the importance of planning and the role of the planning profession in creating and fostering healthy communities—putting the public interest first.

To protect the public interest, the bill sets out a process for regulating professional practice through membership, investigation of complaints, discipline and fitness to practice hearings. The accreditation process for the university planning programs and the certification process for Candidate Members is not affected by the proposed legislation.

As the future of the profession, I urge students to continue to assert our position with respect to the value of professional planning in shaping our communities and environment. Recognition of the profession is not a given. Staff and OPPI members worked hard to have the original *Ontario Professional Planners Institute Act, 1994* passed and we are on the cusp of new public legislation being enacted.

We must keep up the momentum so that planners of the future are recognized as the skilled professionals they are.

Great plans need great planners.

~ Andrea Bourrie

## URBAN DESIGN

# The next big disruption is here

By David Dixon & Harold Madi, RPP, contributing editor

**T**he autonomous mobility revolution is about to give a big boost to walkable urban places in cities and suburbs. Virtually all of the projects we are debating, planning and designing today will open their doors at the dawn of a new mobility era.

Congested suburban arteries and the lack of transit access have long complicated efforts to accommodate, and build community support for denser suburban developments. The arrival of autonomous vehicles (AVs) over the next five years will begin to dramatically shift this equation.

While some observers have predicted that AVs would encourage a new generation of suburban sprawl, it is more likely that the primary impact for at least a decade will be precisely the opposite. The real disruption will come from “autonomous transit” in the form of shared autonomous vehicles (SAVs)—six-to-12-passenger electric vehicles that run on-schedule or on-demand (ordered up by smartphone). Not having a human driver, it will cost half of what shared services cost today—and offer the added advantage of almost never needing to park (or pay for parking).

SAVs will not be equal-opportunity disruptors. Built not to speed along highways but instead to navigate dense urban environments, they will spread rapidly in urban areas where a critical mass of people and varied activities combine to generate lots of trips. SAVs will not replace rail or bus rapid transit but instead connect urban centres to these transit networks. Urban areas will increasingly signify places where vehicles are shared, not owned. In lower-density suburbs, privately owned and operated—and far more expensive—AVs will make more sense, but will phase in slowly.

Today cities provide as many as eight times more parking spaces than they have cars. All of which take up scarce urban land and push up costs—adding \$50-100,000 or more to the development cost of a condominium unit or 1,000 square feet of office space. Replacing a significant share of owned with shared vehicles will reduce costs and free up parking spaces to support new development. In turn, as SAVs reduce parking demand, they will facilitate increased densities. Citywide, surface parking lots will offer new opportunities to build affordable housing, schools, health centres and other building blocks of livability.

Public transit authorities are already looking at SAV services to provide critical “last mile” access, connecting people who live more



David Dixon



Harold Madi



Olli on a test run in DC

IMAGE COURTESY OF STEVE WOLF, STANTEC

than a 10-minute walk to the nearest transit station. These services will make transit more convenient, and enable more distant sites to command the value premiums that transit-oriented development brings.

Within a decade, SAVs will unlock unimagined opportunities to green our cities. Redeveloping acres of impermeable parking lots will reduce ground water pollution. Shared trips will mean fewer trips, and reduced emissions. Automated vehicles—shared or not—can travel within inches of each other, requiring far less pavement than traditional vehicles. The resulting opportunity to repurpose one-third to one-half of our existing street pavement will enable municipalities to redefine and optimize their public amenity space. Instead of a car in every garage, imagine that every street can host a rain garden. Major boulevards can become continuous ribbons of urban trees coursing through the city.

Before we finish painting this picture of urban renaissance, we need to hit pause and ask: Are we planning a next generation of urban development that will be outmoded from day one? Will SAVs exacerbate gentrification as they enhance urban amenity and mobility, reinforcing trends that according to the Brookings Institution have seen a more than 60 per cent increase in suburban poverty since 2000? Should SAV services be operated by private companies or as extensions of public transit, with corresponding public accountability? To remain proactive, we would need to start planning now to ensure that policies are in place anticipating both the implications and the opportunities.

*David Dixon FAIA and Harold Madi, RPP, lead Stantec's Urban Places Group, an interdisciplinary practice focused on creating more livable, healthy, competitive, and resilient communities.*

## PROVINCIAL NEWS

# Legislative update

By Kevin Eby, RPP, contributing editor

It has been very busy over the past month at the province with the recent announcements relating to results of the Ontario Municipal Board review and the release of the 2017 Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Growth Plan).

## Ontario Municipal Board Review

On May 16, 2017, the Province released the results of the review of the OMB and has proposed sweeping changes to the rules governing how appeals to *Planning Act* applications are to be addressed.

Planning is a complex process, made even more difficult by the reality that there is often more than one technically correct answer to many planning questions. The changes proposed by the province are significant and will take time for all of those involved to digest and fully understand. Will the appeals process run smoother and more efficiently? Given the nature of the procedural changes proposed, the answer is likely yes.

Will the changes ultimately make for better planned and more prosperous communities? It certainly appears that the pendulum has swung back in the direction of giving municipal councils far greater authority to pick which of the right answers to planning questions they feel is best for their communities. For many, this alone will be defined as success. However, in the complex world that is land use planning, success is dependent on decisions made by both the public and private sectors. The changes proposed by the province represent a significant shift in the decision-making paradigm.



Until we better understand how councils exercise this new authority and whether the changes significantly impact private sector investment decisions, I think it is safest to say; only time will tell.

## Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (2017)

On May 18, 2017, the province released the amended *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*. This, along with changes to the *Greenbelt Plan*, the *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan* and the *Niagara Escarpment Plan*, represent the culmination of the two-year co-ordinated review of the four plans by the province.

The new Growth Plan, which comes into effect on July 1, 2017, represents a significant change from the 2006 Growth Plan. Similar to the amendments proposed to the OMB, the changes to the Growth Plan will take time to digest and fully understand.

The new Growth Plan appears to remain generally consistent with the goals and objectives of the revised policy framework originally proposed and released for consultation purposes in May 2016. However, the process to achieve these goals and objectives has changed.

The new Growth Plan provides for a relatively complex transition processes associated with how and when the new density and intensification targets are to be established and brought into effect (with some flexibility as to the nature of such targets throughout the GGH being provided through negotiation with the province). In addition, key to understanding the impact of the changing targets on the land use planning process will be the land needs assessment methodology to be prepared by the province in accordance with Policy 2.2.1.5. This methodology has yet to be released. These issues, along with other policy changes proposed in the new Growth Plan will be addressed in greater detail in the next issue.

Fundamental to the successful implementation of the new Growth Plan will be the development of supporting materials by the province. The lack of such supporting materials was clearly a weakness in the implementation process associated with the original Growth Plan. To date, the province appears committed to rectifying that problem through a number of means, including some relatively innovative ones such as the establishment of the Places to Grow Implementation Fund. (A description of the fund and sample illustrative projects will be detail in an upcoming OPJ.)

*Kevin Eby, B.Sc, MA., RPP is a member of OPPI, the OPJ provincial news contributing editor and the former director of Community Planning with the Region of Waterloo. He previously worked on secondment to the province to help with the formulation of the original Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.*

## ELTO

# OMB evolution

By Ian Flett, contributing editor

On May 16<sup>th</sup>, the province released a broad outline of its proposed reforms to Ontario's land use planning regime administered by the Ontario Municipal Board. First and foremost, the province proposes a fresh start for planning appeals by no longer sending them to the Ontario Municipal Board. Instead, they will go to a new body to be called the Local Planning Appeal Tribunal.

There are interesting ideas in the package of reforms, some were expected, some were not. Here are some items that might be a cause for concern for those who appear frequently before the OMB.

The government is proposing procedural changes and it has not

indicated any major changes to policy documents (besides those that are currently underway). However, the breadth of the proposed procedural reforms would create a radically new land use planning adjudication system.

The threshold for a successful appeal of a municipal decision is whether the municipal decision followed provincial policies or municipal plans. This could represent a major change for proponents who would no longer be able to argue for the “best” planning decision considering applicable policies. In effect, a proponent could propose 45 storeys and the municipality could decide 35 are appropriate. If the latter number meets applicable policies, then presumably the appeal would fail. To offset this restriction, the province proposes to shelter approvals near major transit station areas from appeal. These measures do away with the unpopular and least deferential “de novo” standard of review on appeal. What is not clear is what standard of review will take its place. Must municipalities be correct or merely reasonable in making their decisions? Given the latitude in many policies, how will the tribunal decide matters where policies provide significant latitude or are ambiguous?

One of the most radical proposals is to bring an end to most oral evidence at hearings. The province suggests parties may avoid the burden and expense of appeals by no longer taking oral testimony in a hearing setting. Decisions will be made on a written record in most cases with no examinations in chief or cross-examinations. This is intended to shorten the time hearings require.

The most obvious concern with this measure is how decision-makers will be able to test the reliability and accuracy of the written record they are asked to rely on. Cross-examination is one of the most effective tools for testing the quality of an assertion, without it, how will parties test the opinions presented before to the tribunal?

For many parties in an appeal, whether proponents, opponents or a municipality, the cross-examination of witnesses, especially experts, is at the heart of procedural fairness and natural justice. Cross examination is the only substantive and procedural opportunity for parties to test the assumptions underlying an opinion, to root out errors, to identify contradictions or conflicts in the evidence. During a recent ELTO hearing our firm was involved in it was only through cross-examination that a witness revealed that several reports that had been ordered for production were never admitted or produced. Those reports eventually played a crucial role in the final decision in favour of our client. It is also the only way to discredit and denounce unscrupulous experts and speakers on those rare occasions when that is necessary.

It is true the length of OMB hearings has become cumbersome, expensive and difficult to manage. But the province has many other ways of controlling that problem. They include limiting the number of witnesses a party may call, imposing time limits, requiring hot-tubbing,<sup>1</sup> avoiding examinations in chief or giving a tribunal more power in deciding what issues are truly “in play.”

A focus on the written record will force interested parties to participate vigorously and early in the process. This will have the greatest impact on landowners adjacent to development and ratepayer groups. If they object to a proposal and reckon the municipality failed to meaningfully consult them, then they would need to provide all the relevant reports and expert opinions they wished to rely on in advance of the municipality making its decision to ensure their views, as expressed through experts, forms a part of the written record. Without procedural guarantees that municipalities will be accountable for considering third party reports, parties concerned with development will need to get their best evidence on the record at their expense and early in the process.



While this measure puts a new burden on many groups, it is very likely that the early exchange of expert reports and the “locking in” of a development proposal will be a welcome change for many.

The scoping of a tribunal’s jurisdiction can divert disputes to the courts. Concern about procedural fairness at the municipal level (whether alleged by a proponent or respondent) will be argued at the Divisional Court, a vastly more expensive venue for adjudicating planning disputes. It is also arguable that unsuccessful appeals to the tribunal would more often find themselves before the Divisional Court where parties might either allege a procedural defect in the tribunal’s process or argue the tribunal has fettered its discretion by being too quick in refusing appeals in the application of the new consistency/conformity tests (we still do not know how that test will read and how practitioners, the new tribunal and courts will interpret it).

There are some very good and interesting proposals for everyone involved in land use planning. As planners review the proposed changes in more detail, they may wish to ask themselves to what extent the appeal process leads to good planning? What procedural protections will promote collaborative decision-making, whether at the municipal level or on an appeal? How will a planner’s work load shift because of these changes? When advising clients, how will the range of options change in opportunity and constraint analyses? What procedures can the OPPI put in place to promote better co-operation between its members to assist the public and decision-makers in contextualizing their reports and opinions?

The province intends to have legislation available for review in advance of the summer recess.

*Ian Flett practices municipal and administrative law at Eric K. Gillespie Professional Corporation. Ian dedicates his pro bono hours to better cycling infrastructure in Toronto.*

#### Endnotes

- <sup>1</sup> The concurrent cross examination of experts in a given field.

## EDUCATION

# Exchanging knowledge

By Ryan Des Roches

Over the past three years, OPPI has worked to develop tools and resources that can be used to help facilitate the exchange of planning knowledge for members, regardless of their geographic location, or career stage. The Planning Exchange Blog is one such tool that is being used to share planning ideas and concepts.

The blog is essentially a hub for idea sharing that can be freely accessed by any OPPI member or member of the public. While the majority of content comes from RPPs, the blog also provides information from other organizations that is both relevant and transferable to professional planning practice. For example, the [May blog](#) post was provided by the Accessibility Directorate of Ontario, and highlighted some of the milestones in the *Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act*.

Also, over the past year, the blog has been used increasingly by OPPI’s young professional members as a means to showcase their research on innovative, new ideas within planning.

Webinars are another educational tool that have recently gained





## OPPI LEARNING PATH

traction in many professions for facilitating the exchange of knowledge. In addition to learning from an expert who acts as the webinar facilitator, webinars may also offer the potential for workplace colleagues to participate in the webinar together. This gives participants the opportunity to not only learn from the expert facilitator, but to discuss their findings and core concepts together as a group afterward. Even better, recorded webinar videos can be watched on OPPI's YouTube channel or digital learning, anytime, anywhere.

There is still no substitute for face-to-face learning opportunities, such as those offered by OPPI District leadership teams. The Districts offer OPPI members a range of learning opportunities that address current planning issues, often with a local or practical perspective.

How do *you* facilitate the exchange of planning knowledge amongst your peer group or colleagues? Do you have any suggestions for additional platforms or methods that might work well for OPPI? Please feel free to contact me with your thoughts.

*Ryan Des Roches, OCT, is the Education Manager at OPPI.*

### SOCIAL MEDIA

## Everyone can be a podcaster

*By Rob Voigt, RPP, contributing editor*

**P**odcasts are a technology that could easily be used to bridge expectations between planners and citizens.

Podcasts are digital audio recordings that can be downloaded and stored on mobile phones, tablets, computers, and other portable media playing devices. Generally the format for podcasts is similar to a radio broadcast program, in that there is a common theme or host of the podcast around which specific episodes are created that focus more closely on a particular aspect appealing to listeners. For certain businesses, and communities of interest, these episodic podcasts have become very popular over the past few years.

Podcasts are ideal for long format audio recordings. Just as with other forms of broadcasting, podcasts vary in length depending on the subject matter and the frequency with which they are developed. For some podcast producers that create content on a weekly or daily basis these portable audio recordings may range from 2 to 10 minutes in length. Others that are either more in-depth or are published on a less frequent schedule may range from 30 to 60 minutes in length.

There are a number of benefits to podcasting that relate directly to the challenges we face in planning: broadcast programs are inexpensive to develop and publish and can be recorded in almost any location provided you have a recording device such as a computer, tablet, or phone; podcasts are available on demand, making them convenient and accessible to a broad audience; listeners can access new and past episodes through web feeds and can automate the

process by subscribing to the podcaster, so that new audio files are streamed or downloaded automatically; listeners can control which portions of the recorded program they listen to, as well as the playback speed; the podcast format could be used to provide information that is more accessible than print or video media for persons with visual impairments; and the overall format is highly adaptable to any number of planning-related subjects.

Unfortunately, even with these benefits podcasts are yet another technology that is being widely used but rarely by planners in their professional practice.

For planning projects that span many months, or even years, podcasts are an impactful way to keep citizens informed. In such cases podcast archives would be helpful engagement tools. Project background commentary, informative descriptions, presentations and discussions are all well suited to this medium.

While it may at first seem daunting, a simple online search will provide you all you need to know to get started with podcasting. Many how-to articles cover the basics of theme selection, tools and technology, podcast frequency and preparations. One cautionary note to those planners that are willing to explore this new world of communication: remember the audience is king. While your subject may be compelling to you, to be successful with your podcasts, it is critical to understand the needs and interests of your audience and develop appealing content.

For an excellent example of podcasting for planning, I highly recommend you explore the [Strong Towns](#) podcast. It is well-rounded and consistent. The best I have found on urban planning and related issues. This series will not only provide you with incredible knowledge from leading edge experts about many of the most pressing issues we face as planners in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, it will give you insights into how to develop your own podcasts in the future.

*Robert Voigt MCIP, RPP is a professional planner, artist and writer, recognized as an innovator in community engagement and healthy community design. He is a senior practitioner in planning, landscape architecture & urban design at WSP Canada, chair of the OPPI Planning Issues Strategy Group, and publisher of Civiclogger.com. Contact: @robvoigt, rob@robvoigt.com.*

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## Not receiving OPPI emails?

OPPI uses an email service with strict anti-spam policies. Regardless, some workplace servers block communications from OPPI. If this is the happening to you contact the OPPI office at [info@ontarioplanners.ca](mailto:info@ontarioplanners.ca) to receive instructions to send to your IT department on how to correct this problem, or you can log into your Member Profile at [ontarioplanners.ca](http://ontarioplanners.ca) and change your work email address to your home email address.



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