

# ONTARIO PLANNING JOURNAL

ONTARIO PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS INSTITUTE

JULY/AUGUST

2000

VOLUME 15

NUMBER 4

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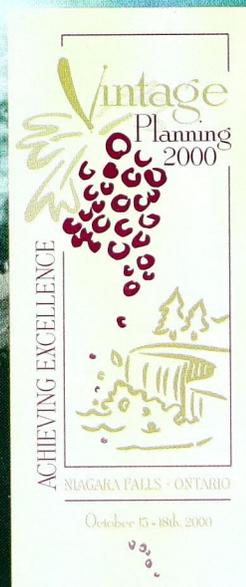
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## ONTARIO PLANNING JOURNAL

Volume 15, Number 4, 2000

### ONTARIO PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS INSTITUTE

The Ontario Affiliate of the Canadian Institute of Planners

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#### Subscription Rates

Canada \$35 per year (6 issues); Single copies \$6.95; Members \$11.00 per year (6 issues); Postage paid at Gateway Post Office, Mississauga

#### Advertising rates

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The Journal is published six times a year by the Ontario Professional Planners Institute.  
ISSN 0840-786X



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Niagara Falls  
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### OCTOBER 26

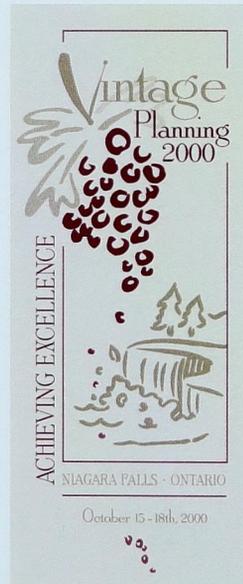
#### OPPI/GTA FORUM SESSION ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING OPTIONS

The OPPI and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) Forum are jointly sponsoring a session on "Options for Affordable Housing: The Market and the State" on October 26, 2000. The meeting will take place in Room 308 at Metro Hall, 55 John Street, Toronto, from 4 to 7 p.m. There is no cost. For more information consult the Forum web site: [www.yorku.ca.org.gtaforum](http://www.yorku.ca.org.gtaforum)

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# MEDIACOM

# Vintage Planning 2000: Achieving Excellence

By Judy Pihach

It hardly seems possible that seven years have passed since my last term as Program Chair for the OPPI Conference in 1993. At that time we were in the depths of a recession. The conference committee of the day was hoping to attract 200 delegates just to break even. The task of choosing a program to entice the few planners who could actually afford to attend was daunting.

Today we are in the midst of an economic boom. The delegates to the 2000 Conference could easily number 500. The task of choosing a program that offers something for everyone is still a daunting task. Here are some highlights.

To focus our efforts, we chose the theme of "Vintage Planning: Achieving Excellence." Although the word "vintage" is a reference to Niagara's thriving wine industry, the program committee thought in terms of its connotation of excellence in choosing the session topics and speakers.

Our keynote speaker, Stephen Lewis, is renowned as an extraordinary orator, a leading thinker and an inspiring individual. Given his background in domestic and international affairs, he is bound to provide a message you won't want to miss.

With the Walkerton water contamination issue still fresh in everyone's mind, environmental issues have taken on a renewed urgency. The 2000 Conference offers a number of sessions on environmental topics to deliver the information we really need to know to achieve excellence in environmental integrity.

"Environmentally Sensitive Community Design" offers a comprehensive look at how planners can create more sustainable communities. The timing of "Groundwater for Dummies" couldn't be better in light of the Walkerton tragedy. The preservation of the environment and natural resources, such as Niagara's valuable agricultural land, the Niagara Escarpment and the Niagara River parkway, is an increasingly difficult challenge for planners. "A Tale of Two

Ridges: The Niagara Escarpment and the Oak Ridges Moraine," "Agri-Tourism: Tiptoeing Through the Tulips Without Squashing Them Flat" and "Rural by Design" all take a practical look at achieving environmental excellence in non-urban regions.

A number of sessions will focus on achieving excellence in redevelopment. "Brownfield Developments: Great Idea But How Do You Pull It Off?," Andres Duany's take on "Downtown Revitalization," as well as "Revitalizing Our Older Communities" and "On the Waterfront" all promise to increase our understand-

ing of the ways and means of refurbishing existing communities in need of a new look and focus.

A number of sessions are devoted to OPPI itself. The new Policy Development Committee will devote a session to "The Municipal Role in Meeting Ontario's Affordable Housing Needs." Also, in previous years we have all applauded the efforts of the OPPI award winners, but often very few of us knew the details of the winning projects (even though they are later written up in the Ontario Planning Journal). This year we have given the award winners a session of their own, "The Best of the Best," to highlight their achievements. "How to Become a Member" provides the ins and outs of membership, whether you're a student about to enter the profession, or a Provisional Member still procrastinating about becoming a Full Member.

Offerings the program committee decided to pursue were sessions devoted to skills development in areas that planners need everyday on the job. We

are offering design charrettes, in both an urban and a rural land use context, hosted by some of the best designers in planning. "Everything You Always Wanted to Know About Zoning and Now Need to Ask" is a how-to session on the often overwhelming task of rewriting or consolidating zoning by-laws. "Consultants, Proposals and Competitions" provides an inside look on how to land that next contract. "Mediation and Facilitation" offers con-



Stephen Lewis keynote speaker

flict resolution techniques aimed at getting people on opposing sides of a question to agree. And finally, given the increasing importance of physical and mental health, "Health and Wellness," is presented in a workshop format to help planners stay sane in an increasingly chaotic workplace.

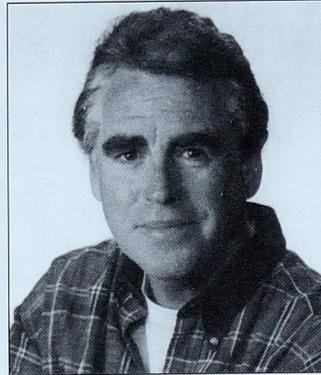
Speaking of health, they say a sense of humour is critical to one's overall well-being. When I was searching for a luncheon speaker with a lighthearted message, I came across Bill Thomas. I went no further when I found out he had written a guide to men called *Guys: Not Real Bright and Damn Proud of It!* You may have seen his newspaper column, which never fails to generate a chuckle. Thomas will provide comic relief when your brain is crowded with all the new ideas you are absorbing.

To ensure excellence in the next generation of planners, the committee consulted with students early on in the programming process. They expressed a preference for certain types of sessions and formats conducive to networking and development of skills

beyond those emphasized in their university courses. Rather than providing a completely separate program for students, we have taken their suggestions and incorporated their needs into the regular program stream, by providing more workshop sessions that encourage participation and networking. Look for the "owl graduate" icon in the program for Monday October 16, 2000 to identify the sessions of interest to students. Although student day is Monday October 16, 2000, students are welcome to attend the entire conference and participate in any of the sessions.

Finally, how does one close a conference with a memorable, lasting message, one that is relevant to our everyday

experiences as planners and endures for more than a day or two? I decided to pass on the usual "motivational speakers" and look a little closer to our own for inspiration. The conference's closing plenary session is "Lessons of Experience: Advice from Vintage Planners." Come and listen to advice from some of the best in the business, those who have been around for a number of years (we won't say how many!), and have pretty much seen it all: Frank Lewinberg from Urban Strategies, Paul Bedford from the City of Toronto, and Peter Boles, a former director with the provincial Ministry of Municipal Affairs who is

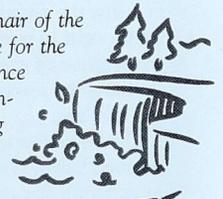


Luncheon speaker with a lighthearted message, Bill Thomas

now enjoying retirement. Their collective words of wisdom, based on years of experience, promises to be the best advice we will hear in a while.

The 2000 Conference is shaping up to be everything the program committee had originally hoped for in pursuing the theme "Vintage Planning: Achieving Excellence." Now all we need is your participation!

Judy Pihach is the Chair of the Program Committee for the OPPI 2000 Conference and is currently a planner with the Planning Services Department, City of St. Catharines.



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## Towards an Urban Agenda for Canadian Cities

## Ten Challenges For Canadian Cities

By John Farrow

Entering a new millennium encourages us to look at our past to focus on what is most important in the future. This article outlines ten important issues for the future of Canadian cities.

**1. Making cities economically competitive.**

Three trends make competitiveness a critical issue: the decline in the influence of the Nation State as a result of the establishment of regional free trade areas; the increase in the mobility of skills and capital; and recognition that a secure economic future is the foundation for many other aspects of living.

Competitiveness is a major challenge because a new world economic order requires new partnerships and approaches to wealth creation. This demands entrepreneurship and originality at a scale that has not been seen in cities for many years. The challenge for Canadian cities is to innovate faster than competing cities. Because of history or circumstance, rival cities may be more inclined to embrace

competition. Canada's economic future is dependent on the future economy of cities so it is critical that we meet this challenge.

**2. Developing a land use transportation system that works.**

Major cities around the world are scrambling to find a pattern of land use development coupled with a system of constructing transportation infrastructure that can cope with growing levels of congestion. Potential solutions abound but implementation is hampered by the power of consumer choice, a lack of funding and problems with the system of governance. Canadian governments must solve this problem to pre-

vent further erosion in the quality of urban life and to keep cities competitive. If city governments in this country can address this issue effectively before competing cities elsewhere, Canada will gain a sustainable competitive advantage.

**3. Create a sense of place for our new communities.**

Many of our cities are growing and as a result new urban fabric is being built at a rapid rate. But even though we have a large country and diverse regions, the variety of urban form in new communities is extremely

limited. These new communities serve basic needs but provide little more. In the past 30 years we have failed to create new urban living space that has a sense of place and interest. We will not serve the future well if we do not respond with a more interesting range of new urban places.

New ways needed to fund infrastructure

limited. These new communities serve basic needs but provide little more. In the past 30 years we have failed to create new urban living space that has a sense of place and interest. We will not serve the future well if we do not respond with a more interesting range of new urban places.

**4. Create new mechanisms to invest in urban infrastructure.**

The most interesting and liveable cities in the world are built on a solid infrastructure that required significant investment over a long period of time. Current mechanisms for investing in infrastructure are not able to keep up with demand and the result

**5. Attract investment to regenerate existing cities.**

As parts of the urban fabric age and become obsolete they must be rebuilt. The current institutional framework favours investment in greenfields over regeneration. This is not only inefficient but disrupts city life over the long term and drives us in a direction that objective observers agree is undesirable. Meeting the challenge of regenerating obsolete parts of our cities will make urban Canada more vital, more efficient and more pleasant to live in. As with many urban issues this is a problem that can only be solved if governments and business

work together. The growing interest on the part of the Ontario government in Brownfield redevelopment is a welcome sign in this regard.

**6. Make it happen.**

Urban professionals talk at great length about problems and solutions for cities but the complexity of the urban system seems to confound us and the result is inaction. We need to simplify our system of urban government so that necessary action can be taken in a timely manner.

**7. Communication in a "noisy" world.**

The media is overloaded with messages, many of them extremely compelling. In



this cacophony, messages about community life and city affairs can get lost. Cities need to find new and better ways to connect their citizens to the affairs of their city and to their communities. Tax increases are typically resisted because of indifference. If we can find ways to help people feel connected they may be more willing to support higher taxes when they are needed to improve our standard of urban living. Urban professionals must start listening seriously and responding to citizens if they are to win their hearts and minds. Too few realize that the city level of government is the one that affects their lives most directly.

8. *The challenge of social exclusion is best met at the city level.*

It is ironic that we are able to redistribute income across Canada but unable to respond to the needs of disadvantaged people we see around us. It is damaging to our humanity and our sense of community if we do not address at the city level the economic and social barriers that result when

large numbers of people are excluded from benefits that the rest of us enjoy.

9. *We must build communities.*

We are a country made up largely of immigrants. As a result we cannot take our sense of community for granted. We must continually work to reinforce the mechanisms that connect us to our community and the ways in which newcomers are introduced to their new neighbours.

Cities are many things but fundamentally they are social networks. Improved communication and increasing mobility will challenge our sense of community and it is important that we respond to this challenge if our cities are to continue to be places that nurture human growth.

10. *Respect the environment.*

The environmental challenge is straightforward: we need to accommodate constantly changing and expanding human activity without - if possible - harming the natural world around us. Succeeding at a local level as well as on a global level is a monumental task and will require every bit

of human ingenuity available.

The size of our country and the beauty of our natural heritage tend to distract us from the urban reality. It is important that we do not let this happen because we Canadians live most of our lives in an urban environment.

Because cities are so complex we need to focus on the fundamental issues and then mobilize to address these issues. In effect, we need to establish an urban agenda for Canada. I have outlined what I believe is most critical so please join the debate.

*John Farrow, MCIP, RPP is president of the Canadian Urban Institute, which next year will be organizing a major conference aimed at developing "an urban agenda" for Canada's major cities. John has been a contributing editor to the Ontario Planning Journal over a 15 year period. Readers are invited to respond to this article by writing by e-mail to [ontarioplanning@home.com](mailto:ontarioplanning@home.com).*

## Where a Wall Interfered

# Planning in Berlin—A Place Like No Other

By Cathy McDonald

My two years at the School of Urban and Regional Planning at Queen's have been full of enriching experiences, both academic and social. In the final term of my program, I was given an opportunity for an enriching experience overseas. In March 2000, I travelled to Berlin, Germany, as part of the SURP International Experience program, an initiative that began this year.

I chose Berlin because I was interested in the ways that large-scale cultural changes can affect urban and regional planning. In the pre-Nazi era, Berlin was one of the world's political, economic and cultural centres. However, it was devastated during the Second World War and by the construction of the Wall in 1961. Since the fall of the Wall in 1989 and the re-unification of East and West Berlin in 1990, the city has been re-creating itself, hoping to become once again a lively and livable world city, as it was in the 1920s. The federal government is completing its



The skyline of Berlin is dominated by cranes

move from Bonn to Berlin this year, and the glass dome on the Reichstag is the symbol of Da Neue Berlin (The New Berlin).

The challenges of transforming a divided city into a cohesive whole are physical as well as political. When Berlin was still divided, city maps sold in the West were usually inaccurate, and those sold in the East simply did not include the other half of the city. Planners from East and West had direct contact until 1956, and, after this time, had an "unspoken cooperation" to ensure that streets lined up and that build-

ings did not block potential connecting routes. This was difficult, as the lines of the wall were political and arbitrary; city streets, transit lines, or homes were not considered when the Wall went up.

Political issues between the two sides remain, even 10 years after re-unification. With the fall of the Wall, most West Berliners wanted to obliterate any evidence of the East German past. Although

Easterners had lived under a repressive regime, they found it more difficult to let go of the past. A West German friend told me that when the Wall first came down, the mood was one of euphoria and "love your brother." Today, stereotypes abound. Westerners are seen as snobbish, and Easterners as unintelligent and unemployable.

The approach to physical redevelopment also differed between the West and the East. The trend in the Western areas has been to demolish and rebuild districts - the number

of construction cranes in the western part of the city is amazing. In the East, the usual approach is to restore existing building stock, because East Berlin could not afford to demolish and rebuild at the time of reunification. Districts and neighbourhoods are therefore being re-created in different ways in the two parts of the city.

I was fortunate to have a friend in Berlin who introduced me to many Berliners. This enhanced my learning experience as I was able to talk to people from both the East and the West about their experiences of the city as it was before and their opinions on

what the city is trying to become.

I appreciate SURP's support of this worthwhile program. For students like me, who have never before been overseas, the program allows for a valuable first-time experience. I also believe that the school is enriched by the presentations made by students when they return. I hope to see this program continue in the future.

*A word from David Luchuk, Second Year Student Representative:  
The world's doors have been thrown open to students at Queen's University's School of*

*Urban and Regional Planning. Through its newly introduced International Experience initiative, the School has undertaken to fund three overseas research projects annually. Students are encouraged to propose planning-related trips to an independent student committee, which selects the most feasible and innovative projects from the submissions. The first of these international experience projects was completed by Cathy McDonald, a second-year graduate student. Over the next few months, two other Queen's students will visit Beirut and Israel.*

## Defining what is really sustainable

# York Bioregional Planning Workshop Inspires Outside Clients

By Ann Joyner

Those of us who are lucky enough to teach in universities know that students bring fresh perspectives to planning problems. This article shares some of the ideas generated in four Planning Workshop groups at the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University. All of the students who participated in the Workshop are Masters in Environmental Studies Candidates and most are in the Planning Program.

The objective of the workshop was to apply a bioregional perspective to "real life" planning problems in the GTA. The students explored the line between planning and practice in four diverse projects. The topics were:

- To compile environmental success stories for use in the City of Toronto's new Official Plan;
- An analysis of "Consumers as Transformers" - the role of the Toronto Renewable Energy Co-operative (TREC) in the new re-regulated energy system in Ontario;
- An investigation of alternative infrastructure systems and eco-tourism for Pelee Island; and
- The creation of a re-development plan for the St. Lawrence Market (north site).

Each group researched bioregionalism and other environmental planning models and then crafted together their own unique planning principles and objectives to guide their study. The students were able to reach beyond the bounds of traditional practice in an attempt to implement principles of sustainability, a bioregional scale/vision, ecology, conservation, self-sufficiency, cooperation and support for diversity.

The following summarizes some of the innovative ideas that emerged.

### Environmental Success Stories - Supporting the City of Toronto's New Official Plan

The students moved beyond a conventional view of environment and selected stories from a broad spectrum of planning. The topics included health and food security, environmental education, transportation, housing, community participation as well as the more common categories of ecological restoration, parklands and natural spaces, storm water management, sustainable cities, green building initiatives and energy conservation.

The students then identified 40 stories that describe ways that Toronto and other cities are addressing environmental concerns and creating healthy, sustainable communities. For each story, background, goals, current initiatives and sources of additional information were provided along with relevant graphics and electronic connections.

What emerged was a mosaic of fascinating stories about community initiatives and the commitment and inspiration provided by the individuals who have championed these projects. Some of the interesting ones include Toronto's FoodShare that began as a program geared to providing low-income individuals with healthy, nutritional food and has evolved into a youth training program and educational institution for healthy living and sustainable practices. Others in the spectrum include Toronto's Autoshare, Quayside Village co-housing community in Vancouver, Mountain Equipment Co-op's green building design in Toronto, the

Sustainable Seattle initiative and the Growing Greener Program in Pennsylvania.

Overall, the stories provide an enlightening package of positive actions taking place in diverse areas of our communities to achieve sustainability and environmental protection.

*Completed By:* Michele Doncaster, Christina Gallimore, Arlette Malcolm and Nilesh Surti



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## Consumers as Transformers - Green Energy and Re-regulation in Ontario

This project explored how re-regulation of the energy market provides the opportunity to produce energy in a more environmentally responsible manner by using renewable sources. Their project was completed for the Toronto Renewable Energy Cooperative (TREC) to assist the co-operative in developing renewable energy alternatives for Toronto residents. TREC is in the process of developing several wind turbines which will produce "green" energy. The intention is that residents will be able to invest in this project and contribute to renewable energy production/use in the City.

Their project showed that the potential to increase the role of renewable power will depend in large part on the response of consumers to "green" options in the marketplace - hence "Consumers as Transformers." The success of initiatives such as TREC could significantly impact the generation of electricity in Ontario by creating a "peoples movement" whereby consumers and local residents demand (through their buying choices) that the situation be changed to support energy efficient and environmentally responsible alternatives similar to TREC's.

One of the most difficult tasks for the students was to unravel the intricacies of power re-regulation and understand the implications for the environment. Once they had overcome this hurdle they decided to put their work to use. They produced a simple, professional quality information booklet entitled "Energy and You" which provides a straightforward

explanation of re-regulation and the environment.

The group also explored the political and economic issues of re-regulation. They concluded that re-regulation has created a price advantage for non-renewable sources of energy for the future in Ontario. Thus, the



Environmental education begins at City Hall (Archives)

role of consumers in the energy marketplace is key to a transformation to more sustainable development.

Completed By: Ronit Little, Satya Ramen and Ireen Stender

### St. Lawrence Market Redevelopment Plan - Sustainable Architecture and Community Design

The North St. Lawrence Market area is situated between the restored South Market and the historic St. Lawrence Town Hall. The project emerged when a local community group was intrigued by the bioregional philosophy and asked for help in generating ideas for redevelopment of the site. The students chose to emphasize the concept of sustainability in the project because the building will be a showcase for Toronto as well as

the community. Their goal was to have the building act as an education tool for sustainability translating theoretical concepts such as sustainable communities, architecture and urban agriculture into actions. Furthermore, they aimed to have the redevelopment help revitalize the neighbourhood by re-introducing nature and biodiversity into the downtown core.

With respect to building use, the students recognized that urban agriculture and food security/sustainability are obviously related themes for a market building/complex. They recommended that the building: support a centre for urban agriculture; highlight the use of composting and living machine technology; highlight a farmers market for Ontario products; incorporate a food distribution co-operative that builds on existing city programs; and provide a community kitchen.

The students also recommended techniques to build a healthy sustainable building. They proposed that the redevelopment be a showcase for ecological architecture and proposed a plan for an ecological architecture design process and associated public participation program. The report outlined general ecological architecture guidelines relating to space and orientation of building, heating and cooling innovations, energy and water efficiency and green building materials.

Although the ideas may not be adopted as a whole by the stakeholders, they provide a range of suggestions on sustainable building and more importantly, on how the market theme can be used to educate and inspire urban residents about their connection to the farming/agricultural community.

Completed By: Colette Bioleau, Clement Chong and Kevin Yam

### Future Visions - Alternative Infrastructure Systems and Eco-Tourism for Pelee Island

The island of Pelee provided a unique opportunity for students to explore the concepts of conservation, stability, self-sufficiency and community cohesion in planning for infrastructure to support controlled development. Pelee is a picturesque island located in Lake Erie supporting about 300 full-year residents. The island has a reputation as a premier eco-tourism destination due to its unique location, landscape and animal life - migrating birds in particular.



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The Township of Pelee is grappling with how to support needed economic development (of a marina and associated businesses/tourism) without destroying the natural character of the island upon which tourism depends.

Working with the Township of Pelee, the group explored ways of promoting economic development by integrating environmentally sensitive solutions to infrastructure deficiencies. This "green" approach to infrastructure would provide the required energy and water treatment capacity and at the same time support an eco-tourism theme for the island.

The two students in the group investigated the power needs and constraints for the island and recommended a wind turbine to meet the Pelee's electrical needs. Positive aspects of wind energy for Pelee include reduced transmission requirements across Lake Erie, long term economic benefits, flexibility to meet seasonal demand requirements (through energy storage or excess energy transmission) and the positive environmental image/impacts of a turbine. The students also provided resource materials to the municipality on issues of capacity, economics, siting, impact mitiga-

tion, energy storage and approvals.

Similarly, the students recommended that two living machines be installed on the island to accommodate the marina and future development for the island. A living machine is a wastewater treatment system that takes place above ground through a series of managed environments that naturally treat wastewater to reuse quality. For Pelee, such a system would be adaptable to shallow soils, provides tourism/education potential and ground water protection.

Although a green infrastructure solution is an excellent match for Pelee island, the students recognized that such a unique approach must be embraced by all of the population and politicians of the island. The major infrastructure improvements will only be part of the solution. In order to draw the residents into the theme, the students prepared several high quality pamphlets for the Township explaining and promoting energy and water efficiency and the benefits of composting toilets for residential use.

Completed By: Jodi Ball and Jane Purvis

*Ann Joyner, MES, MCIP, RPP is an Environmental Planning Consultant with Dillon Consulting Ltd. and a part-time*

*Professor in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University. The workshop was co-instructed by Greg Allen.*

*For more information on any of these projects, Ann Joyner may be reached at [ajoyner@dillon.ca](mailto:ajoyner@dillon.ca) or at 416-229-4646*

## Walton & Hunter Get CIP Honour Award

Margaret Walton, her partner Richard (Rick) Hunter, Betsy Donald and Ross Raymond won CIP's Award for Planning Excellence Honour Award in June at the CIP conference for "Greater Toronto Area Agriculture Economic Impact Study." Readers will recall the recent cover story by Margaret on this report. In that story, Rick Hunter was incorrectly identified. Congratulations to your team, Margaret.

## Obituaries

Appreciations are being prepared for the late Murray Pound and Thomas Kent and will appear in the next issue.

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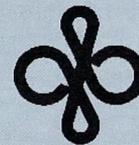
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## Eastern

## Recent Eastern District Events Stir Discussion

By Barb McMullen

In March 2000, the Urban Forum Series hosted a panel discussion in Ottawa on the challenges of increasing multiculturalism for Canadian cities, entitled "Urban Diversity: Managing Multicultural Cities." The event, hosted in partnership with The Metropolis Project, was one of four dealing with the effects of international migration on municipal affairs and urban planning. The others were held in Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver.

**The new six-year program will bring together provincial, territorial, municipal and private-sector partners to address infrastructure challenges**

The panelists agreed that all levels of government need to play a greater role in addressing multicultural concerns and that local governments have had little effect through municipal planning policy in addressing the diverse needs of immigrants. Planners can assist by encouraging an exchange of information and ideas among various stakeholders. A series of papers based on the discussions will be published in an upcoming issue of *Plan Canada*.

In June, Eastern District members

attended an evening presentation on Canada's New Physical Infrastructure Program by Carole Lacombe, Director General of the Policy and Coordination Infrastructure Program, Treasury Board of Canada. The new six-year program will bring together provincial, territorial, municipal and private-sector partners to address infrastructure challenges in urban and rural municipalities across the country.

Negotiations with the provinces, which are taking place over the summer, will result in agreements on program delivery that will be flexible to allow local and provincial governments to identify their own priorities. More information on Infrastructure Canada's objectives and priorities is available at the following Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat website, which will be updated as details of program delivery evolve: [http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/inobni/Main/main\\_e.asp](http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/inobni/Main/main_e.asp)

## Southwest

## Signs of Success in Downtown London

By John Fleming

London, Ontario, has instituted an aggressive range of downtown incentives and public projects designed to resurrect its ailing core. Although the champagne corks haven't popped yet, there are encouraging signs of success.

A former boot factory has been converted into loft apartments. Down the road, a 120-unit luxury apartment incorporates a heritage structure previously slated for demolition. Further east on Dundas Street, a 40-foot-wide site will accommodate a 16-storey tower and a four-storey conversion of a former shoe store and warehouse. Four other large-scale residential projects are either completed or proposed. These private-sector residential investments are complemented by several newly opened restaurants, specialty shops and entertainment venues.

What is generating this enthusiasm for downtown investment? London's City Council has taken bold initiatives in the form of a new central library (\$27 million), a new farmer's market (\$17 million), a new arena/entertainment project (\$42 million),

a major upgrade to the Forks of the Thames River (\$4 million), an upgrade to Victoria Park (\$3 million), new downtown lighting (\$1.2 million), and a variety of smaller-scale projects. London is also waiving residential development charges and offering tax grants, facade loans, interior alteration loans and density bonusing. The City will soon be starting Canada's first "American-modeled" Main Street Program (the subject of an article in a forthcoming issue of the *Journal*).

How can London afford to invest in downtown to this degree? How can it afford not to? Downtown property values plunged by an estimated \$150 million between 1992 and 1996. Early signs suggest that London is well on its way to recouping valuable assessment dollars while creating an asset for all Londoners to be proud of—a good investment by anyone's measure.

## People

## Diana Santos Leaves OMB

Diana Santos has left her post as vice chair of the Ontario Municipal Board after a 20-year stint with Ontario's principal planning tribunal. Mike Fenn, Deputy Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, has appointed Diana as a special advisor to him on the development of affordable housing and Brownfield development. This is another step towards a major strategy centred on Brownfields. The Ministry is sponsoring a major conference in September (see Billboard) on this subject.

Another departure, this one to take place early in August, is that of John Farrow, who after more than five years as president of the Canadian Urban Institute, is leaving to take on the presidency of Toromont Energy, a firm that



John Farrow

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builds small energy projects. In his tenure at CUI, John established the non-profit "urban think tank" as one of the country's leading organizers of conferences on urban issues. John is also known to Ontario Planning Journal readers as the long-time contributing editor on strategic planning, a role he began while he was a partner with Coopers & Lybrand (now PriceWaterhouseCoopers). He will continue to contribute articles for the Journal on an occasional basis.

The new Commissioner of Planning for the Region of York is **Bryan Tuckey**, Acting ADM with Municipal Affairs. **John Waller** has been the Acting Commissioner. Bryan takes up his new position in September. **Mike DeAngelis** has returned to the City of Vaughan to take on the position of Commissioner of Planning and Urban Design.

Monteith Planning Consultants is pleased to announce that **John Henricks** has joined the firm as a senior planner. John brings 19 years of professional planning experience in both the public and private sectors to the firm. He specializes in development planning and will head the firm's Land Development Services, dealing with plans of subdivision, project management, site planning, urban design, commercial development and development approvals.

Weston Consulting Group Inc. welcomes **Robert A. Martindale**, of Martindale Planning Services and former Commissioner of Planning for the Town of Ajax, who has joined the firm as an associate. Bob brings 30 years of planning expertise and his extensive knowledge of Durham Region to the firm. Bob is also chairman of Heritage Ajax, vice-president of the Durham Home and Small Business Association, and a member of

the Durham Region Economic Development Advisory Committee. This new addition follows the recent appointments of **Michael Telawski** (one time contributing editor to the Ontario Planning Journal) as associate and **Peter J. Smith** as senior associate within the firm.

**Peter Tollefsen** has left the Town of Ajax to become manager of the Planning and Development Services Department at the Town of the Blue Mountains.

**Geoffrey Singer** has left the Town of New Tecumseth and is now a planner with the Town of Markham. **Michael Sullivan** has joined the Town of New Tecumseth as staff planner.

**Hugh Handy** recently left the County of Wellington and has joined the firm of Zelinka Priamo Ltd. as a Senior Planner. He is managing a new Guelph office for the London-based planning consulting firm and will be dividing his time between the Guelph and London offices.



Hugh Handy

Hugh will be handling a broad range of planning and development projects with special emphasis on his noted expertise in rural planning and development, recreational trail planning, nutrient management planning and policy planning.

Hugh can be reached in Guelph at 519-767-2830 or in London at 519-474-7137, or by e-mail at [hugh.zplan@home.com](mailto:hugh.zplan@home.com).

Moving in the other direction, **Mark Paoli** has joined the County of Wellington from the City of Mississauga,

where he had been working in policy and research with **Angela Dietrich** and **Mark Chicouin**.

**Bohdan Wynnnycky**, a former member of OPPI Council, recently accepted the position of Senior Coordinator, Client Support Services, Municipal Support Services Branch, MMAH. In this capacity, he will be developing a variety of education and training initiatives in connection with Local Services Realignment. Previously, he worked as a project manager with the Ministry of Attorney General, and as a planner with the Ministry of the Environment. Bohdan can be reached at 585-6638.

Earlier this year, **Tom Slomke** left Guelph for the Town of Caledon where is director of Economic Development. He recently enrolled in the part time MBA Program at Wilfrid Laurier University. Tom can be reached at [TSlomke@Town.Caledon.on.ca](mailto:TSlomke@Town.Caledon.on.ca).

**Gillian Mason**, who is director of programming and marketing for the Commonwealth Association for Public Administration and Management, was recently appointed as vice chair of the Toronto Public Library Board. Gillian's other volunteer activities include participation on race relations and transportation energy committees. Before joining CAPAM, Gillian was a vice president with the Canadian Urban Institute.

*Contributing editors for People are: Lorelei Jones, MCIP, RPP is a principal of Lorelei Jones & Associates ([lja@home.com](mailto:lja@home.com)) and Thomas Hardacre, MCIP, RPP is with Planning & Engineering Initiatives. He can be reached at [thardacre@peinitatives.on.ca](mailto:thardacre@peinitatives.on.ca).*



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**President's Message**

# To Be Recognized as the Voice of Planners, We Must Speak and Be Heard

By Ron Shishido

It is one thing to speak on matters of public interest . . . and quite another thing to be heard. The reaction to our position paper on the Oak Ridges Moraine debate clearly indicates that we have been heard—by both our members and external interest groups. The OPPI office has received many comments from members by means of telephone calls, e-mails and correspondence regarding the position paper and associated media coverage in the Toronto Star, Globe and Mail, GTA Municipal News and several regional and local newspapers. The response has been very favourable with members expressing their support for the Institute showing leadership and taking action on matters of public interest such as the Oak Ridges Moraine. Several members shared their concerns regarding the content and the process for developing the position paper.

So what does all this mean? First, our members clearly want OPPI as an Institute to continue to “speak up” on matters of public interest. Secondly, our new Communications Strategy/Action Plan for Building Public Awareness and the Profile of Planners and the Planning Profession passed its first test—we were “heard”. Our Executive Director - Mary Ann Rangam and our Manager of Public Policy and Communications - Loretta Ryan, with assistance from our communication consultants ably coordinated this first roll-out of a position paper. And thirdly, we can benefit from enhancing our

process for developing position papers to capitalize on the heightened awareness of and interest among our members to get involved in our public policy initiatives.

Over the next couple of months our staff will be researching how other professional associations develop position papers. This information will be synthesized in a summary working paper to be presented at a members focus group being planned for September. The output of this session will be recommendations to OPPI Council on how

the consultative process for developing Institute position papers can be improved. If you are interested in learning more about or participating in the workshop, please contact Loretta Ryan at (416) 483-1873, Ext. 26.

Our first trip “to the plate in the big leagues” of public policy communication has been successful—we made it to first base while taking only a couple of inside pitches off the hands. As we take more swings at the plate we will be able to quickly pick-up the “media”

curve balls. Recent events involving other stakeholder groups clearly indicate that even the most seasoned veterans can on occasion misjudge a pitch. I remain convinced that we are on the road to “recognition”. To be recognized as the “voice” of planners, we must continue to make every effort to “speak” and be “heard”.



Ron Shishido

*Ron Shishido, MCIP, RPP is President of OPPI and a partner with Dillon Consulting in Toronto.*

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# The Changing Face of the GTA— OPPI to Help

By Beth Moore Milroy

A 15-month research project is being launched this summer to investigate multicultural planning practices in the GTA. The question researchers Dr. Beth Moore Milroy (Ryerson) and Dr. Marcia Wallace (York) want to answer is how planning is being shaped by ethno-cultural diversity in all of the GTA's municipalities. Four organizations are lending expertise to the research steering committee: Sharon Hill, for OPPI, from the City of Brampton; Maria Wallis of the Urban Alliance on Race Relations; Tim Rees, Coordinator of the City of Toronto's Access and Equity Centre; and Stefan Kipfer of the Community Social Planning Council of Toronto. The research is funded by a consortium of federal departments through the Joint Centre of Excellence for Research on Immigration and Settlement (CERIS), a collaborative body of researchers from York, Ryerson and the University of Toronto.

For further information contact  
Beth Moore Milroy at  
bmilroy@acs.ryerson.ca or  
(416)979-5000 x 6762 and  
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## GTA Program Committee

### New Urbanism Revisited

Back by popular demand, the GTA Program Committee presents: "New Urbanist Communities in the GTA" A Presentation and Walking Tour of Cornell, Angus Glen, Oak Park and Morrison Common.

On Saturday, September 30th there will be a presentation and walking tour of four of the GTA's new urbanist communities: Cornell, Angus Glen, Oak Park and Morrison Common. This is an exciting opportunity to learn more about new urbanism and to see these planned communities first hand.

Joined by municipal staff, Dan Leeming, Partner, The Planning Partnership and George Dark, Partner, Urban Strategies, will lead the presentation and walking tours of the Markham and Oakville sites respectively.

This is an all day event from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Light refreshments and lunch will be served. Please note: Closed-toe shoes are required – no sandals, because parts of these communities are still under construction! The tour is \$40 for members, students and seniors and \$45 for non-members. Please pay at the event. A map with directions to the meeting point, will be faxed out with confirmations. Reservations are must as there is limited room on the coach. Spots will be filled on a first come, first served basis.

If you have any questions about the event, please contact David McKay, MHBC Planning, Chair - GTA Program Committee, at (905)761-5588 ex. 214.

## 2nd Annual OPPI Family Wonderland Day

The GTA Program Committee held its second annual OPPI Family Wonderland Day event on June 11, 2000. Despite the bad weather over 60 members and their families enjoyed the rides and fun of Canada's Wonderland.

Look for a similar event next summer from the GTA Program Committee

## Strategic Plan

### OPPI'S New Policy Initiative

By Mami Cappe

OPPI's new Strategic Plan calls for a stronger leadership role for our Institute. As part of this initiative the new Policy Development Program was recently launched. Designed to nurture creative ideas in planning policy, the new program will fund the development of policy papers on topics of emerging interest. The goals of this new program are to provide leadership in the development of planning policy in Ontario and to advance innovative policy solutions on issues affecting professional planners.

The Policy Development Committee has been active since the beginning of the year. We were delighted to hear from so many of you in February, in response to our request for ideas on policy topics. The Committee has since solicited proposals and awarded a contract, following a rigorous evaluation.

I am pleased to let you know that Ed Starr and Christine Pacini were selected for their proposal "The Municipal Role in Meeting Ontario's Affordable Housing Needs." The aim

of this paper is to identify a range of tools available to meet affordable housing needs and set out a methodology through which a coherent municipal strategy can be developed. It will include examples of best practices in Ontario and elsewhere. There will also be extensive consultation with OPPI members and others experienced in the affordable housing field.

In this current climate of senior government withdrawal of support for affordable housing, municipalities face a simple reality—either they take the lead in addressing the affordable housing needs of their local community, or their own residents will be forced to suffer increasingly severe social and economic impacts. The pending devolution of social housing to the municipal level and the widespread municipal restructuring occurring across Ontario offer timely opportunities for municipalities to take a pro-active approach in the development of coherent and comprehensive housing strategies aimed at addressing these needs.

The Policy Development Committee will continue to keep members informed and updated as the paper progresses. Please remember to check the website for updates!

*Mami Cappe, MCIP, RPP, is Chair of OPPI's Policy Development Committee and Acting Director for Social Housing at the Region of Ottawa-Carleton.*

*Other members of the Policy Development Committee include: Meric Gertler, University of Toronto; John Henricks, Southwest; Kevin Eby, Southwest; Jeff Celentano, Northern; Ann Tremblay, Eastern; Andrea Gabor, Central; and Tony Usher, Central.*

For further information contact, Ed Starr, MCIP, RPP, President, Starr Group Inc. at (905)833-1313 or Loretta Ryan, MCIP, RPP, Manager, Policy and Communications, OPPI at (416) 483-1873 or 1-800-668-1448.

## Editorial

## Protecting "brand Ontario" in the wake of Walkerton

By Glenn Miller

Our self-image of the good life in Ontario shattered the instant that newspaper headlines shocked us with the tragic news of Walkerton. The vision that planners, economic developers and community leaders have been building on for generations suddenly looked flawed and uncertain. Surely the issue of safe drinking water had been put to bed a century or more ago? How does a province move ahead to compete for the best brains to work in the knowledge economy when the fundamentals no longer stand up to scrutiny?

Answers may well be found in the coming months but in the interim the brand that is "Ontario" must undergo some serious reassessment. Safe drinking water is not a product that can be withdrawn from the shelves but the process that large corporations follow to protect their brand image in the wake of disaster is worth noting.

Johnson & Johnson, whose Tylenol product killed seven Chicago residents in 1982 after product was contaminated with cyanide, moved quickly and effectively to communicate with the public. The company set up a hotline to answer consumer concerns, spent more than \$100 million (U.S.) to remove contaminated product, more millions to relaunch a newly designed package and less than a year after the disaster had reclaimed 85 percent of their former market share.

The company received continuing favourable press from the New York Times and Chicago Tribune over a six-month period in the full glare of publicity. Few realize that the manufacturer of Tylenol was one of many small firms in the Johnson & Johnson family.

There are some lessons here for the provincial government. At the very least, the Walkerton disaster has undermined public and potentially investor confidence in small-town Ontario. Brands are built on loyalty and belief in a promise made by the organization in charge of the brand. Unlike a consumer product, brand Ontario is infinitely more complex. Protecting brand Ontario is a job too big for the government alone because Ontario is not a monolithic product but the sum of hundreds of communities acting - for the most part - independently, not unlike the day-to-day activities of the manufacturer of Tylenol. Walkerton is a wake up call about our systems, our procedures and our people. If we believe in the quality of our "product" every planner in Ontario has a role to play in rehabilitating "brand Ontario."

Glenn Miller, MCIP, RPP is editor of the Ontario Planning Journal and director of applied research with the Canadian Urban Institute in Toronto. He can be reached at ontarioplanning@home.com.

## Letters

## Retrospective a hit

The "Journal cover stories retrospective" in the most recent issue was a great idea. Mike Canzi should be commended for an excellent update. The Journal should make a habit of this type of thing.

Brenton Toderian, MCIP, RPP

Brenton is an Associate with MacNaughton Hermsen Britton Clarkson Planning.

## Jonathon Swift Tackles Urban Sprawl

For quite some time, we planners have been hearing about how we just don't have the tools at our disposal to fight the problems of urban sprawl. We know the litany of evils caused by such sprawl, but we just can't seem to convince those young couples with kids from moving into single detached homes in the suburbs.

Recently I attended such an urban sprawl roundtable and the same evening happened to be seated at a dinner beside a lawyer involved in tobacco litigation in the United States. This got me thinking that, perhaps, we can take a leaf from the notebooks of the

anti-tobacco groups south of the border in their attempts to change consumer patterns and curb urban sprawl. Based on recent tobacco actions, there are three measures we could undertake:

1) Ban advertising for new single detached subdivisions everywhere-and especially in weekend newspapers. As a side benefit, this would save paper and reduce the Toronto Star, at least, to a more manageable size.

2) Enact punitive taxation, increasing the base cost of such housing units by at least a couple of hundred percent.

3) Sue the manufacturers of such housing to reflect the true costs to the public purse. If sprawl is resulting in pollution-related illness and deaths, let's sue to recover the resulting health care costs.

The above is only the result of some preliminary thought. I'm sure these, and other large steps, would meet with the same degree

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Send your letters to the editor to:  
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of success that have occurred in changing consumer behaviour in regards to tobacco.  
*Jim Helik, MCIP, RPP*

*Jim is a research planner with the City of Toronto and a contributing editor to the Ontario Planning Journal. His new column, "Planning Principals," will appear shortly.*

## Waterfront plan the work of more than mentioned

I enjoyed reading Melanie Hare's article, "Gateway to a Viable Waterfront Vision." At the end of the article, Melanie mentions a number of members of the Institute who have been involved in the waterfront plan. Unfortunately, these credits neglected to mention my direct involvement in preparation of the plan.

*John van Nostrand, MCIP, RPP, FRAIC*

*John is president of Planning Alliance based in Toronto. We are happy to correct this omission. Other planners not named include Steve Willis of MMM Ltd.*

## Oak Ridges Moraine Position Paper

I wish to express my concerns over the process as to how OPPI formulated its position paper on the Oak Ridges Moraine and perhaps more importantly, how the process of policy development will be conducted in the future by the organization.

I applaud OPPI for making policy development a desired objective of a professional organization. I believe that this role will serve OPPI well on many issues in the future.

However, with policy development comes a host of issues, including how policy is created to fairly represent the positions and

views of the greatest spectrum of the membership and how the membership is consulted.

I believe that the process of developing the paper on the Oak Ridges Moraine was flawed by the Policy Committee and Council. Their actions may prove to be harmful to some members of the Institute. Reading the Globe and Mail (June 6, 2000), made me shudder at the quotes delivered by (environmentalist) Glenn De Baeremaeker such as "...planners would stand up to developers that feed them." Did Council appreciate the attention this would draw and the implications associated thereto? This quote is not complimentary to the profession, in fact it is rather inflammatory and cannot be tolerated or condoned by a process that failed to adequately consult its membership. I find it rather hypocritical that as planners we strive to consult with the public and those who may be impacted by the decision in question. Why was not an open and accountable process afforded the membership in this case?

I offered my suggestions of how the process of creating position paper should be undertaken to Mr. Shishido, as I understand did others. The advice was offered based on professional experience in policy development and appreciating the media attention that such a paper would attract. OPPI should have undertaken a more "open" process whereby once a draft paper was developed, it could have been posted on the web site and allowed a comment period. This would have been a low cost alternative, but least afforded ALL members interested in the subject a fair opportunity to submit comments and felt that they were consulted. Furthermore, no notice or public policy workshop was held to seek input and feedback on this issue.

In light of OPPI hiring a full-time

Policy and Communications Manager, Council must implement procedures for how policy is created in the organization. Failure to do so would not be in the best interests of OPPI and its members - which are the organization.

Clear rules on the development of policy and position papers in combination with an open and accountable process will protect first and foremost, our membership and the Institute. I urge Council to begin development and discussion as to how such procedures could be put in place before another paper of magnitude such as the Oak Ridges Moraine is released by OPPI.

*Neil H. Rodgers, MCIP, RPP*

*Neil is Manager of Policy with the Urban Development Institute (UDI).*

## Bravo to OPPI

OPPI's Millennium Strategy says that OPPI should maintain its Watching Brief on Government. While seen as valuable to the Institute and its members, room for improvement was noted. Namely, the Watching Brief needed to become more timely and substantive.

The policy paper on the Oak Ridges Moraine is a fine example of being both timely and substantive. I can't remember when an OPPI paper has generated so much interest among planners and government. Our goal of being an influential organization is greatly enhanced by this effort.

Issuing policy papers is not an exercise in consensus. How many of our past efforts have become bogged down in fruitless efforts to satisfy all members and offend none. Debate is good. I look forward to further successful efforts by OPPI.

*Lynda Newman, MCIP, RPP*

*Lynda is the principal of Clara Consulting in Bradford*

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# A Waterfront Home for the New Economy

By Robert A. Fung

I am concerned that in this new economy, playing "catch-up" is an extremely difficult proposition - and, catch-up is what we're facing.

The stakes are high. There are no rules. There are no precedents. The game is played intently with all the knowledge, innovation and creativity you can muster. And, it must be played with velocity. Speed and the ability to respond quickly define the difference between winning and losing.

The Toronto Waterfront Revitalization Task Force has developed a potential plan. It proposes to revitalize the Toronto waterfront by turning it into a "portal" or gateway on the new economy. But time is working against us. This is because the new economy environment runs on a high level velocity of decision-making and, most importantly, of commitment.

To borrow a phrase from a book about the new economy by a Canadian expert in e-commerce, "Most companies don't die because they are wrong; they die because they do not commit themselves. The greatest danger is standing still."

One of the fundamental rules of the new economy is that status quo is not a viable option. It's a tough rule. But we have to accept it. Standing still is dangerous. The three main forces on this economy are:

- the merger of telecommunications and information technology;
- the commercialization of the internet; and,
- the deregulation that broke up the telecom monopolies like AT&T and Bell.

The merger of telecom started back in the late 1980s with the gradual removal of regulatory and technological barriers. This was the beginning of a force we've come to refer to as "convergence."

Convergence is not just about technology, although digital technology's offer of higher capacity, higher velocity and new services is driving the convergence of telephony, broadcast media and on-line computing.

The new economy is driven by convergence, dominated by globalization and fueled by innovation and creativity. The world map is being redrawn.

Today, power and position are no longer defined by old qualifiers such as Third World or Industrialized World status. The operative word is "smart."

How smart have we been in positioning

our major cities as portals on the new economy? We find ourselves in a position of "catch-up."

Here are some examples of communities we are trailing:

Over 10 years ago, Singapore embarked upon a nation-wide study to prepare itself for the new economy that resulted in a document entitled, "A vision of an intelligent island." The study covered 11 major economic sectors. The result was that a \$300 million government investment has been channelled to make Singapore among the first countries in the world with an advanced nationwide information infrastructure.

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**We cannot afford to miss the opportunity to create a convergence centre on the Toronto waterfront. Convergence is not a spectator sport. We need to take action.**

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The goals of Singapore One are:

- Singapore will be an early adopter of multi-media broadband networks and applications in the world . . . breaking the bandwidth barriers of current internet technologies . . . putting Singapore at the cutting edge of the digital age.
- Creating an ideal research and development environment to attract global tenants to the intelligent island in a new urban environment with an I.T.-literate population. Singapore government ministries and agencies have become anchor tenants of Singapore one.

In 1998, Shenzhen became the first special economic zone in China. One of the first acts was to approve the master plan for Cybercity, a \$2 billion initiative.

Nearly 40 percent of Shenzhen's 3.9 million population holds college degrees. Over 100 research institutes and 130 universities around China have branches in Shenzhen.

Shenzhen's high-tech industrial park is home to bio-engineering, information technology, "optical/electrol/mechanical" integration and new materials, and, of relevance to us all is that it is also home to IBM, Epson, Compaq, Seagate and Olympus.

It is also allied with Hong Kong's Cyberport, located at telegraph bay in Pokfulam, on the western side Hong Kong island, Cyberport is a

mixed development of commercial space, offices, technical facilities and ancillary residential properties, a \$13 billion high-tech regional I.T. hub. Hong Kong legislators have approved \$964 million in initial infrastructure funding.

The government is supplying the land that has been valued at \$5.5 billion—a private developer—Pacific Century group is contributing \$7 billion to build Cyberport and the related residential development. Anchor tenants include new economy heavy weights such as Hewlett Packard and Yahoo!

Clearly Asia is developing significant portals on the new economy and attracting global high-tech and knowledge-based corporate tenants.

There are now many other examples of Smart Cities around the world. In the U.S., if a business is interested in locating in Kansas City, the council will complete a comparison between Kansas' Smart City and up to 15 other cities of interest to the potential corporate tenant, within seven days of the enquiry.

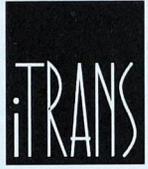
Smart Cities are about connectedness, which is good. But is good "good enough"?

Toronto is not part of Canada's smart community demonstration projects, nor is Vancouver, or Montreal. A \$60 million fund is being distributed from the North West Territories to Shawinigan. Canada must develop a portal on the new economy.

Toronto is unique, with a strong base of companies, brains and as the centre of many key clusters. We cannot afford to miss the opportunity to create a convergence centre on the Toronto waterfront. Convergence is not a spectator sport. We need to take action.

*This piece is excerpted from a speech given by Robert Fung to the Canadian Urban Institute and Toronto Board of Trade in June. Robert*

*Fund is chair of the Toronto Waterfront Regeneration Task Force. See the previous issue's cover story for more details on the waterfront plan.*

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## Environmental Assessment

## Environmental Screening Process Proposed for Electricity Projects

By Steven Rowe and Elaine Hardy

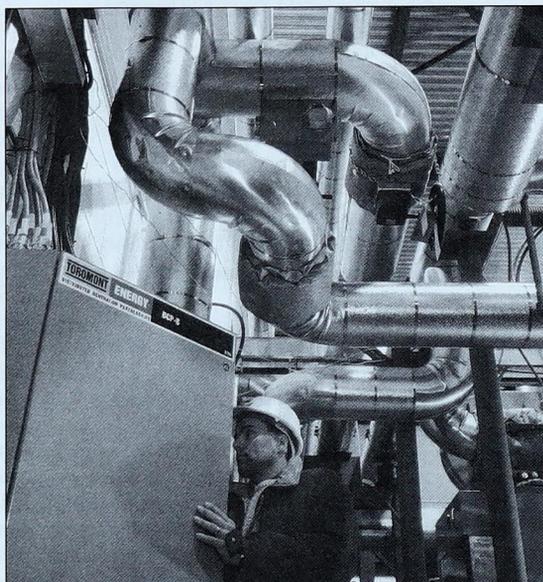
Planners working for municipalities and other agencies may soon be asked to comment on applications for electricity generation and transmission projects, under new requirements proposed under the Environmental Assessment Act (EAA) by the Ontario Ministry of the Environment. Many projects would be required to follow a new Environmental Screening Process.

At present, the approvals required for electricity generation and transmission projects depend not on the project or its environmental effects, but on whether the proponent is public or private sector. Ontario Power Generation and Hydro One (successors to Ontario Hydro) projects are subject to the EAA, but are exempt from Planning Act requirements for projects that are approved under the EAA. Other projects by private proponents do not fall under the EAA unless they are specifically designated, but they are subject to the Planning Act, for which approval requirements depend on the provisions of Official Plans and zoning by-laws. These may not specifically provide for private as opposed to public utilities. Some private projects may be located in unorganized territory where no Planning Act approvals would be required. In addition, both public and private sector projects are subject to any required technical approvals such as Certificates of Approval under the Environmental Protection Act and the Ontario Water Resources Act.

As readers will likely be aware, the electricity industry in Ontario is in the process of restructuring, and open competition between producers is scheduled to begin in November of this year (although this target date may not be met). The current discrepancies in approval requirements are seen by the ministry as incompatible with the need for a "level playing field" that will enable different types of proponent to have equal access to the new electricity market. The ministry's proposals are intended to protect the environment while imposing the same requirements for all proponents for a given type of project.

### The Ministry of the Environment's Proposals: Three Categories of Projects

The ministry has proposed a regulation that would divide projects into three categories, each of which have different requirements. Category "A" projects are considered to be relatively benign. They include a range of facilities including all



A district energy project by Toromont Energy would be subject to EA if feeding into the grid

fuel cells and solar cells, and landfill gas fueled generation up to a limit of 25 megawatts. These projects would not be subject to the EAA. Category "B" projects include a wide range of facilities with environmental effects that can likely be mitigated. These projects are designated under the EAA, but can proceed through an "Environmental Screening Process" which is the subject of a separate proposed guideline. Category "C" projects include coal and oil fired generation above 2 megawatts, larger transmission and transformer facilities and most generation using municipal or hazardous waste as fuel. These projects are considered to have significant environ-

mental effects, and are subject to the full requirements of the EAA.

### The Environmental Screening Process

The proposed Environmental Screening Process that would be required for Category "B" projects is similar in some respects to a Class Environmental Assessment. It is a proponent-driven, self-assessment process that begins with an evaluation of the project against a set of screening criteria. If there are clearly no potential environmental effects, the process would be completed with a "Level 1 Screening", which may require some agency consultation to confirm that there would be no effects but requires no formal notice. Most projects would have some environmental effects, and these would be subject to a "Level 2 Screening" which begins with a formal public notice describing the project and inviting public input.

If the project has environmental effects that can be mitigated using standard techniques or that would be adequately dealt with by other required approvals, the proponent can post a notice and issue a "Level 2 Screening Report". If there are no objections from the public or agencies requesting that the project be "elevated" to the next level of the process, or to an individual Environmental Assessment, within 30 days, the proponent can proceed with the project, subject to any other required approvals.

If there are outstanding environmental effects or public concerns that remain to be resolved, the proponent can issue a notice and proceed to an "Environmental Review", without issuing a separate Screening Report. The Environmental Review would involve further studies and consultation related to those specific issues for which concerns have been raised. On completion of the Review a notice would be posted and a report would be issued. Again, if there are no objections requesting elevation of the project to the next level (in this case an individual

Environmental Assessment under the EAA) within 30 days, the project can proceed subject to any other required approvals.

The process is intended to complement rather than replace or duplicate other required approvals. The definition of the environment under the EAA is very wide, and includes economic and social effects as well as effects on the natural environment, whether they are positive or negative. Where other approvals are required, the screening documents can assist in providing a complete understanding of the approvals and controls that apply.

Proponents are encouraged to go beyond minimum notice requirements and to consult with the public and with relevant agencies throughout the process. It is in a proponent's interests to satisfy concerns and thereby prevent an "elevation" request to the Ministry of the Environment. Although it may be involved in consultation on technical approvals, the ministry would not review the screening documents unless an elevation request is received. There are several options open to the Director of the Environmental Assessment and Approvals Branch of MOE on receiving an elevation request. These include denying the request, denying it with conditions, referring the matter to mediation, requiring further study, requiring the proponent to conduct an Environmental Review, and recommending to the Minister that a full (or "individual") EA be conducted. Decisions by the Director and the Minister are subject to timelines.

When the process is complete, the proponent prepares a "Notice of Completion" and submits it to the MOE. No other provincial or municipal approvals can be issued until the Environmental Screening Process is complete.

### The Planners' Role

While only a few new electricity facilities have been proposed in Ontario in recent years, the number will likely increase and the Environmental Screening Process will become one of the tools available to planners and agencies to ensure that environmental issues are addressed. Where Official Plan or zoning amendments are required, the proponent may wish to integrate these with the Environmental Screening Process to the extent possible, for example in issuing notices, arranging public meetings and conducting studies that deal with both processes. At the same time, a clear distinction will need to be made as to which issues would be dealt with under the Screening Process rather than other legislation. Issues that may be dealt with under the Screening Process where the Planning Act already applies might include community impacts and benefits, and securing environmental protection measures where these might not be attainable by other means.

The role of planners in responding to electricity restructuring would not be limited to working with the new requirements under the EAA. In reviewing and amending official plans and zoning by-laws, for example, we should ensure that they reflect the new realities of the electricity industry. Obviously the term "Ontario Hydro" is no longer applicable, and "public utility" is also losing its relevance when this function is increasingly served by private operators or public-private partnerships.

Who will the proponents be in the future? Ontario Power Generation is pursuing a "green power" initiative that may result in proposals in partnership with the private sector, but it is currently required to divest itself of other generation capacity. Some of its generation plants have been offered for sale or

lease to other utilities including those in the private sector. OPG is unlikely to propose any major new generation projects. Hydro One may propose some new transmission capacity, although the emphasis will be in making the best use of existing infrastructure.

Private proponents, on the other hand, may initiate a range of projects, including cogeneration plants designed to serve requirements "inside the fence" of an existing factory, or for the export of power to other customers or to the grid. Some larger gas turbine facilities have been proposed by private companies in Peel Region, and in Sarnia. This trend raises questions as to how private electricity generation as an ancillary or primary use of a site should be addressed in official plans and zoning by-laws.

There is a growing trend towards public-private partnerships providing energy generation and services. Toronto Hydro and the Toronto Renewable Energy Cooperative are partners in proposing up to three wind turbine generators on the Toronto waterfront. Borealis Funds Management, a company owned by the Ontario Municipal Employees Retirement System (OMERS), has acquired a 10percent interest in Hydro Mississauga, and intends to use this as a platform for the amalgamation of municipal utilities in the 905 area. If public-private partnerships make proposals for electricity projects it can be difficult to determine whether they qualify as a "public utility." Planning documents will likely make fewer distinctions between the public and private sectors, and increasingly treat electricity generation as a use like any other, permitted subject to performance standards in particular designations and zones.

*Steven Rowe MCIP, RPP is an environmental and land use planning consultant. He can be contacted at (416) 489-7434, or by e-mail at [deyrowe@sympatico.ca](mailto:deyrowe@sympatico.ca). He is a frequent contributor to the Ontario Planning Journal.*

*Elaine Hardy is a Program Support Coordinator with the Environmental Assessment and Approvals Branch of the Ministry of the Environment. She can be reached at (416) 314-8182, or by e-mail at [hardyel@ene.gov.on.ca](mailto:hardyel@ene.gov.on.ca).*

### Story Update

In the March/April 1998 issue of the Ontario Planning Journal, Steven Rowe raised concerns with approval requirements for electricity facilities in a restructured electricity industry. Since that time the Ministry of the Environment has developed proposed environmental assessment requirements that would give equal treatment to all types of proponents. Elaine Hardy is the

ministry's lead in developing these requirements, and Steven Rowe (and consultant Chris Bancroft-Wilson) assisted the ministry in developing the new Environmental Screening Process for electricity projects.

The proposals were posted on the Environmental Registry in early June of this year. The 32-day period allowed for comments on the proposals will have expired by the time this

issue of the Journal reaches OPPI members, but the proposed regulation and guideline can still be accessed and should be reviewed for a more complete description of the ministry's proposals. The material can be found at [www.ene.gov.on.ca](http://www.ene.gov.on.ca) using Environmental Registry No. RA00E0005. The final regulation and guideline will also be posted on the Registry when they have been approved.



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## Environment

# Clean Planning For Dirty Soils Part II

## Part II: Promoting the Redevelopment of Brownfield Properties

By Luciano Piccioni & Christopher Morgan

In Part I: Municipal Planning's Use of the Record of Site Condition (see previous issue), we presented a Standard Municipal Model for dealing with development approvals on potentially contaminated sites (aka brownfield properties). The Standard Model brings certainty and consistency to the evaluation of development on potentially contaminated sites. Certainty and consistency are the necessary precursors to the voluntary assessment, clean up and redevelopment of brownfield sites. But, an obvious question still remains: what can a municipality do to encourage brownfield redevelopment?

Until recently, it did not appear that there was much that municipalities in Ontario could do in the way of providing incentives to promote brownfield redevelopment. Section 111 of the Municipal Act prohibits "bonusing". However, an exception is made in Section 111(2) of the Municipal Act for municipalities exercising powers under Section 28(6) or

28(7) of the Planning Act. (See also an article by Stan Stein on this subject in a previous issue of Ontario Planning Journal). This article explores the municipal use of Section 28 of the Planning Act to adopt community improvement plans that specifically permit grants or loans as financial incentives to promote brownfield redevelopment.

### Community Improvement

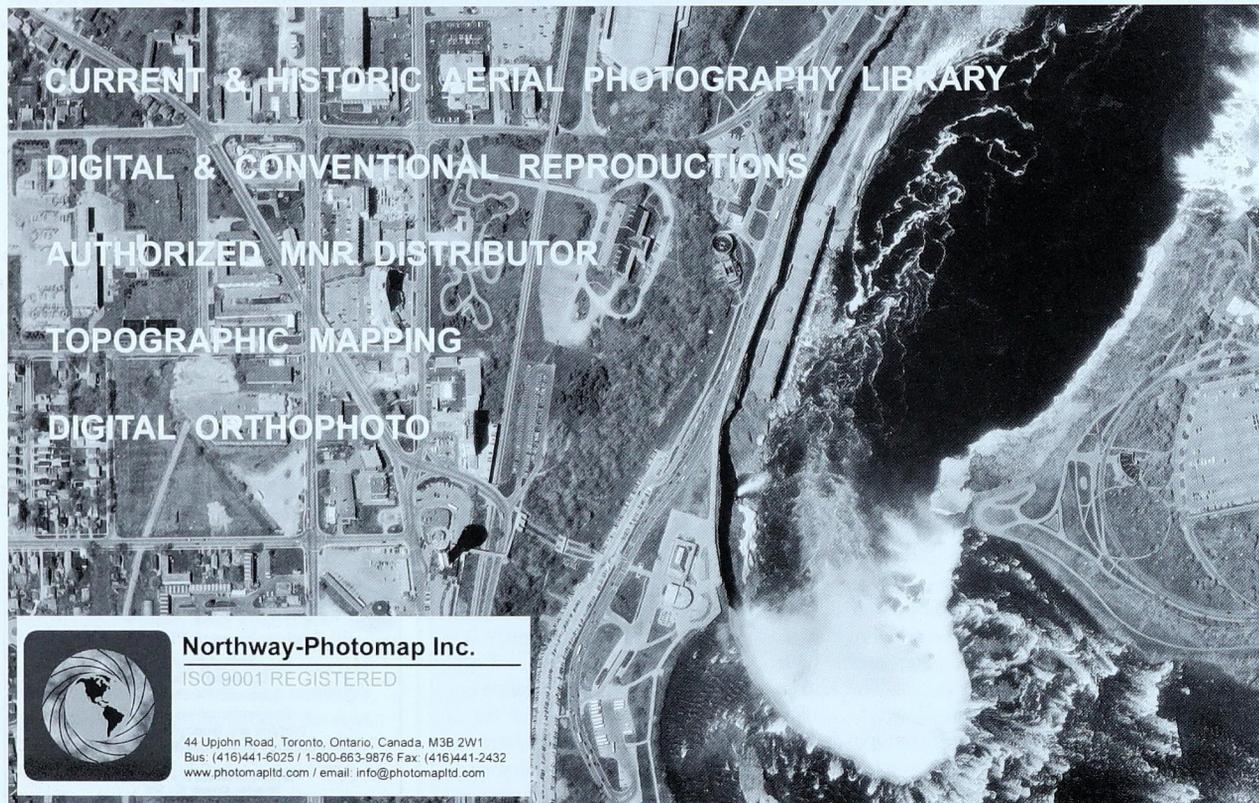
Section 28 of the Ontario Planning Act (Community Improvement) allows municipalities with the required provisions in their official plans and a designated community improvement project area to adopt community improvement plans for these areas. Once a municipality's community improvement plan is approved by the Province, the municipality "may make grants or loans to the registered owners or assessed owners of lands and buildings within the community improvement project area to pay for the whole or any part

of the cost of rehabilitating such lands and buildings in conformity with the community improvement plan." (Planning Act, 28(7)). These grants or loans are not considered bonusing by the Province.

Several Ontario municipalities including Hamilton, Toronto, Kitchener, London, and Thunder Bay have used community improvement plans to provide grants for downtown revitalization and facade restoration of designated heritage buildings. However, none of these municipalities have comprehensive community improvement plans in place to promote redevelopment of their older industrial areas. Yet, the older industrial areas in many cities often represent a much larger geographic area, and in some cases, a larger employment and tax assessment base than the downtowns. Comprehensive community improvement plans can create significant urban economic and environmental health benefits in brownfield areas.

### Tax Increment Financing (TIF) or Show Me the Money

The costs of assessing potentially contaminated sites may be small but the costs of cleaning-up contaminated properties can be substantial. Therefore, even if municipalities



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are willing to adopt community improvement plans and provide grants to landowners to assess and/or remediate their properties, a major question remains: where does the money come from? The answer lies with the concept of tax increment financing (TIF).

The TIF concept has been successfully adopted by a number of U.S. municipalities who have used it to promote the redevelopment of brownfield properties. Also, as noted above, several Ontario municipalities have used what essentially amounts to TIF to fund programs that promote downtown revitalization and heritage building restoration.

Simply defined, a brownfield TIF utilizes the difference between total future tax payable and current tax payable, that is, the tax increment, to pay for the specific costs associated with assessing, clean-up and redeveloping that property.

Instead of the municipality retaining the future tax increase when a property is improved or redeveloped, it returns part or all

of that increase to the owner/developer in the form of an annual grant for a specified period of time in order to help the owner/developer to pay for eligible redevelopment costs (as established in a community



Toronto's port lands and other brownfield sites have location on their side

improvement plan). These costs can include the cost of environmental remediation, but can also include environmental study costs, site preparation costs such as demolition and grading, and on-site infrastructure upgrading.

In all cases TIF grants should be linked to the completion of a satisfactory Record of Site Condition (RSC), such that the appropriate Provincial soil guideline standards are uniformly maintained (see Part I of this article).

Furthermore, a very significant benefit exists when the costs of clean up are not so severe as originally thought. TIFs can be used to fund site assessments that do not necessarily lead to any clean-up requirement. This can help overcome unwarranted concerns and stigmas. Equally, the use of TIFs in "as-of-right" development situations will help encourage voluntary submission of RSCs to ensure that all brownfield clean up and redevelopment cases are treated equally.

### Why TIFs are Short-Term Pain for Long-Term Gain.

A TIF program can have many benefits for a municipality. Once the rehabilitation and/or assessment costs have been repaid, say in five to 10 years, the municipality then collects the full amount of municipal taxes in perpetuity. There is little risk to the



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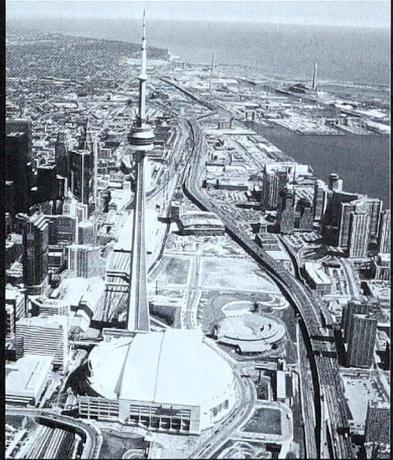
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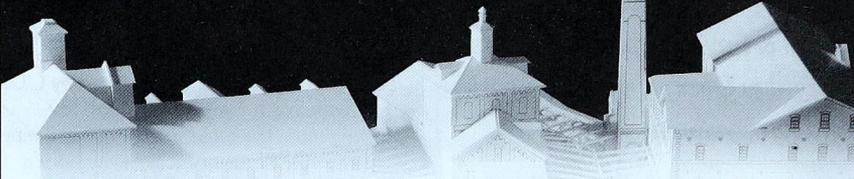
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municipality because it is not directly involved in the acquisition of land, demolition of buildings or environmental cleanup. The municipality does not incur any debt because the developer and financial institution finance the entire project. The key is that without TIF, the project would have not been started. From this perspective, the municipality literally has nothing to lose. Municipalities can think of TIF as a long-term investment in the future of the community. The potential power of TIF becomes clear when we look at an example. The example provided here uses actual land values and tax rates for the City of Hamilton.

The pre-project assessed value of a vacant (no building) contaminated two acre industrial property at approximately \$125,000 per acre is \$250,000. Applying a vacant industrial land tax rate of 7.11%, the annual property tax collected is about \$18,000. If this property is cleaned-up and a new 30,000 sq.ft. industrial building is constructed (conservatively estimated at \$40 per sq.ft.), the project construction value would be approximately \$1,200,000. Combining this figure with the original \$250,000 land value yields an approximate assessed value of \$1,400,000.

Applying the occupied small industrial tax rate of 11.44% to the assessed value of \$1,400,000 yields an annual property tax of approximately \$158,000. The "tax increment" is \$140,000 annually or \$1,400,000 over 10 years. The municipal portion of this tax increment (since approximately one-half of all tax dollars collected even on industrial/commercial properties goes to the Province for education) is approximately \$70,000 per year or \$700,000 over 10 years. Regardless of the level of contamination on this two-acre site, this is a substantial amount of money

that could be made available to the owner of the site to clean it up. In this example, in year 11, (or sooner if the clean-up costs are repaid to the owner in full before year 10), the munic-



Development of former brownfield site in Hamilton gets underway

ipality then collects and retains the full amount of the taxes.

But, can TIF actually work? That is, can it actually generate private sector investment and redevelopment? The answer appears to be yes! A recent study of 107 completed brownfield projects in the U.S. by the Council for Urban and Economic Development found that every \$1 of public money invested on brownfield sites generated \$2.48 in private investment. Chicago's long-established TIF program generates \$6.30 of private investment for every public TIF dollar.

Still, there are certain safeguards that a municipality should put in place if it is to contemplate the use of TIF. First, as opposed to an up-front lump-sum payment, the grant should be provided annually, and then only after taxes have already been paid in full. This "pay-as-you-go" approach reduces the risk to the municipality and ensures that taxes remain current on the property. Also, any form of grant should be predicated on a development

agreement between the municipality and the property owner that specifies the responsibilities of each party, including an obligation on the part of the owner to repay the grant, should the owner default on the agreement. Municipalities are also advised to better protect themselves by linking a completed RSC as a standard requirement of any brownfield TIF program.

### Conclusion

In this two-part series we have presented a Standard Municipal Model for dealing with development approvals on potentially contaminated sites. This Standard Model and the certainty and consistency it provides is seen as a necessary precursor to the redevelopment of potentially contaminated sites.

In the absence of Provincial or Federal funding to promote brownfield redevelopment, municipalities in Ontario can do more than wring their hands. They can develop and adopt community improvement plans that use TIF to provide grants to promote brownfield redevelopment. The true test will come when one or more Ontario municipalities have forwarded their adopted community improvement plans for brownfield redevelopment to the Province for approval. With municipalities like Hamilton and Thunder Bay now preparing community improvement plans to address the improvement and redevelopment of potentially contaminated brownfield areas, that moment is close at hand.

*Luciano Piccioni, MCIP, RPP is a Development Officer with the City of Hamilton/Region of Hamilton-Wentworth and a member of the RPCO Soil Working Group and the Advisory Board of the National Brownfield Association based in Chicago, Illinois; Christopher Morgan is a scientist and a planner with the City of Toronto, a provisional CIP/OPPI member and Chair of the RPCO's Soil Working Group. Both individuals will be speaking at a September 21 conference, "Unlocking the Potential of Brownfields" organized by CUI with Smith Lyons, the Waterfront Regeneration Trust and three provincial ministries. OPPI members can attend for a reduced price. There will also be presentations on the Ministry of Municipal Affairs' Showcase program featuring Community Improvement Programs and application of TIF concepts.*



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## Vibrant Weasels (And Other Generally Significant Statements)

By Philippa Campsie

On one of the rare sunny days in June this year, I attended a garden party, where I met a physician who specializes in work-related injuries and environmental disease. She is often required to assess patients who are claiming worker's compensation. I asked her if she is ever called upon to give expert testimony.

"Lawyers hate me," she said, "because I never use adjectives or adverbs in my reports. There are no weasel words, so there's nothing for them to get hold of."

Later on, I bumped into an OPPI member at the party, and repeated her comment to him. He considered the idea and then said, "Maybe if I'd tried that approach, I wouldn't have been mauled by the OMB that time."

Is it possible to eliminate all qualifiers from a planning report? I don't think it would be possible to get rid of adjectives completely, because many of them are needed to describe

sites, buildings, soil conditions and the like. Mind you, as Nigel Richardson pointed out in a recent letter to the Journal, useless adjectives such as "significant" add nothing to the meaning of a sentence and should be jettisoned.

Other adjectives that take up space without adding information include available, appropriate, existing, real and total, not to mention newly coined barbarisms like "impactful." Some adjectives merely repeat the sense of the word they are supposed to qualify, as in expressions like "basic fundamentals," "new innovation" or "forward progress."

None of these, however, would cause more than a yawn at the OMB. A more serious problem with adjectives is the way they can slant a report. I have seen planning documents that reminded me of real estate ads, full of words like vibrant, friendly, attractive,

high-quality, prestige, and liveable. I sometimes wonder how a planner would justify these words to a pitbull lawyer. "Would you care to explain exactly what you meant by 'vibrant' in your report?"

Adjectives can make us say more than we mean. The opposite is true of adverbs, which we use to say less than we should. Most writing would be improved if all the rather's, somewhats, quites, verys, justs, arguably's, actually's, meaningfully's, actively's, clearly's, totally's, basically's and definitely's were removed. We use adverbs to weasel out of giving an opinion one way or the other. "And just what did you intend to convey when you wrote that the groundwater was 'somewhat contaminated'?"

At times, of course, we need to qualify an expression, since life is not all black and white, but most of us use weasel words out of habit, until our writing comes out like dingy laundry. Not something you want aired at the OMB.

*Philippa Campsie probably means nearly everything she said in this column. She is more or less deputy editor of the Ontario Planning Journal and generally gives plain language workshops whenever appropriate.*

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# Stone Road Commercial Node Urban Design Study

By Moiz Behar



Representative view of south side of Stone Road, west of Edinburgh Road

In April 1999, the City of Guelph commissioned The Planning Partnership and Moiz Behar to develop an urban design vision and qualitative standards for the Stone Road Commercial Node. The study area is bounded by Hanlon Parkway in the west, Gordon Street in the east, and is one block in depth on the north and south sides of Stone Road.

Guelph City Council approved the final report on the study recommendations in February.

## Rational intensification was the goal

The mission for the study was to promote a distinct character for the Stone Road commercial node. A key objective was to avoid

piecemeal development by creating an overall design strategy.

The study resolved to establish:

- an active, interconnected, safe, accessible and visually enriching public realm and streetscape;
- support for a pedestrian scale by appropriate building placement, massing and articulation;
- provision or enhancement of landscaping on privately owned lands, particularly when viewed from the public realm or adjacent properties; and
- identification, connectivity and enhancement of views and linkages between natural and open space features and the various land uses.

## Current Policies

The current planning policies focused on maintaining the retail and service functions of the Stone Road Commercial Node and contemplated a mix of uses, including residential and institutional. It was anticipated that there would be continued development interest resulting in intensification. The motivation for the study was to protect the public interest during this evolution. There was a solid basis for this in the Guelph Official Plan and Urban Design Guidelines.

## Design Concept

The recommended overall design concept for the Node is not a singular vision. Rather, it is a concept that emphasizes:

- defined gateway points for the area;
- a central focal point;
- a green streetscape and landscape;
- interconnected trails and open spaces;
- high quality streetscape amenities for the streets; and
- transit and pedestrian-supportive development patterns.

## Proposed Strategy

To help realize the design concept, the proposed strategy is to:

- improve the environmental quality of existing streets, boulevards, open spaces, walkways, bikeways and trails;
- create an active, interconnected, accessible, safe and visually enriching public realm;
- identify design options for new streets and walkways, to ensure a high level of public access while providing flexibility for a broad range of development types;
- encourage transit-supportive built form, and a network of streets to enhance transit convenience and accessibility;
- guide new development towards design standards that are supportive of a pedestrian scale, through performance criteria for building placement, massing, and

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- building articulation;
- guide new development to use site planning tools that enhance a given site, particularly adjacent areas that affect the quality of the public realm;
- encourage the municipality to apportion funds for capital improvements in the Node; and
- encourage owners of existing developments to participate in various initiatives for improving the area.

### Principles and Guidelines

There were three groups of guidelines:

#### General

- Gateways and Intersections
- Views and Vistas
- Public Art Opportunities
- Safety
- Barrier-free Accessibility

#### Privately-owned Lands

- Street and Block Pattern
- Built Form
- Site Treatment, Landscaping and Open Spaces
- Parking
- Signs

#### Publicly-owned Lands

- Open Spaces and Linkages
- Streetscape
- Public Transit

### Implementation Priorities

Stone Road Commercial Node will evolve gradually and the urban design strategy will be realized over time as new developments are built, sites are intensified or redeveloped, and improvements to the public realm take place.

The implementation Priorities section of the study recommends that the guidelines be taken into consideration in:

- determining municipal capital budget expenditures for streetscaping, and general infrastructure improvements;
- establishing municipal work program priorities for follow up studies or other initiatives; and
- reviewing development applications.

To realize the urban design strategy for the Node, the following implementation priorities are recommended:

- street tree planting: at gateways; on Stone Road; and along the streets perpendicular to Stone Road in the study area;
- implementation of the "recreational trail" on the north side of Stone Road, including the expanded sidewalk/ decorative paving



View of proposed recreational trail along the north side of Stone Road

- and pedestrian-scale lighting and street furniture; and
- implementation of the "trail loop" as a cooperative venture between the municipality and the University of Guelph and as part of the city-wide trail master plan.

### Demonstration Plans

Demonstration plans were also prepared as

## Redefining Sense of Place

By Liz McArthur

For me, sense of place refers to the perceptual, sensory or experiential qualities of a particular locale. It is a qualitative condition attributable to the sights, sounds and smells of a place. As such, it involves the appearance or image of a locale, as well as the values, decisions and routine activity patterns which account for its look and "feel". Sense of place has three key benefits:

**Expression of identity.** The appearance of a place speaks of individual, group and/or corporate identity. It is therefore an important tool for people, corporations and cities wishing to express themselves or distinguish their properties in the urban landscape. According to Maslow, identity is a fundamental ingredient of personal growth and development. As Glover noted in his recent Journal article, image or appearance distinguishes cities from one another in the global marketplace.

**Psychological and physical well-being.** Sense of place figures prominently in health and well-being because of the significances or meanings it holds for "ordinary people". Old, familiar features speak of attachments, memories, stability and continuity and in so doing, provide comfort in the turbulent times in which we live. The challenge here,

part of the study, for illustration only, to show how the Node might evolve. The study is intended as a "visioning" and planning document. It elaborates on the built form and open space aspects of the Stone Road Node and sets qualitative standards for both the private and public realms that could be realized in many different ways.

### The End Result

The Stone Road Urban Design Study builds upon the open space and landscaping assets and positive built form examples of the Node. It provides a flexible guide for the future physical planning

of the area both in the public and the private realms in keeping with Guelph's Official Plan and general urban design policies.

*Moiz Behar is the principal of his own firm and associated with the Planning Partnership. He is a member of the Urban Design Working Group chaired by Anne McLroy, MCIP, RPP.*

as noted by Glover, is to reconcile the image and significances of established places with the values, aspirations and identity embodied in new places in the urban landscape.

**Citizenship.** Sense of place also inspires proactive citizenship because of the significances it holds for individuals as members of a greater whole. Special places and civic features speak of group identity, values and aspirations, and collective memory. These qualities figure prominently in the building and strengthening of sense of community. They figure prominently in inspiring civility - behaviour which respects interests beyond self (Rae, 1998). They figure prominently in inspiring civic responsibility - ordinary people assuming their roles in ensuring the welfare of the broader community of which we are all part, symbolically and functionally (Rae, 1998). As Kunstler (1993) notes, these qualities can also be instrumental in making our towns and cities "worth caring for".

*This is the second in a series by Liz McArthur, a consultant and educator based in Guelph. For more on this topic, see the book reviewed by Robert Shipley in the previous issue.*

## Housing

# Margaret's Community Housing Development A Case Study of Community Economic Development

By Janet Kreda



A big challenge for single parents can be supervised after-school daycare

For the past two and a half years I have worked at LIFE SPIN (Low Income Family Empowerment Sole-support Parent Information Network) developing Margaret's Community Housing Project as a community economic development initiative. LIFE SPIN has been working with the low-income community in London for over 10 years, providing mediation and advocacy services to people in crisis, and developing long-term solutions to poverty. The goal is not just to develop housing but to create a project that helps people stabilize peoples' lives and help them become more self-reliant.

Margaret's Community Housing Development grew out of the need for afford-

able housing in London. The community had identified a need for permanent affordable housing as well as a need for supported housing for psychiatric survivors. Margaret had come to LIFE SPIN homeless and seeking help. She had encountered women's shelters lacking trained staff and resources for psychiatric survivors, trusted no one, and feared readmission to the London Psychiatric Hospital. LIFE SPIN helped by treating her with dignity, getting her back on social assistance and helping her to find place to live. However, she was still caught in the cycle of homelessness and the criminal justice system, primarily because she did not have a perma-

nent home with appropriate supports. As a result of our experiences with Margaret, the idea for Margaret's Community Housing Project began to take shape.

### A Brief Description of Community Economic Development (CED)

My favourite definition of CED is that it is a process to achieve long-term, sustainable development that combines economic, social, environmental and cultural priorities and goals. It is a community-driven process of individual and community empowerment that involves and benefits members of the community.

An important part of CED is putting in place the tools for communities and individuals to help themselves, and become self-reliant. Most importantly, residents of disadvantaged neighbourhoods participate in the governance of local organisations.

The idea behind self-sufficiency is to help people make decisions that look beyond immediate problems and take into account choices that will affect their future in a positive way.

Some goals of CED include:

- Improved quality of life
- Reduced poverty and social inequity
- Improved access to capital for community benefit
- Enhancement of local resources and talents resulting in increased community capacity.
- Investment in the development of new skills
- New employment opportunities
- New sources of financing
- Locally owned and operated businesses and co-operatives and housing.
- Various forms of public goods and public spaces created and maintained

### Developing the Vision for Margaret's Community Housing

The process for developing Margaret's started with building a Community Advisory Committee with the expertise needed to develop supported housing. We were able to bring together:

- Consumer/Survivors of the mental health system from CanVoice (a peer support group for psychiatric survivors);
- planners from the private sector;
- Sifton Properties, a major developer in London;
- An individual who worked for years developing non-profit and co-operative housing,
- Western Ontario Therapeutic Community Hostels, the largest provider of supported housing in London,
- psychiatric care givers and support workers from the hospitals and community based service organizations.

The diversity and level of expertise on this committee proved to be an asset, and enabled us to build community support for this initiative.



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The committee then convened several visioning sessions with women consumer/survivors in London to identify their housing needs. This process took several months, and we spoke with over 80 women. It proved to be extremely useful in shaping the vision for Margaret's. The main elements women expressed a need for were:

- privacy, safety, and security
- a permanent place to call home that was their own space
- common space such as a lounge, community kitchen, garden space, studio space.
- flexible access to support services
- sense of community
- opportunities for work
- beauty in their surroundings, including flowers and trees.

This process also built awareness and interest among the women and service provider in the project. Further research supported the idea that the project should be looking to provide independent apartments for women with flexible support services. From a CED perspective we wanted the project to be self-sustaining, and were looking to integrate some form of commercial enterprise that could both help the project be economically viable but also offer the long term potential for the development of consumer survivor businesses related to the housing

### Realizing the Vision

The hard work of finding a way to build the vision then began. The project faced several challenges - most obviously, the fact that no affordable housing had been created in London since 1995 when the provincial government withdrew from housing, and the fact that we had no capital. The project had some seed funding from the Affordability and Choice Today program and Status of Women Canada.

The Advisory Committee focused energy on several different aspects of the project including site identification and development, community education and promotion, tenant issues, fundraising, social policy, and legal issues. We ran a logo contest to raise the project's profile in the community and to build community interest and support. We made presentations to all levels of government on the need for affordable housing, and worked politically to keep the issue of housing and homelessness on the public agenda.

The next hurdle was how to purchase a building with little or no capital. And how to fund the support services when the Ministry has yet to define its policies? Examples from community development corporations in the United States showed housing projects cobbling together their financing from 15 or more sources, and this is not far off from our experience with Margaret's. We were fortunate to find

a building that met most of our needs, and that proved to be affordable. The property has 10 residential units (1 bachelor, 6 one-bedroom, and 3 two bedroom), 4 commercial units, a two-bedroom house and space for a garden. We are still piecing together critical pieces of funding for support services, and completing renovations. But after over two years, the project is months away from opening its doors to London's women.

### Standing Trickle Down Theory on its Head

Through our work on St. Margaret's we have built new relationships in the community among people who had never had the opportunity to work together before. The project has spawned a three-year Community University Research Alliance proposal, a first ever joint project with University of Western Ontario, Wilfred Laurier University, University of Waterloo, Concordia, and several of our community partners. The project has been an inspiration to women's mental health providers and we hope ultimately a model for future changes in mental health and housing policy. The project has created a sense of hope, and more importantly paved the way for future projects to move ahead. By improving the quality of life of the poorest and most marginalized, we can raise everyone's standard of living.

### The Role of Planners and CED

Community Economic Development is a tough sell because it does not fit well within the traditional planning framework nor does it fit well within the traditional economic development model. CED is a process with uncertain outcomes. Planners can play a key role in facilitating communication between different groups in a neighbourhood or community and developing policies that foster CED.

Using a community development approach recognizes residents as the true experts. As Greg Watson, commenting on the community planning process in Shelterforce stated, "When you allow residents to really weigh the options, what (often) emerges are . . . sustainable strategies."

*Janet Kreda has been the Co-ordinator for Margaret's Community Housing Project for two 1/2 years at LIFE \* SPIN. Janet has a Master's in*

*Regional Planning from the University of Massachusetts, and she has worked as a planner in the private and public sectors in both the United States and Canada. She has a background in community based organizing, archaeology and environmental activism. She can be contacted at*

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## Dakin v. Niagara (Region) Land Division Committee

By Paul Chronis

The matter before the Ontario Municipal Board involved a severance of a parcel property located in the Dock Area of the Town of Niagara-on-the-Lake (the "Town"). The Land Division Committee approved the severance application granting provisional consent conditional upon the applicant successfully obtaining a rezoning of the property. The owner applied to rezone the property, but was refused by Town Council. That application was similarly appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board and a concurrent hearing was held on both matters.

The key issues in the hearing were:

- Conformity with the Official Plan;
- Prematurity of the application, given the commencement of a Secondary Plan Study for this area;
- Compatibility of the lot size with the neighbourhood;
- The height and mass of any new dwelling to be constructed on the retained parcel,

and its compatibility with the neighbourhood;

- Obstruction of views;
- Setbacks from the roads bordering the property; and,
- Whether an archaeological survey should be required.

The history of the Zoning By-law and the Official Plan as they applied to this area complicated the issues to be considered in the hearing, particularly which policies would apply to the consideration of the applications. The Board concluded that since the severance application pre-dated a recently approved Official Plan, the "old" policies would apply. However, the recently adopted in-force Official Plan would apply to the rezoning application given that this "new" Official Plan was in force and effect at the time the rezoning application was filed.

Upon assessing the propriety of the consent application, the Board looked beyond

the narrow interpretation of the provisions of the Official Plan and implementing Zoning By-law. It had regard to the Provincial Policy Statement and Regional Official Plan, particularly since these documents were passed later in time than the Comprehensive Zoning By-law.

After carefully examining the history of the planning documents, the nature and magnitude of the changes to the Official Plan and other policy documents, the Board concluded that the proposed Zoning By-law implementing the severance application could be supported and that the proposed severance was generally in conformity with the applicable Official Plan. The Board found that the current Zoning By-law did not reflect the reality of the lot sizes in the area. The proposal was not out of keeping with the character of the area and would be compatible with the surrounding lots.

With respect to the Provincial Policy Statement, the Board found that the applications were supportive of the policies that promote infilling as a method of ensuring the efficient use of land and infrastructure. It concluded that the subject property presented an excellent opportunity to achieve

## Avoid land mines...

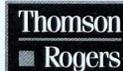


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efficient use of an expensive proposed and existing storm, sewage, and water infrastructure, and to make more efficient use of existing urban lands.

In respect of the loss of view issue, the Board concluded that the fairest approach to all parties was to acknowledge that there was no inherent right to the protection of a view across a neighbour's property. Only those views identified in public planning documents would merit a public protection as a public amenity and as a matter of public planning policy.

Source: Decision of the Ontario Municipal Board

Case No.: PL981040  
File No.: C980298,  
Z990097  
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OMB rejects principle that views across a neighbour's property can be protected

Area residents were concerned with the loss of open space, loss of trees, parking and traffic issues, density of the development, loss of privacy and views, and wildlife corridors.

The existing zoning on the property

principle that there is no right to a view. The issue to be considered is the impact of the proposed development and whether the approval would create an adverse situation. Although a different view would result with an approval for

the residents, it would not constitute loss of a right to a particular view nor would it create an undue adverse impact on the continued enjoyment of the objectors' properties. The Board found that the private open space does not belong to the residents and given the current planning framework, it would be unrealistic for the residents to expect that change would not occur.

The Board approved the

## Fieldgate Apartments v. the City of Toronto

The owner of land in the City of Toronto applied to rezone the parcel to permit an infill townhouse development adjacent to an existing 10-storey apartment building.

The property was designated in the Official Plan as "High Density Residential" which permits multiple unit housing of all types. The project complied with Official Plan policies respecting density and those encouraging residential infill projects and intensification of residential uses.

limited uses to "only a single apartment house, and any accessory structures". The balance of the site area, subject to the rezoning appeal before the Board, was limited to no purpose other than landscaping and underground automobile parking. The residents contended that a restricted covenant in 1964 limited any future development to detached single family dwelling.

The Board in its decision concluded that the property was capable of development. History demonstrated that there was no commitment that no development would occur. The Board reiterated the

requested zoning change with increased spatial separation distances between established homes and the new townhouses.

Source: Decision of the Ontario Municipal Board

Case No.: PL990140  
File No.: Z990022

*Paul Chronis, MCIP, RPP is a senior planner with Weir & Foulds in Toronto. He is the Ontario Planning Journal's contributing editor for OMB and can be reached at CHRONISP@weirfoulds.com.*



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## What High Gasoline Prices Really Mean

By David Kriger



The urge to drive is irresistible

We know the drill: planners have put a lot of faith in road pricing as a solution to managing growth. Drivers should be charged a fee for using roads, to offset the external costs they generate (notably, pollution) and to generate revenues for new transportation services (including transit). This way, we might avoid building some new roads, for all the good reasons; and even induce

some drivers to leave their cars at home in favour of transit.

Pricing mechanisms have been given serious consideration in planning departments across the country, not least in Ontario. Tolls perhaps come to mind first - think of Highway 407 as the modern Canadian prototype.

Fuel price increases are another mechanism. Some official plans have even

gone so far as to assume such increases as a basis for minimizing future infrastructure investments (Greater Vancouver's Transport 2021 strategy is one example). Many other plans assume that drivers will be so sensitive to higher gasoline prices that they will not hesitate to switch to transit. The recent National Climate Change Process retained fuel price increases as one of many measures designed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions. And, yes, I too am guilty of worshipping at the Altar of Road Pricing As The Panacea Of Modern Ills; though of late I have changed allegiance to the Offering Place of Understanding What This Means Before We Actually Do It. (witness anecdotal evidence from Vancouver that suggests drivers might switch only if their costs increased tenfold—way beyond anything ever hypothesized for fuel price increases.)

Well, guess what? Higher fuel prices have arrived! We have heard that drivers are Fed Up and that taxes must be cut (of course, not Ontario's but the Federal government's) and that the Federal govern-

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ment should devote funds from its fuel tax revenues to pay for new "highway" infrastructure. No doubt these are all valid viewpoints. Unfortunately, we have not heard much about the hordes of new transit riders who were derived from droves of drivers. Are there any?

So, what does this all mean? Is pricing a non-starter as a planning tool? I don't think so. Remember that the issue is largely defined in the public eye as one of consumers' rights v. big industry, with a secondary front on Provincial / Federal taxation and the uses thereof. Here, then, is an opportunity for planners to get their dibs in on something to which - on paper, at least - we have subscribed. I'd like to see OPPI go on the record (publicly) for a more balanced discussion of the public impacts, by putting planning issues onto the table. In particular, as the voice of Ontario's planners, OPPI should ask why, if the Province wants to pry loose Federal funds for "highway" infrastructure, it would not also ask the same for transit? In addition to addressing a hot issue, voicing OPPI's position would certainly raise our

profile - something we could all use!

Yes, this is a test. Yes, there will be more.

*David Kriger MCIP, RPP, a Principal with Delcan, is the Journal's Transportation Editor. Contributions are welcomed. Reach him in Ottawa at d.kriger@delcan.com.*

*Editor's note: Meanwhile, in the U.K., gasoline is closing in on \$2 per litre and car ownership rates continue to increase.*

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### Where is the Harry Potter of Planning Books?

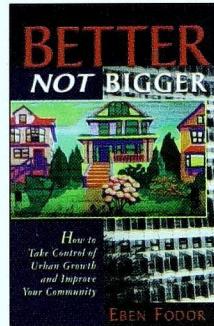
*T.J. Cieciora, who works for the City of Mississauga, shares his views on Eden Fodor's Better not Bigger, a critique of unlimited urban growth.*

### Better not Bigger: How to Take Control of Urban Growth and Improve Your Community

Author: Fodor, Eben  
Date: 1999  
Publisher: New Society Publishers, BC  
Pages: 153  
Price: \$17.95

As the title suggests, the topic of this book is focused squarely on controlling urban growth which, for the purposes of this work, is defined as the "quantitative increase in the size of the urban built environment." The book "is intended to be a resource for individuals and groups who want to get off the treadmill of urban growth."

The tone is set early with repeated statements about the negative impacts of growth on the health and welfare of people living in growing municipalities. Many of Fodor's viewpoints centre on the assumption that people do not want their communities to grow but that growth is being forced upon them by the "urban growth machine." This machine is made up of business interests including land-owners, real estate developers, mortgage bankers, realtors, construction companies and contractors, cement and sand and gravel



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companies, and building suppliers. Furthermore, the perception seems to be that planners are the handmaidens of the growth industry. The author even goes as far as stating that "the business of planning has become primarily the process of accommodating growth."

Fodor contends that planning practice has an interest in the management of growth. He maintains that planned growth fails to address the amount that is desirable and that planners should be more aware of whether growth is desirable at all. Fodor says that while the market is not the sole progenitor of urban growth, the growth machine actually perpetuates the notion that growth is inevitable, thereby causing growth itself. He does not explicitly state that planners have exacerbated the problems associated with urban sprawl but neither does he identify the positive impacts of planning that may have been lost without professionals attempting to order growth and development.

The concepts and ideas in this book are worthwhile and would augment any planner's knowledge base. The research is sound, and well written, using clear terminology. This adds to its credibility and can be recommended as a guide to identifying issues surrounding the growth process.

*T.J. Cieciora, (tjc@pathcom.com) works for the City of Mississauga.*

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