



Ontario Professional Planners Institute

OPPI AGM 2014
President's Message
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As I prepared for this year's AGM address, I had a number of 2013-2014 Council highlights – milestones – themes – and accomplishments to choose from for my annual report to you – it's been a year of bumper achievements and milestones for OPPI members

From the successful launch of our website – the progress of our CPL programme – the successes of our District Leadership Team – our progress on advancing our professional regulation interests – the activities of our volunteers – our financial stability – the numerous examples I came across about how you collectively are taking ownership of the profession – or, I thought perhaps something about the ± 3,000 emails I had in my account this past year about OPPI and CIP matters.

But, for me personally, the #1 milestone that quietly stood out – head and shoulders – above everything else was a single line in an Information Report on Membership that went through a recent Council Agenda – that marked our millennial cohort having surpassed our baby boomer cohort (23% vs 21%).

It certainly doesn't sound like much of a change but it represents the shift that OPPI Councils, and that we as a profession in general, have been expecting and planning for over the past decade.

Over the next decade, we're projecting to lose over 800 Full Members to retirement – for any association that's a real fiscal challenge – and for a profession, that's a potentially crippling challenge.

Investing in growth – and investing in being relevant to a changing profession and group of members has been OPPI Council's priority leadership and governance challenge – not just for today, but for the next 25 years.

Our highlights and achievements for this past year all reflect positive results flowing from those investments in the future of the profession and in our members.

We've broadened and provided more accessible volunteer opportunities for members to be actively involved – our volunteer activity is up and remains the envy of other professional groups – and continues to be at the core of our success – we have over 250 professionals actively volunteering on a broad range of activities through structured

committees/groups – we have many more also volunteering on individual activities – an example that jumps out for me is our recent calls for Mentors that has resulted in over 60 members identifying themselves on OPPI's website for that volunteer activity. I'm looking forward to watching that becoming an area of increased volunteer activity.

Our Districts, through our District Leadership Teams, brought the membership a diverse and exciting selection of events and programmes last year, with increased member participation – my favourite programme initiative from last year was the wildly successful "Planning Considerations for Medical Marijuana Facilities" session – and we're looking forward to an equally exciting 2014-2015 programme.

We have a comprehensive communications strategy, a learning strategy guide and an updated and flexible Website to provide our members with the best and most timely information, resources and linkages for their practices and for their volunteer efforts and platforms to deliver our messages and to promote public education on planning issues, to members, partners and other key stakeholders.

Our Planning Issues Strategy Group's "Calls to Action" continue to attract attention and focus to our sustainable, healthy community policies.

The response from our millennials and gen x'ers has been overwhelmingly supportive for our CPL programme – over 40% of you used last year's transition year to extend your credits into 2014 – and almost three-quarters of you are well into completing this year's requirements.

We're involving the next generation at an early stage – students and young professionals – through programmes, outreach and participation – and the response has been dynamic. At last week's joint Outreach Committee and Student Liaison Committee meeting we heard some very exciting visions and expectations for the future. The young professional is very engaged.

Council continues to move forward on updating our 1994 RPP legislation and on professional self-regulation – my undertaking to you at last year's conference was to ensure that whatever the outcome of this initiative, OPPI professionals would remain leaders in this area, as we were when the 1994 legislation was introduced. With the provincial election now settled, discussion opportunities have been identified and Council continues to move forward on positioning Members for the future by advocating professional regulation and enhanced title protection for the planning profession. OPPI has again retained a government relations consultant to assist with meeting and gaining the support of government officials and MPPs.

I'm often asked why we need to do this. For me, it's less about a self-interest need as it is about encouraging the province to recognize and support the importance of planning

and the planning profession in the same way as we recognized it ourselves through our private Bill in 1994 and in the same way as other provinces have.

A position paper has been drafted and meetings scheduled with the minister and staff of Municipal Affairs and Housing, as well as other professional regulators and associations. We also continue to monitor recent legislative updates and efforts by partner Provincial and Territorial Institutes and Associations (PTIA), and those of other professions in Ontario.

Earlier today we had a Symposium session on "Enhanced Self-Regulation Legislation for the Planning Profession in Ontario", which was again well attended and which provided us with excellent feedback. Our expectation is that we will have more such consultations in the forthcoming months as we focus in on what is in the best interests of the profession and the public.

OPPI's task is to ensure planning professionals are ready for the challenges ahead. Ensuring we remain current with contemporary practice and effective in the dynamic environment ahead. Ensuring we have the skills, knowledge and commitment to the public interest to plan the communities and spaces the next generation needs. Ensuring we can offer meaningful leadership province-wide, in all spheres of practice.

At last year's OPPI Annual Conference, I reflected on the fact that standing still as a profession is not an option. As we transition towards the next 2 decades of growth, and the challenges that growth represents for the public at large, I am pleased to report that OPPI and OPPI's professional planners are committed to providing those skills, leadership and commitments to the public interest.

We are indeed blessed to have so many engaged professional members, active leaders on Council and a first rate professional staff at the OPPI office. Together it is an unparalleled team. Professional planners in Ontario are not standing still.

On a final note – it's not directly an OPPI AGM business – I have a current topic that I wanted to briefly reflect on.

On the national CIP front, with July's 94% support of CIP's national Articles of Continuance, CIP Council is now in the midst of canvassing input on its realignment structure so as to have a new CIP By-law ready for a membership vote in early 2015.

From the comments that I've heard on my various travels, it looks like CIP Council will have a broad spectrum of input to consider, ranging from "very supportive", to "stay at the status quo", to "let's go back to the way things were before" and through to that "the changes don't go far enough".

I wanted to take this opportunity to encourage all OPPI members to participate in that input – and in getting your comments to CIP Council through CIP's member feedback so

that CIP Council can make an informed decision on the best governance model to take the profession's national interests forward into the next 25 years.

I also wanted to take this opportunity to assure you that, whatever the outcome of this CIP realignment will be, it will not affect your RPP interests in Ontario:

Membership standards are now, and will continue to be, managed through our partnership between the participating PTIA's (Provincial/Territorial Institutes & Associations – former Affiliates) and CIP, through the PSB and the PSC;

Job portability across the country is now guaranteed by federal legislation and our PSB/PSC partnership on standards ensures that we all have equal standards and qualifications wherever we practice;

Professional regulation is, and will continue to be, secured at the PTIA level; and

Membership in OPPI and use of the RPP designation is not contingent on an MCIP membership and that would continue forward. Membership in CIP is however contingent on being a qualified PTIA Member.

What remains is the need for a restructured national (and international) CIP role that doesn't compete with PTIA's but rather provides the profession with a strong national voice – promoting, supporting and advocating for the profession of planning – such as advocating on behalf of the remaining 3% of PTIA members to also have access to a provincial RPP or equivalent designation and providing a national governance structure that will finally (long awaited) facilitate the full participation of all PTIA's, including our Quebec colleagues.

So – inform yourselves – and participate through CIP's member feedback. Take advantage of CIP's booth at this Symposium – Michael Gordon, President of CIP and Andrea Bourrie, OPPI President-Elect and CIP Council Director, are there to answer your questions.

In 2011, we celebrated 25 years as an Ontario Institute. In 2017, we will be celebrating 100 years of comprehensive land use planning legislation in Ontario and in 2019 we will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of the establishment of organized professional planning in Canada, centred within Ontario – and we will be celebrating the 25th anniversary of RPP in Ontario.

It is indeed a great time to be a planner and an exciting time to be President of this Institute – professional planners in Ontario are most certainly not standing still.