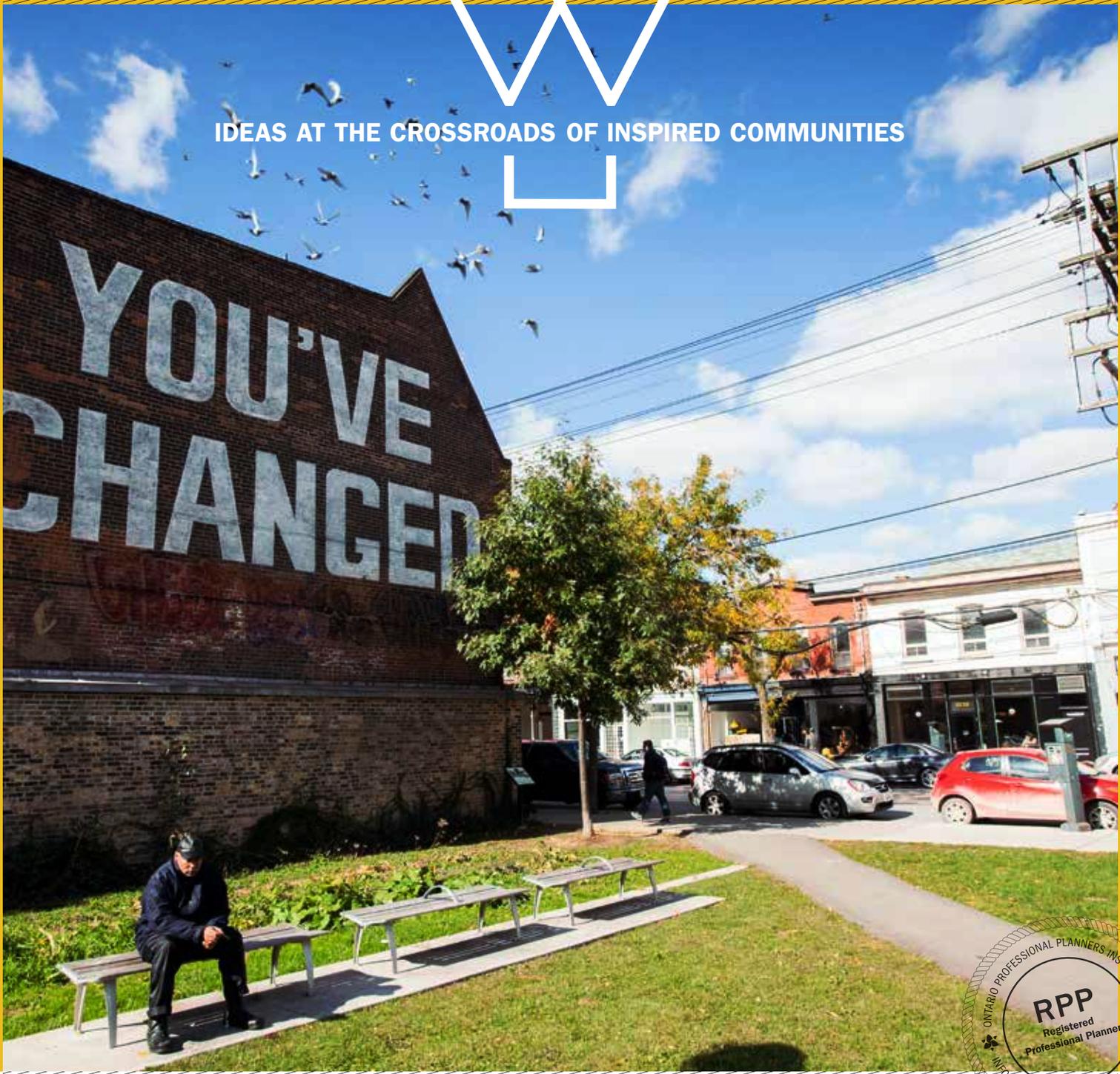




IDEAS AT THE CROSSROADS OF INSPIRED COMMUNITIES



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**UNEVEN GROWTH** 06

Ontario's communities don't grow at a constant predictive rate. It's messier than that.

**MILTON, A DECADE OF GROWTH** 08

The town with a growth trajectory unlike any other municipality in Canada.

**GROWTH IS VARIABLE ACROSS GREY COUNTY** 14

Locational and market forces drive development nodes across the county.

Managing growth is an art and a science and skilled Registered Professional Planners excel at both.

# INSPIRE



## JOHANNESBURG: WHERE MASS TRANSIT RULES

Johannesburg, one of the largest cities in South Africa, has had a unique response to growth.

During apartheid, the urban poor were pushed to live in outer-city settlements or slums anywhere between five and 40 kilometres away from urban core. In 1994 when apartheid ended, a steady influx of people began moving to the urban core.

That's when the government identified strategically located urban hotspots and then invested in mass transit to link those spots. This enabled rapid intensification of both jobs and houses.

A report by the Global Commission on the Economy and Climate reveals that Johannesburg's bus rapid transit system,

Rea Vaya—built in 2009—has saved South Africa about \$890-million so far by improving road safety, decreasing travel time, and reducing carbon emissions.



The Rea Vaya, Bus Rapid Transit in the city of Johannesburg in South Africa, is an example of how investments in mass transit has helped improve the lives of residents. The transit system is safe, economical, fast and sustainable.



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## ISSUE 01

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Mary Ann Rangam  
Robert Fraser  
Rob Kirsic  
Radhika Panjwani

**Editor**

Lynn Morrow RPP

**Design**

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**For advertising inquiries:**

finance@ontarioplanners.ca

**To subscribe:**

communicationspecialist@ontarioplanners.ca

**For feedback and story ideas:**

editor@ontarioplanners.ca

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Ontario Professional Planners Institute  
201-234 Eglinton Ave. E., Toronto, Ontario M4P 1K5  
T: 416-483-1873 or 1-800-668-1448  
E: info@ontarioplanners.ca  
ontarioplanners.ca

Email [finance@ontarioplanners.ca](mailto:finance@ontarioplanners.ca) or visit

[ontarioplanners.ca](http://ontarioplanners.ca) for your copy of the media kit

“Registered Professional Planners (RPPs) inform the choices that inspire the communities of today and tomorrow.

In a competitive world crowded with thinkers, doers, dreamers, and achievers, success usually comes to those who question the status quo and ask “why?”

There’s a similar mindset in play for Ontario’s Registered Professional Planners (RPP) when it comes to planning communities across Ontario. If we think of all the great cities and noteworthy places across the globe, they have one thing in common: they are designed to meet the needs of the future.

As professional planners, our thought process stems from the question “why?” and through Y Magazine our goal is to show you how we inform the choices made that inspire the communities of today and tomorrow.

Welcome to the inaugural issue of Y Magazine. Through this publication, we want to highlight stories that transcend real borders and imaginary boundaries. We will not only start a dialogue across Ontario and beyond but also educate, inform and confirm the importance of developing current and future communities with the expertise of RPPs by your side.

Also, each issue will subtly underscore the critical work planners do in areas such as climate change, technology, and uneven growth.

Whether it is gentrification or intensification, sluggish or fast, even or uneven, we can all agree the character and prosperity of a community is interlinked

with its pace of growth. The first issue of Y Magazine tackles this subject through several in-depth articles.

As you flip through the pages, you will notice the narratives are set within the urban, rural and global contexts, and shine the spotlight on projects, initiatives, and planners that have reimagined spaces.

In addition to launching our new publication, it was 25-years ago that the Ontario Professional Planners Institute granted the RPP designation to its first cohort of professional planners in the province. Talk about trailblazers. This year marks the 25th anniversary of that momentous event. While we celebrate the past, we will also take every opportunity to look ahead as we

guide Ontario into the next quarter century.

I invite you to challenge your perceptions about planning, ask yourself “why?” and engage in the discussions we present in each issue of Y Magazine.

Happy reading. Until next time.



*Jason Ferrigan*

**Jason Ferrigan RPP**  
President  
Ontario Professional Planners Institute

# UNEVEN GROWTH

This inaugural issue of Y Magazine explores the ways growth differs, and planners' responses to growth. There are a variety of articles speaking to urban, suburban, rural, and northern experiences, as well as current research.

BY ED SAJECKI RPP



“To succeed you do not require a brilliant strategy, just a good one. The requisite is brilliant execution.”

As we explore the topic of uneven growth these words have a lot of meaning.

What is uneven growth? Why is it that some cities are experiencing explosive growth while others stagnate or decline? What are the defining characteristics of growth, and what factors make growth uneven—both across and within municipalities? What strategies and tools are planners using to direct/manage growth and to share the benefits and challenges associated with growth? Why is it that globalization, de-industrialization and industrial restructuring have devastated some communities while others have been able to take advantage of this transformation?

The impact of uneven growth is perhaps best reflected in the disparity of housing prices in the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) in comparison to other parts of Ontario.

Work on the Growth Plan that became law in 2006, started in 2001 when the GGH was 7.5 million or 65 per cent of Ontario's population of 11.5 million. We had a relatively balanced housing market then, with the average sale price of a detached home in Toronto being just under \$300,000 and a condominium apartment under \$200,000. Average monthly rents were \$870 for a 1-bedroom unit and \$1,039 for a 2-bedroom.

The GGH has since grown to 9.3 million people and is now home to more than two-thirds of Ontario's 13.5-million people and accounts for one-quarter of the population of Canada. The GGH is currently growing by about 115,000 persons annually.

The average sale price of a detached home in Toronto has skyrocketed to \$1.3-million and it is now over \$900,000 in the remainder of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). A condominium apartment is now \$615,000 in Toronto and \$455,000 in 905. Average monthly rents in Toronto have soared to over \$2,100 for a

1-bedroom unit and \$2,800 for a 2-bedroom. According to RBC, housing affordability in Toronto is now “off the charts.” To cover homeownership costs in Toronto, homebuyers must spend a record 75.9 per cent of their income.

By contrast to the GGH, rural and northern Ontario continue to stagnate or even decline, while growth in western and eastern Ontario, with the exception of Ottawa, has been relatively modest. Northern communities such as Thunder Bay, Sault St. Marie, North Bay and Timmins have each experienced a slight decline in population since 2001.

Again, this uneven growth is reflected in housing prices. Today, the most affordable housing markets in Ontario are Thunder Bay, Sudbury, Ottawa, Whitby and Waterloo. The least affordable are Richmond Hill, Toronto, Vaughan, Markham and Oakville.

It's easy to see why pressure is mounting to increase housing supply.

With this disparity, will it become reasonable at some point to commute longer distances because higher speed and automated options make it doable? What might be the impact of improved transportation and logistics as a result of technological innovation on the near-term horizon? Will the underutilized infrastructure, cheaper housing markets and less-congested logistics of welcoming small towns and tier-two cities within southern and mid-northern Ontario, start to syphon-off the GTHA's growth? Is that going to be seen as sprawl, or a safety valve for sustaining Ontario in a global economy? Will immigration be directed to these communities, to take the pressure off the GTHA?

Against this backdrop, it's easy to see why pressure is mounting to increase housing supply. With this growth there is a strong impetus to streamline development approvals to help meet demand and address housing supply and affordability issues as housing prices and rents skyrocket.

The supply issue is enormous given the 115,000 new persons coming to the region every year, as well as the pent-up demand

of millennials who wish to enter the market but find it unaffordable. Estimates suggest this millennial number could be as high as 730,000 over the next 10 years, potentially resulting in 500,000 new households seeking housing. This is placing huge pressures on the system to deliver more housing more quickly. While millennials may sustain the 1-bedroom condo market while in their twenties, they will want other types of accommodation as they move into family formation years. Also, one wonders if the single-family executive homes outside of Toronto, may soon become a glut on the market as baby boomers downsize. Will there be products for that relocating market segment (e.g., bungalows, aging-in-place residential, etc.)?

The updated *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, 2017*, came into effect on July 1, 2017. This is an especially important document when coupled with the legislation restricting the right to appeal Planning Act approvals with respect to consideration of conformity with provincial plans and relevant official plans. In short, decisions on future growth in the GGH will be largely predetermined by these plans.

Uneven growth in Ontario cities is based on multiple contributing issues which will be explored further in this magazine. For example, a Growth Plan that assumed that we are inevitably going to have growth will be undermined if the economy falters because employers and investors can't attract or keep knowledge workers and professionals in the GGH marketplace. What will be the impact on the need for low-wage, lower-skilled employment to sustain the service trades and health care system on which the overall economy will continue to depend?

A good growth plan for cities is designed to address these issues. Such plans also need to be adaptable to keep pace with an unpredictable future. The key to achieving desirable growth is in the persistent execution of the plan over time, while allowing for adaptability when it is necessary. Easier said than done? 



**Ed Sajecki RPP** is the former Mississauga Commissioner of Planning & Building and a former provincial ADM with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. Ed is an OPPI Member.

# TRANSLATING GROWTH INTO POSSIBILITY

BY BARB KOOPMANS RPP

Credit: Town of Milton

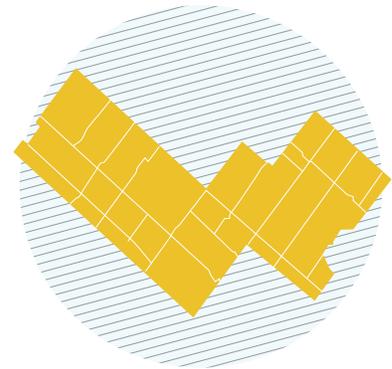


## Town of Milton

**Population:** 110,128 (2016)

**Characteristics:** Urban

**Growth pattern:** Rapid, greenfield



In 2000, with a population of approximately 31,000, the Town of Milton set out on a path of growth unlike any other municipality in Canada.

Despite its strategic location in the western Greater Toronto Area (GTA), Milton had not experienced much in the way of urban growth, largely due to a lack of water and wastewater servicing to support development. Since that time, however, Milton has experienced a tremendous rate of growth—71.2 per cent between 2001 and 2006, 56.5 per cent between 2006 and 2011 and 30.5 per cent between 2011 and 2016, according to Statistics Canada. Today the town's population exceeds 113,000, with a projected population of 238,000 by 2031, and it anticipates continued growth for the foreseeable future.

Milton has a young, highly educated and diverse population. In fact, it is one of the youngest communities in Ontario with the average age being 35 years old, and 74 per cent of its population has attained some level of post-secondary education. Given its locational advantages in the GTA, the town anticipates it will continue to attract families seeking to purchase a home in a community where they can set down roots, enjoy living in close proximity to the town's abundant natural areas, and have ready access to a variety of services and amenities to support an urban lifestyle.

**01** The FirstOntario Arts Centre Milton is the community's cornerstone for creativity. It creates partnerships between the Town of Milton and the community that support arts and culture.

**02** With a projected population of 238,000 by 2031, Milton anticipates continued growth in the foreseeable future.

**03** While the young families attracted to Milton are seeking a suburban subdivision lifestyle, they expect amenities more characteristic of urban metropolitan environments.

The majority of Milton's growth has occurred in new, greenfield areas—Bristol, Sherwood and Boyne Surveys—which were brought into the urban settlement area in the 1990s. The Bristol and Sherwood Surveys were each planned to accommodate a population of 40,000 while 50,000 residents are planned to live in the Boyne Survey, which is still under development.

In part, this emphasis on greenfield development is due to the fact that Milton's pre-growth urban area is relatively compact, characterized by largely stable neighbourhoods, some of which include concentrations of heritage homes. Perhaps more significantly, the young families attracted to Milton are seeking a suburban subdivision lifestyle. However, they also expect amenities more characteristic of urban, metropolitan environments.

This dichotomy was one of the greatest challenges during Milton's early growth when the number and range of programs, services and facilities were designed to meet the needs of a much smaller population. Similarly, existing retail and employment opportunities were relatively limited. With rapid growth came an expectation that the range of municipal programs and services, and the availability of community facilities, would have expanded either prior to, or coincident with residential development.

Municipal funding for community facilities and infrastructure is largely generated from fees and charges associated with the new development. Consequently, community facilities, while planned, could not be constructed until funding was forthcoming through that same development. As well, amenities such as expanded retail opportunities are

generally market-driven and typically occur after the subdivisions have been built. This results in a timing gap between the occupancy of new subdivisions and the construction of parks, schools, and other amenities.

To increase awareness of the planned facilities, Milton is actively engaging the community through various forms of outreach—town's website, social media, myMILTON mobile App and enhanced public consultation using an online Let's Talk Milton engagement platform.

**Reconciling these competing objectives—a suburban lifestyle with urban amenities—requires collaboration.**

Another growth challenge related to the shift in policy direction that occurred after Milton's expansion area had been designated for development but prior to the adoption of a secondary plan to guide infrastructure investment, mix of housing and community facilities.

This shift resulted in requirements for increased residential densities, which in turn increased demand for land that could be developed for community uses. In addition, land requirements to achieve a sustainable natural heritage system in an urbanizing context and for stormwater management increased resulting in greater competition for the same land

02



03



base. Consequently, the net amount of developable land decreased, requiring some revisions to the mix and spatial distribution of land uses. This created challenges in the design of complete communities, which achieve both technical requirements and planning and design objectives.

Reconciling these competing objectives—a suburban lifestyle with urban amenities—requires collaboration. Hence, town staff has worked with partner agencies and the development community to co-ordinate technical requirements and develop defensible standards and effective implementation tools. Effective communication is a core component of the town’s capacity to evaluate applications and build well-designed communities.

Yet another challenge relates to the fact that land use planning objectives and market demand are not completely aligned. In Milton’s case, the initial overwhelming market demand was for grade-related dwellings. Based on smaller lot sizes, higher lot coverages and reduced setbacks, required densities could often be achieved in grade-related housing. However, achieving the numbers did not necessarily achieve the desired range and mix of housing choices, the intended community form and functionality, or urban design objectives.

Further, while satisfying market demand, the pressure for grade-related housing creates other issues relating to on-street parking, stormwater management and overall connectivity and walkability. In Milton’s experience, attributable in part to the abundance of grade-related housing, there has been a tremendous influx of young families resulting in higher than average persons per household. This makes it challenging to project demand for population-based facilities including schools, cultural and recreational facilities, programs and services.

Finally, it has been a long-standing town objective to balance residential and employment growth and achieve an activity rate of one job for every two residents. While Milton has continued to attract a considerable number of large-scale warehousing and logistics operations, which are very important to the town’s economic base, it is taking more time to attract knowledge-based employment opportunities. Secondary plans underway—Milton Education Village, the Agerton Employment Area and the Downtown Major Transit Station Area—are intended to address this issue. The intent is to facilitate the development of complete urban neighbourhoods with a range and mix of uses that will be attractive to both employers and employees.

Given its location and the availability of designated urban land, Milton expects growth to continue well into the future. The town has endorsed a future urban structure to provide a strong context to articulate the community vision and manage growth and

04



Credit: Town of Milton

05



Credit: Town of Milton

**04** The Mattamy National Cycling Centre is the only velodrome of its kind in Canada. It serves as both a community recreation facility and a venue for provincial, national and international cycling events.

**05** Milton seeks to maintain the viability of its historic downtown as it grows.

development. In addition, the town utilizes council-endorsed tertiary plans to more clearly articulate its expectations for community structure and the integration of a range and mix of land uses within smaller, cohesive neighbourhoods.

While Milton has certainly experienced growing pains, through innovation, teamwork and collaboration, we are successfully building a place of possibility. ☺



**Barb Koopmans MPA, MCIP, RPP, CMO**, is Commissioner of Planning & Development for the Town of Milton and an OPPI Member.



Credit: BA Group



01

## City of Mississauga

**Population:** 756,000 (2016)  
**Characteristics:** Urban  
**Growth pattern:** Rapid, infill



# PLANNING FOR THE MISSING MIDDLE

BY GRAHAM HAINES

**T**he Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) is one of North America’s fastest growing regions. Its rapid growth has presented a challenge in delivering sufficient appropriate and affordable housing. A tall and sprawl development pattern only makes meeting this challenge more difficult.

The majority of new housing built and under construction in the GTHA is either tall—one-bedroom condos at high-density nodes—or sprawl—single-family homes at increasingly distant locations on the urban fringe. This leaves households with little choice in the housing market. The majority of options available are either a small condo in a high-rise tower close to amenities and transit, or a single-family home not served

by either transit or amenities and requiring a long commute.

In part, this tall and sprawl development pattern is the result of traditional approaches to planning. Most municipalities have restrictive zoning by-laws that have defined greenfield areas and a limited number of high-density nodes as the only places to add a significant amount of housing. As a result, while intensification has delivered record levels of small condo units, it has not delivered enough family friendly, “missing middle” units. Instead, the predominant way municipalities are building new family-appropriate housing is through sprawl. A new approach, focused on delivering missing middle housing, offers municipalities an opportunity to

**01** The Humbertown Shopping Centre redevelopment demonstrates how low-density commercial sites across the GTHA can be redeveloped to provide new housing, services and greenspace.

> FAMILY-FRIENDLY MIDDLE-DENSITY HOUSE FORMS TEND TO BE MISSING IN THE GTHA WITH MOST NEW CONSTRUCTION BEING EITHER TALL OR SPRAWL.



intensify and provide new family-friendly housing at the same time.

In order to understand the potential for more intensification using missing middle house forms, the Ryerson City Building Institute undertook a case study of Mississauga. For this study, we assessed the potential housing that could be accommodated in areas that Mississauga has identified for intensification. These areas include growth centres, major transit station areas, transit corridors and plaza redevelopments. We discovered that Mississauga has significant room to grow through medium-density intensification. Using conservative densities, we found room for 174,000 new homes, which could accommodate 435,000 more residents:

- 44,000 homes in Growth Centres, such as Erin Mills and Downtown Mississauga, and other major growth areas identified by the city.
- 39,000 homes in GO station areas, putting more people close to express regional transit and connected employment opportunities.
- 39,000 homes along transit corridors, including the Hurontario LRT and Dundas rapid transit corridors.
- 32,000 homes at arterial nodes, plazas and vacant sites across the city.
- 20,000 homes in planned re-developments, such as Britannia Farm, M City and West Village Port Credit.

These potential new homes represent much more growth than Mississauga has been allocated over the next 25 years.

Additionally, Mississauga could accommodate even more growth through

intensification of its low-density residential neighbourhoods. While not included in our study, this intensification could take the form of low-rise apartments, multiplexes and accessory dwelling units such as laneway suites or side-yard suites. All this is to say, Mississauga has significant room to grow through intensification within a range of densities, including missing middle housing.

**The majority of new housing built and under construction in the GTHA is either tall ... or sprawl.**

This potential is not unique to Mississauga. All municipalities in the GTHA have opportunities to intensify. Seizing these opportunities, whether along transit corridors, or in low-density residential neighbourhoods, would help ensure that we are building an abundance of new missing middle houses, and avoiding further sprawl onto greenfield / agricultural land. This would provide opportunities for families to live in desirable neighbourhoods close to transit, jobs, schools and services, helping to protect the Greenbelt and create a more sustainable region. In addition, increased intensification offers benefits to municipalities including optimizing transit operations and infrastructure delivery.

In order to deliver on the intensification potential, GTHA municipalities will need to address barriers that have caused developers to shy away from this form of development. These include zoning, financing and the approvals process.

However, reducing these barriers must be done with care, as simply streamlining policies to build more housing supply anywhere and everywhere will only result in more tall and sprawl.

In particular there is a strong benefit to pre-zoning areas for intensification. This pre-zoning would best be informed by a comprehensive understanding of opportunities that a municipality has to add new housing—such an approach is required in the United Kingdom through their Strategic Housing and Land Availability Assessments. Adopting such an approach in the GTHA would be beneficial and help municipalities proactively plan for intensification.

There are several benefits to planning proactively planning for missing middle intensification. These include a lower-risk and more transparent development process since developers will no longer need to rezone properties for development. Likewise, transparent knowledge of what density is allowed on a given site can help rein in speculation by creating a clear understanding of the financial return that can be achieved on a specific property.

By optimizing a municipality's potential for intensification, cities will be better able to attract growth and new talent by building housing close to the amenities people desire. Finally, residents will benefit from more housing choice, particularly family-friendly housing in location-efficient neighbourhoods. ☺



**Graham Haines** is the Research Manager at the Ryerson City Building Institute and a Candidate Member of OPPI.

---

# Variable growth leads to authentic communities

BY RANDY SCHERZER RPP, SCOTT TAYLOR RPP, and HIBA HUSSAIN

## → Grey County

**Population:** 93,830 (2016)  
**Characteristics:** Urban/rural  
**Growth pattern:** Mixed



**A**s a large geographic area located outside of the provincial *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, Grey County faces both challenges and opportunities with respect to growth. With a population of approximately 94,000 people spread across 4,500 km<sup>2</sup>, Grey's growth pressures vary, as do the landscape and service levels across the county. Locational and market forces drive development nodes within Grey to a greater degree than the influence of individual municipal boundaries. This can lead to planning challenges within the county, as what is best for growth in one municipality, might not work in another.

Over the past decade, Grey County has experienced limited population growth. Combined with an aging population, out-migration of youth, and the loss of some traditional employment opportunities, the county's demographics are undergoing a transition. The county is also seeing the in-migration of older adults which creates opportunities for growth in Grey's recreation and retirement-oriented sectors.

Growth in Grey County takes various forms from traditional residential development, to seasonal second home/recreational development, to commuter driven development. Each of these forms of growth emphasizes different demands and are located in different development nodes within the county.

The county is home to smaller urban areas such as Owen Sound and Hanover, resort areas including Blue Mountains and the Beaver Valley, and large swaths of agricultural and resource areas. In southern parts of Grey County growth is also being driven by commuters to the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). These people live in Grey, but travel outside the county for work. However, changes in permanent population only tell part of the story, as seasonal second-home development plays a large role in Grey's growth picture.

Both the seasonal recreational and traditional growth markets are largely fed by retirees. Grey has become a popular choice for lifestyle immigrants, who wish to leave larger urban areas behind, in favour

of the county's beautiful natural amenities and rural charm.

Easiest to understand is the traditional development which is tied to both local employment levels, as well as those choosing to retire to Grey. This traditional development is spread throughout the county, often in our settlement areas and throughout our rural areas.

Seasonal second homes are located in close proximity to the Niagara Escarpment, Georgian Bay, the Beaver Valley, or Blue Mountains. This type of development is generally on full municipal services, and often developed through plans of subdivision or condominium style development, and can be indistinguishable in appearance from permanent residential growth. While these residents may have permanent homes elsewhere, they still spend a lot of time in Grey and can place similar demands on service levels, such as water/sewer, garbage pick-up, etc., as full-time residents. However, typically this development does not rely on other services such as schools or social services.

Second home development can be cyclical in nature, in that a unit developed as a seasonal home can become a permanent residence, and then go back to a seasonal home many times in its lifespan. Second home owners may be less open to intensification efforts, and less impacted by the need for affordable housing and employment, than traditional development.

The commuter phenomenon is relatively new to Grey, which is now on the fringe



Credit: Blue Mountain Village Association

01



Credit: Blue Mountain Village Association

02



Credit: Grey County

03

- 01** Seasonal second home/recreational development in the Village at Blue in the Town of The Blue Mountains
- 02** Seasonal second home development plays a large role in Grey's growth.
- 03** New condominium apartment building under construction in Owen Sound.

of commuting distances from the GTA. People who cannot afford to live in the GTA are choosing to commute from places like Dundalk and Markdale, similar to what has been seen in Shelburne and Orangeville. This presents the challenge of ensuring that we have the facilities, infrastructure, and commercial elements to serve new residents, in addition to integrating them into our communities and social networks.

Trends indicate that growth in the Grey County has been unevenly distributed among its local municipalities. Some municipal populations declined between 2011 and 2016 while others grew more than forecasted. Statistics indicate that our urban areas are not always our fastest growing communities, and smaller municipalities such as Southgate are seeing an influx of residents and growth.

**The commuter phenomenon is relatively new to Grey, which is now on the fringe of commuting distances from the GTA.**

The levels of new development vary across the county from infill opportunities to create individual new lots in a village, to a new subdivision of 400+ homes. While many of our permanent and recreational settlement areas are serviced by municipal water and sewer, some smaller communities are still serviced by individual well and septic systems.

The county's official plan policies vary

from the protection of our Mennonite and Amish communities in our agricultural areas, to high-end recreational development around Blue Mountain resorts, and everything else in between.

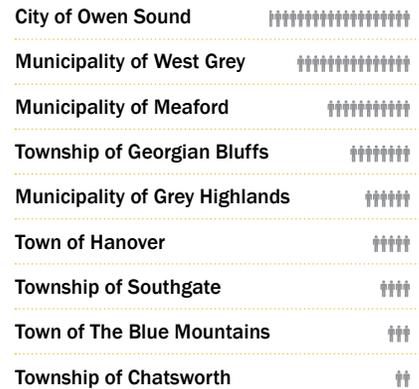
This uneven population distribution, and Grey County's varied forms of growth, has led to infrastructure challenges and program delivery difficulties. The cost of housing has increased tremendously over the past few years based on supply and demand. Skilled labour is also in short supply as demand increases. Labour shortages are further exacerbated in the service and manufacturing industries, due to the lack of affordable housing.

Although some traditional employment areas are declining, the county has experienced a boom in on-farm businesses, the local food economy, and is now seeing spin-off development from the Bruce Power expansion.

In response to these challenges and opportunities, the county has recently prepared a new official plan, *Recolour Grey*. The new official plan provides flexibility and autonomy in municipal decision-making, while ensuring the overall values of the county's residents are addressed.

To better support growth, the county has also recently partnered on a county-wide transit pilot project to better connect our communities and our rural areas. A New to Grey initiative is also meant to attract and support new residents, including new Canadians. In addition, the county is partnering with its local municipalities to develop a county-wide Community Improvement Plan Program for both rural and settlement areas to address housing and employment needs.

**GREY COUNTY LOCAL MUNICIPALITIES IN ORDER OF DECREASING POPULATION SIZE**



Other planning challenges include balancing the protection of the county's natural beauty and farmlands, while promoting growth nodes to create healthy sustainable communities.

While the distribution of growth will never be even across the county, this helps feed our diversity, making each of Grey's communities an authentic place to live.



**Randy Scherzer RPP MCIP** is Director of Planning, **Scott Taylor RPP MCIP** is Senior Planner, and **Hiba Hussain** is a Planner for Grey County. Randy and Scott are OPPI Members and Hiba is a Candidate Member.

**The Planning Partnership**

Urban Design | Landscape Architecture | Planning | Communications

1255 Bay Street, Suite 500  
 Toronto, Ontario M5R 2A9  
 416.975.1556  
 info@planpart.ca  
 www.planpart.ca



West Don Lands Public Realm

# CHARTING A NEW COURSE FOR THE FUTURE

BY TOM VILLELLA RPP



Credit: Bill Tatarnc / Niagara Region



## Niagara Region

**Population:** 447,888 (2016)  
**Characteristics:** Urban/rural  
**Growth pattern:** Mixed



01 Niagara Region is known for its abundant vineyards.

**W**hen you think of the Niagara Region, some opposing images are likely to come to mind. You may be envisioning scenes of abundant vineyards, tender fruit orchards, mighty cataracts, serene villages, fertile farmland, and busy casinos. Or, alternatively, you may be thinking about steel mills, massive hydro-electric works, brownfields, smokestacks, and lake freighters. Either way you'd be right since all of this describes the Niagara of yesterday and today. But you'd be wrong to think that it fully describes the Niagara of tomorrow.

This is a pivotal time in the history of Niagara, and an opportunity now presents itself to reimagine the Niagara of the future, mindful of our industrial heritage and small-town past, but embracing the prospect of unprecedented growth, and the benefits and challenges that will come with it. In light

of the population and employment targets assigned to Niagara through the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* (2017), Niagara Region staff is hard at work preparing for the wave of development already beginning to appear on its western fringe, from the direction of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA).

Over the next two decades, Niagara will need to accommodate an additional 225,000 residents and jobs. To prepare for this, the region has initiated work on its new official plan, which will include a revised urban structure, and will allocate population and employment targets to its 12 local area municipalities. In doing so, we will need to rethink what it means to live in, work in, and visit Niagara.

Historically, growth in Niagara has been slow but steady, and relied heavily on the manufacturing sector. From the aerospace industry and rail yards of Fort Erie, to the steel mills of Welland, to the auto assembly



02

operations of St. Catharines, heavy industry played an important role in the development of the region as an economic powerhouse throughout the 20th century.

At the same time, the tourism industry benefitted from the proximity of Niagara Falls, the Niagara Escarpment and the viticulture-supportive lands lying along Lake Ontario, drawing millions of visitors each year to the Falls, local wineries and hospitality venues. Although the tourism and housing sectors are very much alive and well, the less-robust heavy manufacturing sector presents the challenge of uneven sector growth for Niagara. Despite this, recent trends do indicate that Niagara's overall employment sector is on the upswing, with some major employers about to begin operations, including General Electric's new high-tech Brilliant Factory in Welland.

Homes in Niagara are extremely affordable relative to GTHA comparators. According to *MoneySense Magazine*, Niagara is ranked as one of the best locations in Canada for real estate investment. This fact is not lost on families and land developers looking for more value for their money, and has spurred the unprecedented growth currently being experienced in the western reaches of Niagara.

The introduction of daily GO rail service will serve to accelerate this growth and spread its reach to other communities along

the rail corridor and beyond. The challenge will be to ensure that new employment keeps pace with population growth, so that Niagara does not simply become a bedroom community for Toronto, but rather a truly complete community where residents are able to live, work and play, all within the boundaries of the region.

**We will need to rethink what it means to live in, work in, and visit Niagara.**

In addition to developing our new regional official plan, Niagara Region is also assisting its local municipalities in meeting the growth challenge head-on. We financially assist local municipalities in the development of secondary plans that guide future population and employment growth, including the recently completed GO Hub Secondary Plans for the four future GO rail station areas. We are also developing district plans for strategic regional growth nodes such as the Brock University district and Glendale, in order to provide a high-level vision for areas that have the potential to positively impact the image and brand of Niagara.

At the same time, Niagara's Economic Development Office is hard at work

**02** Central Niagara Region communities benefit from their prime location on the Welland Canal and Highway 406. A bridge crossing the canal is illustrated here.

ensuring that our employment sector continues to thrive. The dedicated, professional team markets Niagara globally as a location for investment, promoting our competitive advantages, which include the Foreign Trade Zone designation.

Inevitably, market forces will play a major role in the distribution of growth in Niagara. New housing in the short term will likely be most prevalent in the northern and western reaches of the region, closest to the GTHA. However, with planned transportation and public works improvements such as GO rail and Southern Niagara highway expansion, opportunity will be available to ensure that all parts of Niagara share in future population and employment growth. While northern Niagara communities benefit from the QEW and GO rail expansion, central Niagara communities benefit from their prime location on the Welland Canal and Highway 406, and eastern Niagara communities benefit from their proximity to the international border with New York State.

A bright new future for the region is emerging from the decline of heavy industry. Properly managing growth will be key to ensuring that what we love most about Niagara is not lost to the wave of development. ♻️



**Tom Vilella CPT MCIP RPP** is an OPPI member and currently serves as Special Projects Manager with the Regional Municipality of Niagara. Tom will be retiring in 2019 after a 33-year career in land use planning.



## → Municipality of Chatham-Kent

**Population:** 102,042 (2016)  
**Characteristics:** Urban / rural  
**Growth pattern:** Declining population



**01** Example of a project in downtown Chatham funded through the Downtowns & Main Street Areas Community Improvement Plan.

# Turning the tide on population loss

BY BRUCE McALLISTER RPP  
 and RYAN JACQUES RPP

**F**ormed on January 1, 1998 through the amalgamation of 22 separate municipalities, the Municipality of Chatham-Kent is a single-tier municipality. It is located in the heart of Southwestern Ontario, nestled between Lake Erie, Lake St. Clair and Lake Huron. At 2,458 km<sup>2</sup>, geographically, Chatham-Kent is one of the largest municipalities in Ontario. It comprises a variety of urban centres, hamlets and rural settlement areas, surrounded by a rural area that is dominated by agricultural activities and prime agricultural land. The natural environment includes major features such as the Thames and Sydenham rivers, Lake Erie and Lake St. Clair, as well as Rondeau and Wheatley Provincial Parks, Clear Creek Forest and the St. Clair National Wildlife Area.

Due its large geographic size, Chatham-Kent also has a significant infrastructure

portfolio comprising a vast road network, bridges/culverts, buildings, underground pipes, land improvements, municipal airport, vehicles, and machinery and equipment. Together, these assets had a total valuation of \$4.5 billion in 2017. For instance, Chatham-Kent has one of the largest bridge and culvert inventories in the Province of Ontario, with about 863 structures, which have a span greater than 3 metres.

In 2006, Chatham-Kent's total population was 108,177, but declined to 103,671 in 2011, a drop of 4.2 per cent based on the 2011 Census. A little less than half of the municipality's population lives within the community of Chatham.

Traditionally, Chatham-Kent's economy has been heavily reliant on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. The recession of the late 2000s had a big impact on the municipality, in particular, the

manufacturing sector. This had a direct correlation to the significant population decrease over this same time period. Additionally, the number of individually-owned farm operations has significantly declined over the last 20 years due to larger farm consolidations. This is also reflected in a steady decline in the rural population.

Streamlined and efficient development approval process commitment – To assist with process improvements, a Technical Advisory Committee, which has been in place for a number of years, meets on a weekly basis to provide a forum for communication and consultation among all departments to fulfill municipal objectives, goals and

in Chatham-Kent's various urban centres and offers a variety of incentives. The Commercial Community Improvement Plan identifies 11 commercial corridors in the municipality's urban centres in need of an improvement strategy and offers a variety of incentives.

The Employment Community Improvement Plan is the most recent program adopted by council. Its objectives are to stimulate development activity in the region by providing incentives through planning policy in strategic areas that support new investment in existing and new industrial properties.

Ontario Investment Ready Program certification The Bloomfield Business Park is a municipally-owned business park located at the Highway 401/Bloomfield Road interchange. In late 2017, Chatham-Kent obtained certification through the Ontario Investment Ready Certified Site Ready Program for 21 hectares of vacant land within the business park.

The program was designed to attract province-wide investment. An investment ready site designation gives investors a greater degree of certainty when looking for development opportunities throughout Ontario municipalities. This status gives international investors easy access to important property information such as availability, completed environmental assessments, utility costs and transportation access.

To date, approximately 12 hectares in the business park are either in development or have been purchased for development.

#### **RESIDENT ATTRACTION AND RETENTION**

Since 2011, when the census indicated a -4.2 per cent decline in our population, Chatham-Kent has been focused on resident attraction and retention. Efforts have targeted young people (aged 15-39),

Traditionally, Chatham-Kent's economy has been heavily reliant on the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. The recession of the late 2000s had a big impact on the municipality, in particular, the manufacturing sector. This had a direct correlation to the significant population decrease over this same time period. Additionally, the number of individually-owned farm operations has significantly declined over the last 20 years due to larger farm consolidations. This is also reflected in a steady decline in the rural population.

With a declining population, shrinking assessment base, and a huge infrastructure portfolio to consider, the last term of council focused on three strategic directions: jobs, people and health. With this in mind, a new Chatham-Kent brand was adopted "Cultivating Growth, Shore to Shore."

To support this direction, a number of planning related strategies have been initiated:

Economic Development Strategy completed – The strategy focuses on the following target sectors: diversified high-value agriculture, advanced automotive parts manufacturing, business process outsourcing, next-generation energy, retail/commercial, and tourism. This was complemented by an emphasis on workforce development.

timeframes. It is also the primary technical resource to the municipality, consultants and developers, providing advice on planning and development applications.

Community Improvement programs implemented – Chatham-Kent has developed four Community Improvement Programs to help tackle some of the economic challenges we face.

The Brownfield & Bluefield Community Improvement Plan addresses certain impediments and offers incentives to redeveloping brownfield and bluefield (i.e., former schools and vacant institutional uses) sites.

The Downtowns & Main Street Areas Community Improvement Plan identifies 13 core neighbourhoods needing improvement



02

immigrants, and active retiree populations to address the decline.

Chatham-Kent is increasing efforts to attract and retain residents by focusing on talent attraction to meet local labour market needs. Targeted attraction efforts have begun which support employers that have had difficulty filling labour market needs locally. These efforts will help not only to fill workforce needs but will contribute to addressing population decline.

Through community engagement, support and active partnerships, Chatham-Kent was designated as Canada's first official Welcoming Community by the Department of Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada in 2016.

Since 2011, when the census indicated a -4.2 per cent decline in our population, Chatham-Kent has been focused on resident attraction and retention.

To conclude, the latest census numbers, from 2016, report a significant reduction in the total population decline (to -2 per cent) and improvements in key age cohorts for young people. The 30-34 year old demographic increased between 2011 and 2016 by 5.4 per cent (from -8.7 per cent), and the rate of decline for those aged 20-24 (-8.3 per cent) and 35-44 (-4 per cent) has

improved from -13.7 per cent and -14.9 per cent respectively.

Since the 2016 Census, there are several indicators that would suggest that the population has actually increased over the past couple of years. Both residential and non-residential permits increased significantly in 2017 and 2018, with record home sales being realized in the region. According to recent statistics, the unemployment rate for Chatham-Kent has dropped to 5.6 per cent, which is the lowest it has been in 17 years, and the lower trend is continuing. This is a sharp contrast to the 12.1 per cent unemployment rate experienced in 2010. (V)



**Bruce McAllister RPP** is Director, and **Ryan Jacques RPP** is Manager of Planning Services for the Municipality of Chatham-Kent. Both Bruce and Ryan are OPPI members.

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Credit: Town of Grimsby

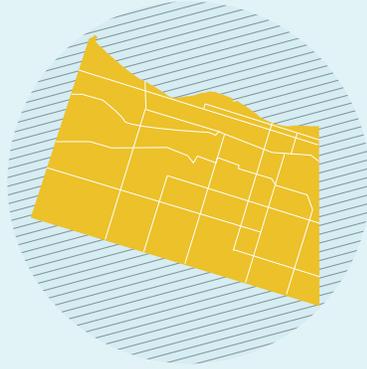


## Town of Grimsby

**Population:** 27,314 (2016)

**Characteristics:** Small town urban

**Growth pattern:** Targeted growth



- 01 Grimsby reshaped a planned commercial plaza into a main street for Grimsby-on-the-Lake, its growing west end neighbourhood.

# CHOICES FOR SMALL COMMUNITIES

BY MICHAEL SEAMAN RPP and AMY SHANKS

**W**hen we think density and intensification, as prescribed in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, we tend to think about the major urban centres around the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA) such as Toronto, Mississauga, Markham and Hamilton. These municipalities have a multi-decades long history of dealing with tall buildings.

But what happens when the demand for high density arrives in a smaller community? For Grimsby, Ontario, a small town with a population of 27,000 located in the western end

of Niagara Region, apartment-style density was something that was last encountered in limited frequency in the 1960s. Most of the growth up to 2005 was in the form of small subdivisions of singles and townhouses, accommodated within a gradually expanding urban area.

This began to change in 2005 with the introduction of the provincial *Greenbelt Plan and Growth Plan*. What these changes meant for Grimsby was that the urban boundary was now frozen and new development would now have to occur within fixed limits. The change in policy direction at the provincial level brought about a fundamental shift in the town's



Credit: Town of Grimsby

02



Credit: Town of Grimsby

03

approach to planning going forward. Instead of looking for more land, Grimsby had to use what was already available to accommodate demand for residential, employment and other uses, and achieve provincially-mandated density targets.

In 2009, when the municipality began the process of developing a new official plan, it was clear that there was strong desire within the community to maintain Grimsby’s historic small town character and stable residential neighbourhoods. While other communities have spread density across their urban areas, in Grimsby it was decided that the best way to achieve provincially-mandated targets was to focus growth in two specific major intensification areas—Grimsby’s downtown commercial core and the Casablanca interchange area in the west end of Grimsby.

The first major intensification area in the downtown is not without its constraints. It is governed partially by the *Niagara Escarpment Plan*, which restricts building heights south of Main Street, and is subject to the town’s heritage conservation policies, which call for retention of significant heritage resources and cultural landscapes. Grimsby has not experienced much redevelopment and intensification in the downtown yet, however, this is anticipated to change as readily available land elsewhere in town becomes scarcer.

On the other hand, Grimsby has experienced significant growth in recent years in the Casablanca interchange. In 2009, the Winston Neighbourhood Secondary Plan was adopted for the portion of this area north of the QEW and south of Lake Ontario. This secondary plan encourages the establishment of a complete and sustainable high-density, mixed-use community in an area that was largely undeveloped. The plan calls for a continuous 3.6-kilometre multi-use trail and promenade along the Lake Ontario waterfront. It directs the town to prioritize

parkland dedication in the area immediately adjacent to the waterfront, and use other parkland payments in the vicinity to finance the construction of trail infrastructure.

**The Town of Grimsby has demonstrated that a small municipality can achieve beautiful and livable mixed-use high density, and transit-supportive communities.**

Subsequently, the town adopted a Waterfront Master Plan and Trail Plan for the Winston Neighbourhood. Its purpose is to assist the town in strengthening the design vision for the eventual build-out of the waterfront trail and the new neighbourhood surrounding it.

The master plan reshapes commercial land uses throughout the neighbourhood into a focused mixed-use commercial mainstreet designation, serving the local community and tourists travelling to and from Niagara Falls along the QEW. The mainstreet is intended to bring a number of benefits, including a commercial hub for the neighborhood and a context for an already existing hotel. The mainstreet is also planned as a complete street with traditional commercial mainstreet sidewalks, plantings, urban plazas, bicycle lanes and amenities, and on-street parking. As part of its commitment to quality design in the Winston neighborhood, the town worked with Grimsby Power and the area developers to bury the overhead wires through the mainstreet section.

The town also worked with development community to achieve a view corridor to the lake to ensure that as much of the lakefront parkland as possible is perceived

**02** Service at the future Grimsby GO Transit station is anticipated to begin in 2021.

**03** Section of the 3.6-km multi-use trail and promenade along the Lake Ontario waterfront in Grimsby’s growing Winston neighbourhood.

04 As the Winston neighbourhood develops, urban design has been administered through a peer review architect, creating an architectural typology that is both progressive and sensitive to the human scale.

as public open space. The so called “window street” can be closed from time-to-time to enable festivals and community events to be held in the lakefront park.

Through the master plan process, the community expressed an interest in being able to interact with the water, so sand and cobble beach designs were built into the reinvestment plans along the lake edge. Work on construction of the waterfront trail is currently on-going, with funding being provided in part by Niagara Region through a million dollar grant from its Waterfront Investment Program.

Development interest in the Winston neighbourhood was fairly moderate at first, with a handful of fairly standard townhouse and midrise condominium townhouse developments springing up. However, over time, a number of external factors began to influence a change in the real estate market for high-rise construction in Grimsby’s west end. These factors included unprecedented real estate market conditions, increasing demand from GTA baby boom retirees to downsize in Niagara, and the 2010 completion of the Metrolinx environmental assessment for GO train expansion to Niagara. This study identified a site at Casablanca Boulevard on the south side of the QEW as the preferred site for a future GO train station.

As the area develops, urban design requirements have been administered through a peer review architect, Ute Maya Giambattista of SGL. This has helped to move the development community to create an architectural typology that is both progressive and sensitive to the human scale. The peer review design process is proving essential for small-town Grimsby to manage high-density growth by giving the municipality access to expertise that it does not have in-house.

Currently, the Town of Grimsby is working with Niagara Region to extend the Casablanca interchange major



04

intensification area to the south side of the QEW, as part of the Niagara GO Transit Hub Secondary Plan study. The hub will centre on the future Grimsby GO train station, with service anticipated to begin in 2021. The town and region are working with Metrolinx to help make the future Grimsby GO station a dynamic hub for both train commuters and tourists travelling to Niagara and beyond.

The Town of Grimsby has demonstrated that with a strong and clear policy framework, design standards, and a peer review process to augment staff resources, a small municipality can achieve high quality, beautiful and livable mixed-use high density, and transit supportive communities. The success of its planning process has enabled the town to accommodate growth while protecting its stable residential neighborhoods and heritage areas. ♿



**Michael Seaman** MCIP RPP is Director of Planning and **Amy Shanks** is Senior Planner with the Town of Grimsby. Michael is an OPPI member and Amy is a Candidate Member.



## Southwestern Ontario

**Population:** 2.584 M (2016)

**Characteristics:** Urban/rural

**Growth pattern:** Mid-sized city regeneration



**M**y Ryerson University planning students and I ventured out onto Highway 401 last Fall on a six-day, four-city odyssey of southwestern Ontario—Kitchener, London and Windsor (which naturally had to include Detroit). This is a reflection on our experience and what it taught us about planning issues and strategies unique to this part of our province, and about planning itself.

### EVERY COMEBACK NEEDS A CATALYST

“Regeneration” and “revitalization” are mainstays of the southwestern Ontario planning vernacular. They are as common today as they were when I was a planning student at the University of Windsor in the mid-1990s. The difference today, however, is that those words are being followed by “for example.”

For example, and likely the most dramatic revitalization we saw, is the 19-km, 19-stop ION light rapid transit (LRT) rail running between Fairway Mall in Kitchener and Conestoga Mall in Waterloo set to open in 2019 (like other LRT projects in Ontario, it is delayed due to the late delivery of vehicles by Bombardier).

Walking parts of the line with city planners Brian Bateman and Sandro Bassanese and urban designer Adam Clark, we saw firsthand how the \$900-million public investment has already generated

# REVITALIZING MID-SIZED CITIES

BY SEAN HERTEL RPP



Credit: Sean Hertel

02

- 01** “Cathedrals of commerce” on Griswold Street in Detroit’s financial district, across the river from Windsor.
- 02** Sean and his Ryerson University planning students set out on a six-day, four-city odyssey of southwestern Ontario. Here the group gathers in London’s Old East Village.
- 03** The most dramatic revitalization we saw, is the 19-km, 19-stop ION light rapid transit rail running between Fairway Mall in Kitchener and Conestoga Mall in Waterloo.
- 04** Kitchener Lag Tannery

over \$1.2-billion in new development including the re-purposing of century-old brick and beam factories, the foremost being the Kaufman Footwear Building.

Kitchener’s 10-year, \$110-million Economic Development Investment Fund has been a potent twin catalyst for the ION LRT, incenting downtown development through development charge exemptions and other benefits including alternative



Credit: Sean Hertel

03

parkland and stormwater management requirements. Among the applications processed through the fund, set to expire in March 2019, will be the 49-storey mixed-use Duke Tower, by far the city’s tallest building. While the revitalization of Kitchener’s downtown has always figured prominently in its official plan, especially as a counter to de-industrialization, massive public investments over the past decade have made the difference.

“You’ve got to have catalysts,” the city planners told us.

An hour west on Highway 401 is London, where the planning department’s 206 Dundas Street storefront office is more than a metaphor. (It occupies part of the former Capitol Theatre, and vintage movie posters, found during renovations, hang on the department walls.) It’s a living, breathing example of city leadership to revive a downtown still rebounding from the ravages of the former Galleria Mall—one of a handful of downtown malls built in southwestern Ontario cities throughout the 1980s to revive their cores, only to have the opposite effect.

The storefront office is not an outlier: it follows the construction of a new Covent Garden Market building in tandem with the 10,000-seat Budweiser Gardens arena, a new main branch of the London library, and a downtown campus of Fanshaw College. Stringing these public investment pearls together is the on-going reconstruction of downtown Dundas Street to transform it into a curbside “flex street” replete with outdoor patio areas, space for trees to survive and thrive, and room for vehicles, pedestrians and cyclists to safely co-navigate. And yes, London, like Kitchener, is building rapid transit: the Shift bus rapid transit (BRT) network, fanning out from downtown to connect to suburban centres.



Credit: Sean Hertel

04

Another 180-km west on Highway 401 is Windsor, where Ontario narrows to a thumb of flat prairie that separates lakes St. Clair and Erie at the Detroit River. Here, in Canada’s oldest colonial settlement west of Québec, city planners are still looking to fully leverage the planning and financial capital invested by Windsor council over past decades.

Our first walking tour of Windsor with planners Kevin Alexander, Greg Atkinson, Laura Diotte, and Derek Heinbuck began



Credit: Sanjath R. Avudya/Sean Hertel

Credit: Sean Hertel

05

06

**05, 08** The Old East Village in London has revitalized building façades. The mural shown here is comprised of thousands of pottery tiles made by people in the neighbourhood.

**06** Another mural in London's Old East Village.

**07** The 1927 Windsor Star building at Pitt and Ferry Streets in downtown Windsor was restored and incorporated into the University of Windsor's downtown campus and school of social work.

at the foot of Ouellette Avenue in front of what was once heralded as the downtown catalyst of a generation (just as experts claimed, when I was in planning school, that the “twin anchors” concept of the downtown casino and arena once was). The 14-storey headquarters of Chrysler Canada was supposed to be so much more when,

**(Windsor's) strength, perhaps owing to a factory-focused spatial and social organization, lies in its many neighbourhoods.**

about 18 years ago, one of the last and best historic commercial blocks was demolished for what was then promised to be an iconic 32-storey tower occupied by the auto behemoth. Today, the unremarkable building before us, with a hulking above-ground parking garage, sits less than fully occupied with Chrysler taking up no more than five floors. As Windsor knows better than perhaps any city in southwestern Ontario, stuff tends to happen. Recession. Auto sector restructuring. A high Canadian dollar. A low Canadian dollar. Repeat.

Across the river from Windsor is Detroit, Michigan and it's quite a different story. Once a “ruin porn” punchline emblematic of mass suburbanization, auto-dependence, and the nasty business of racialized mortgage lending practices (i.e., red-lining) coupled with systematic inner-city disinvestment, the Motor City is still

humming. But in contrast to our previous stops, this is a resurgence largely led by the private sector.

In what could best be described as a real-life game of Monopoly, two prominent Detroit business conglomerates—Illitch Holdings, whose late patriarch Mike Illitch founded Little Caesars pizza and later purchased the Detroit Red Wings and Tigers, and Bedrock Detroit, the real estate arm of Dan Gilbert's Quicken Loans—have systematically purchased empty skyscrapers and land in the Woodward Avenue corridor, each, on average, for about the cost of a single-detached home in Toronto.

Fast forward 20 years, these two entities control most of the downtown redevelopment, which has proven so lucrative that it has largely financed the recent re-introduction of a streetcar—the \$130-million USD, 5.5-km curbside “Q Line” LRT, named not so coincidentally after Dan Gilbert's Quicken Loans—to Woodward Avenue. This took a bargain \$25-million USD public investment. Riding the new line from Campus Martius in downtown to New Center in midtown, I saw the beginnings of new life in Detroit that reminded me of the stories my grandparents told me about this once “Manhattan of the Mid-West.” My students were blown away.

**PUTTING THE COMMUNITY IN COMMUNITY IMPROVEMENT PLANS**

Windsor, in retrospect, has never really had a strong downtown. I admit to not giving this much thought when I lived there but distance and time lends some perspective. Its strength, perhaps owing to a factory-focused spatial and social organization, lies in its many neighbourhoods.

But it's not all doom and gloom in the

downtown. The Chrysler building, casino and non-existent arena aside, life is percolating back through empty lots and storefronts largely owing to investments made by the University of Windsor and St. Clair College to establish downtown campuses and new specialized programs. The Armoury is now home to the arts school, and the former Windsor Star building to the school of social work. Other buildings and programs are in the works.

Adding oxygen to this flame are tools under the city's downtown community improvement plan (CIP) to enable land assembly, façade improvements, and



Credit: Sean Hertel

07

tax breaks. There's also a vibrant arts scene incubating in and bringing life to downtown alleys, spreading outward to the streets, buildings and parks beyond.

London's Old East Village, about 2.5 km east of the planning department's storefront office, is a Dundas Street neighbourhood that has the pre-gentrification patina of mass Victorian industrialization, mid-century suburbanization, and subsequent de-industrialization. Boarded, peeling empty storefronts. Walk-up apartments, leaning as if turning from the wind. People pushing

rusted shopping carts loaded with what's left of a life before drugs or alcohol or both. But through all this, there is community. There is even hope.

Leading us through the neighbourhood, London planners Britt O'Hagan, Jerzy Smolarek and Michael Tomazincic explained how the city developed a secondary plan, CIP and built form guidelines for the neighbourhood in close collaboration with the Old East Village BIA (business improvement area). The aim was, as is now, to create local solutions to not only fill vacant properties and enhance the public realm but to increase the economic and social carrying capacity of the community. This work has already supported a local pottery centre which has trained neighbourhood talent and created community-made public art installations across the village.

Another in-progress success is the establishment of a local food incubator to provide fresh and healthy food options for residents, many of whom have the highest needs in the city, and to support local entrepreneurship and skills training to

spur local economic development. Once established in the incubator, the BIA and city assist in locating the businesses into Dundas Street storefronts.



Credit: Sanjam Raisuaday/Sean Hertel

08

City planning created a new “artisanal use” in the zoning by-law to accommodate the mix of commercial and manufacturing permissions that new operations such as coffee roaster-retailers require to remain in the neighbourhood.

**GOLDILOCKS IS REAL!**

Planning can sometimes be criticized by people outside our profession as being too much of a fairy tale. Our plans are too big. We are out of touch with reality. That's nice, we're told, but that will never work. Not here. Not now. Not ever.

And this had me thinking—Highway 401 gives ample time for reflection—about how Goldilocks of fairy tale lore would have thought Kitchener, London and Windsor to be just right: big enough for planners to have significant projects, and small enough for planners to have a hands-on role. The opportunity to be both challenged and able to rise to the challenge. Go find work in a mid-sized city, I told my students.

Better yet, go to Windsor. The pizza, alone, is worth it. 🍷



**Sean Hertel** MCIP RPP is a lecturer at Ryerson University's School of Urban and Regional Planning, and is a consulting planner. Sean is also an OPPI Member.

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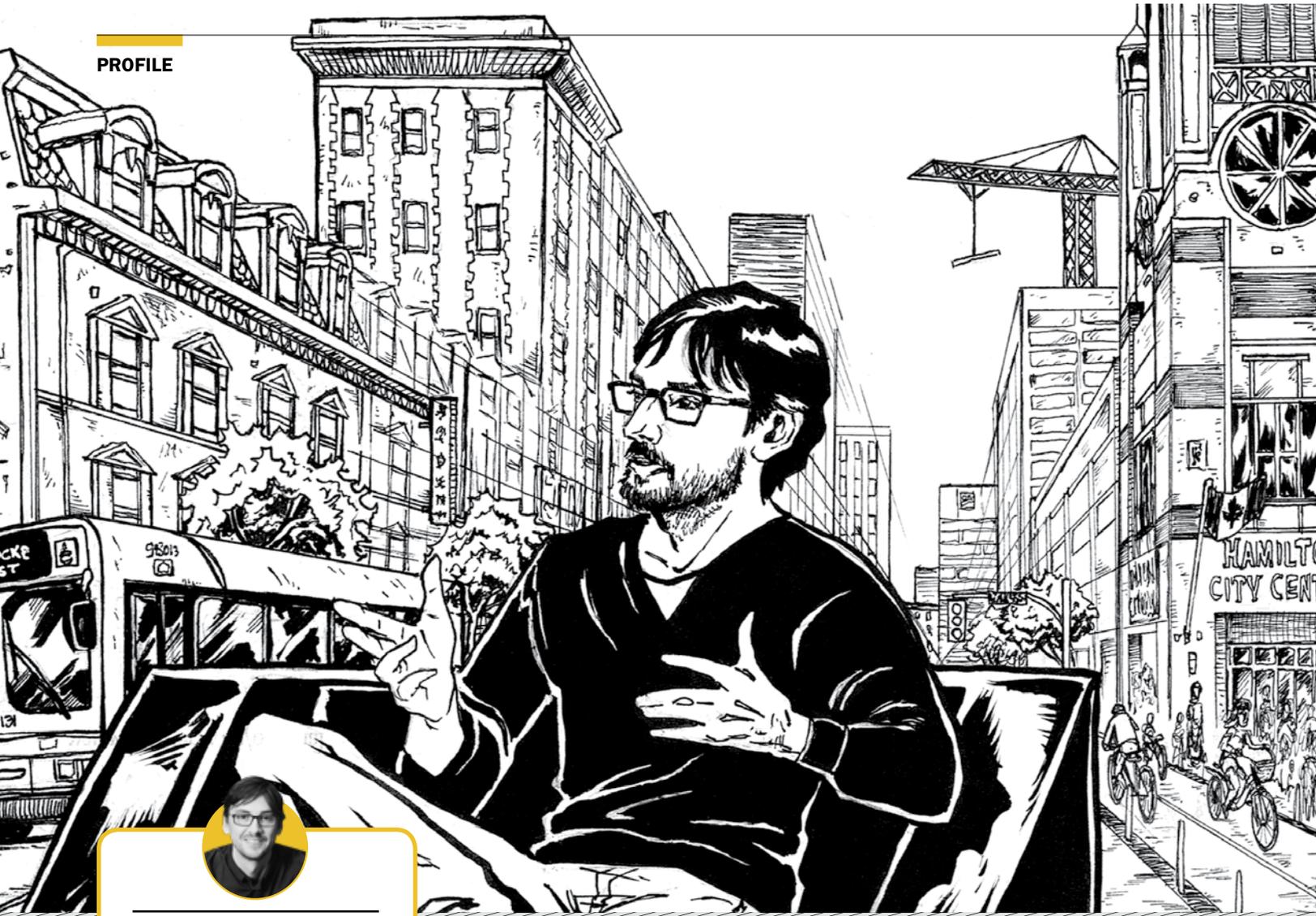
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Registered Professional Planner

## PROFILE

NAME:  
**Jason Thorne RPP**

LOCATION:  
**City of Hamilton**

POSITION:  
**General Manager of Planning and Economic Development**

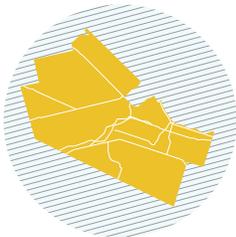


Illustration by Frank Fiorentino

**T**horne took on his current role five years ago. Here he talks about the transformation of his hometown and offers insights into Hamilton’s metamorphosis and identity as it tackles growth.

**What brought you to pursue planning as a career?**

I came to planning through environmentalism. I studied environmental science and was passionate about the subject. After university, I worked in the environmental activism field specifically around areas such as water and air quality, biodiversity, etc. I realized environmental issues are connected to how our cities are designed and built, and that brought me to urban planning. Urban planning is one of the most important ways we can have a positive impact on the environment

**Tell us about some of the projects you have handled in your career and how they influenced your growth as a professional planner?**

Planning touches upon many aspects of life. I remain interested in issues around quality of public space and civic engagement, affordability, social justice and other issues and how those linkages are all tied to how we design communities.

**How would you describe Hamilton to someone unfamiliar with it?**

I grew up in Hamilton. It’s an once-in-a-

lifetime opportunity to come back to your hometown and have a voice and influence on how it changes and grows.

Hamilton went through a period of stagnation, especially in the lower city and downtown areas. This is a city with a very strong industrial base. It's a big part of our economy. What's exciting is that we're now starting to see a lot on reinvestment into our urban areas. A lot of vacant buildings are starting to be repopulated, new restaurants and businesses are moving into storefronts that had been vacant for decades, heritage buildings are being restored and there are cranes in the air because of all the new developments. This is particularly exciting for any planner, but when it's your hometown, it's even more significant.

**Steel Town was Hamilton's past, how do you envision the city's future?**

Hamilton is still a steel town. We have a strong manufacturing base and a lot of employment in the sector and we're proud of that. What a lot of people don't realize is Hamilton has one of the most diversified economies in the country: a strong post-secondary sector, health and medical sciences, creative and culture sectors, etc.

There's a renaissance happening in Hamilton. You can see it when you walk down the streets. There're hard numbers to back up the statistics around all the development.

**What challenges will you have to overcome to be successful?**

One of the challenges we're wrestling with right now is housing affordability. Although people outside of Hamilton

may say it's a very affordable market but for many Hamiltonians, the prices we're experiencing now are not affordable.

Also, as our population grows, we're planning for mobility by investing in transit and improving the pedestrian realm. We recognize that as the city grows, we will have to rely more and more on other forms of mobility that have not been part of our transportation system in the past.

**"Anybody that's interested in planning or in city-building should travel as much as they can and see different types of cities: big cities, small cities, rich cities, poor cities."**

**What transportation initiatives are you undertaking to get there?**

We're looking at transit-oriented and pedestrian-friendly developments that will integrate cycling infrastructure, reduce requirements for on-site parking and increase requirements for on-site bicycle planning. In some of our new communities we're looking at issues around street design and designing a complete street to improve safety from day one.

**What inspires you?**

It's quite something to walk the streets I walked as a teenager as a planning professional now. I see the streets a lot differently. Most of what inspires me is

seeing the animation on people's faces as they enjoy outdoor festivals or street fairs. Nothing makes me happier than when a new business opens in a building that had been vacant for a long time, or a vacant lot becomes home to hundreds of people.

**What would you say to a young and aspiring professional planner looking at starting his/her career?**

Anybody that's interested in planning or in city-building should travel as much as they can and see different types of cities: big cities, small cities, rich cities, poor cities. That's where I draw a lot of inspiration. That's where I do my best learning: by seeing what other cities have tried and done...by adapting and learning from them.

The other thing I would say is to recognize that when it comes to city-building, planning is a critical part of city-building, but city-building is not the responsibility of planners alone. Planners need to work with engineers, transportation planners and even beyond that.

The key lesson of the Hamilton story has been that yes, planning has been part of the many great things happening here, but it's also been the work of artists, residents, by-law officers, people planning the parking systems, engineers, etc.

Planning on its own isn't going to transform a city, but when planning finds ways to complement all the other disciplines, that's when you can see real change happening. 🙌

This interview has been condensed and edited for length.

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NEXT ISSUE PREVIEW:

# SWEDEN

Taking climate change to new green heights





Child recycling in Sweden.

In 2001, a team of architectural firms undertook an ambitious project to convert an old and derelict shipyard in the City of Malmö in Sweden, into a thriving carbon-neutral neighbourhood consisting of a university, homes, offices and shops. Powered entirely by the sun, wind, water, and food waste, Malmö is one of many sustainable hubs in the country. Sweden is an undisputed world leader when it comes to managing growth and practicing environmental sustainability, especially when it comes to meeting targets to reduce Greenhouse Gases (GHG) emissions.

The next issue of the Y Magazine will feature stories about how Ontario planners are tackling climate change challenges.



# Planning for a Post-Growth Future ↗

BY PETER VICTOR

**PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS ARE IN AN UNENVIABLE POSITION.** Whether they are planning for urban, suburban, rural, northern or southern communities, they are obliged to make assumptions about variables beyond the scope of their plan. For most plans one such variable is the rate of growth of the economy and its constituent sectors.

A resilient plan will be one that can withstand a substantial difference between the assumed rate of economic growth and what actually transpires.

As we look forward to the third decade of the 21st century, the question of what rate of economic growth to assume when making plans is becoming moot. While governments continue to prioritize economic growth, some promising to return it to rates enjoyed in the increasingly distant past, there are serious forecasts of much slower rates of economic growth ahead. For example, in *The Rise and Fall of American Growth*, economist Richard Gordon forecasts a growth rate in U.S. GDP per person of only 0.8 per cent from 2015 to 2040. This is down from 1.8 per cent between 1970 and 2014 and 2.4 per cent between 1920 and 1970. If he is

right, will Canada's prospects for economic growth be very different?

Another view is offered by those who see artificial intelligence and robotization as change agents that will revive economic growth, though the troubling implications for employment and the distribution of incomes and wealth are matters of deep concern, and a challenge to planners.

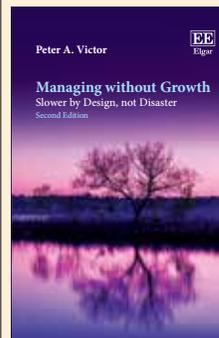
Another stream of thinking about economic growth comes from the 'degrowth' movement which began in Europe about three decades ago and is now spreading to North America. It challenges the rationale for economic growth in high income countries, arguing that better societal and environmental outcomes can be obtained only if economies reduce their use of materials and energy. Degrowth proponents such as Giorgos Kallis, argue that this will result in a reduction in GDP, bringing negative economic growth. They and others view 'green' growth, in which the material and energy requirements of economies decline long term while economic output continues to rise, as nothing more than wishful thinking.

So, what are planners to do? In Canada, it's usual to adopt an economic forecast of some reputable government organization such as the Organization of Economic Cooperation and Development, Canada's Department of Finance, a provincial body such as Ontario's Ministry of Finance, or from a private sector organization such as the Conference Board of Canada. This provides the necessary cover should the forecast turn out to be wrong.

It is also likely to result in plans that are consistent with government policy. But if the forecasts of much lower rates of economic growth, like those of Gordon, prove correct, or if the many critics of economic growth become more influential, or if the effects of climate change and measures to address it reduce growth rates, then, to quote Robert Burns, the best-laid plans of mice and men will go awry.

Facing such uncertainty, planners would be well-advised to subject their plans to sensitivity analysis: by varying the assumed rate of economic growth over a wide range to see how the plans stand up. A resilient plan will be one that can withstand a substantial difference between the assumed rate of economic growth and what actually transpires. A less resilient one will require frequent updating, which undermines confidence in the plan and reduces its usefulness.

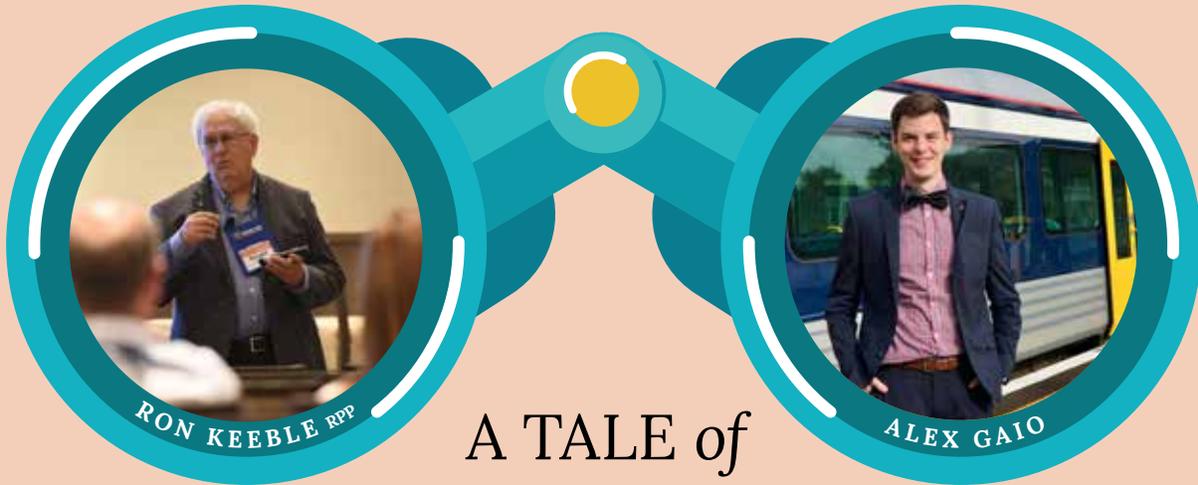
To help us think about widely different futures, and to choose among them, Tim Jackson (University of Surrey, U.K.) and I have developed several simulation models in which the rate of economic growth is an outcome rather than an assumption. Our recent model of the Canadian economy can be accessed at <https://tinyurl.com/LowGrowSFC>.



Users can run the three scenarios out to 2067 that are featured in the forthcoming second edition of my book *Managing without Growth* (January 2019). The scenarios are a base case, a greenhouse gas reduction scenario, and a sustainable prosperity scenario. They can also create and run their own scenarios.

These scenarios are not predictions. They are useful for helping us think about the kind of future we want, rather than the future we fear. For professional planners it means foregoing the easy reliance on others for assumptions about economic growth when making plans for what may well turn out to be a post-growth future. ☺

**Peter A. Victor** is a Professor Emeritus at York University



## A TALE of TWO PLANNERS



HONOURING  
*25 years*  
OF RPP

For more than four decades, Ron Keeble RPP, a professor at the faculty of the School of Urban and Regional Planning at Toronto's Ryerson University, has stood before hundreds of eager students and shared his love for planning with them.

He admits he lives vicariously through the accomplishments of his students.

Alex Gaio was two years into an undergraduate degree in a computer science, when he switched tracks to pursue a planning degree. Gaio graduated from the School of Urban and Regional Planning in 2018 and is currently enrolled in a master's program at KTH Royal Institute of Technology in Sweden where he's studying Sustainable Urban Planning and Design.

Keeble wears his Registered Professional Planner (RPP) title with a sense of pride and optimism for the future.

This year marks the 25th anniversary of the granting of RPP designation in Ontario. It was the first of its kind in Canada at that time as Ontario was the first province in the country to do so.

"Having an RPP designation shows a planner is serious about putting the public interest first wherever they choose to practice planning," Gaio said. "It's a way of showing public agencies and private enterprises that a planner is bound by

a code of conduct. To me, it also means having access to a network of experienced professionals to ensure that the best decision can be made by tapping into the extensive knowledge that exists in the wider RPP community."

### LOOKING BACK

Keeble, a long-time volunteer with the OPPI, recalled a time in the '70s when he and other volunteers worked out of a cramped apartment. During council meetings, members sat huddled together with a window air-conditioning unit blasting cold air. Everyone ended up nursing a cold a few days later, joked Keeble.

Camaraderie and a sense of purpose united everyone that worked tirelessly to strengthen OPPI's membership base.

"Bringing about significant change is sometimes a very long undertaking," Keeble said. "You need patience, time and a strong strategic plan. We were blessed because we had some competent and dynamic councils. Their leadership allowed us to build our voice provincially and create the administrative capacity needed to support various initiatives over the years."

Many years ago, OPPI honoured Keeble's volunteerism with a student scholarship in his name. Gaio was the 2018 recipient.

Besides his teaching career, Keeble has experience working in both the private and public sectors as a professional planner. His interest in planning for mixed-use centres was spurred four decades ago when the

prevailing trend was to build single-family homes. The veteran planner says he's heartened to see mixed-use diversification make a comeback as a solution to the issue of housing affordability.

### THE NEXT 25 YEARS OF PLANNING

Keeble and Gaio believe incorporating small changes in the way our communities are planned and built can have a big impact on growth, climate change, urban mobility, public health, and other issues.

Gaio who grew up in Delta, British Columbia, says good planning can address how communities deal with these challenges.

"The future densification, growth, and sustainability of our communities will be created in concert with the people that live in them," Gaio said. "Our communities will continue to evolve but we will need to rely on measured and unbiased information to urgently make the right planning decisions to address the need for greater density, accelerating growth, and sustainability. I'm incredibly optimistic for the future of cities. As a recently graduated planning student, I'm excited to improve outcomes for the future and learn from the past 25 years of RPP expertise." 

*As part of our ongoing celebration of the 25th anniversary, each issue of the Y Magazine will include an article that explores the significance of the milestone.*

## Apply for an OPPI Student Scholarship

The Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) provides its Student Members with several scholarship opportunities to ensure they can continue to learn about planning and be the future of the planning profession in Ontario after graduation.



Credit: John Narvali

Aida Mas (centre), a graduate student in the Master of Environmental Studies at York University, seen here with Jason Ferrigan (R) President, OPPI and Andrea Bourrie, past president, OPPI. Mas was the 2018 recipient of the Andrea Bourrie Scholarship.

OPPI has two scholarships available for Student Members to apply for by March 1.

**Ronald M. Keeble Undergraduate Scholarship:** This \$2,000 undergraduate scholarship supports students studying planning. Applicants must be Student Members of the OPPI at the time of application and enrolled full-time in an accredited undergraduate planning program in Ontario.

**Gerald Carrothers Graduate Scholarship:** This \$2,500 scholarship will be awarded to a student assisting in furthering planning education and making a difference in their community. Eligible applicants must be members of OPPI at the time of application and enrolled full-time in an accredited graduate planning program in Ontario.

OPPI continues to support its Student Members in their mission to become the planners of tomorrow. This is a great opportunity for students to promote their work and leadership and receive some help with their tuition.

For details about all the scholarships, application, and eligibility criteria, etc. please visit our website: [ontarioplanners.ca](http://ontarioplanners.ca).

## Calling all planning leaders to join the OPPI Council

The Ontario Professional Planners Institute's Governance & Nominating Committee is calling for nominations from Full Members who wish to join the OPPI Council as Directors.

The positions are for a two-year term. Directors may be re-elected for a second two-year term. Elected Members to OPPI Council will assume office at the adjournment of the 2019 Annual General Meeting.

The deadline to apply is April 1.

The priority of Council is to guide the organization through policy decisions and strategic directions. It provides direct oversight in several core areas such as finance, quality control, risk management and stakeholder relations. It empowers staff and volunteers to implement OPPI's Strategic Plan.

The governing body comprises nine to 11 members who are motivated individuals drawn from diverse backgrounds, who work together effectively with professional acumen, foresight and creativity.

For more information on OPPI's Council Call for Nominations, specific governance resources and to submit your application, please visit [ontarioplanners.ca](http://ontarioplanners.ca).

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Credit: Jesse Harris and Cooper Cole, Toronto

# GENTRIFICATION: INNER CITY GROWTH

BY GURRAJ AHLUWALIA

**WHO ARE WE PLANNING FOR?** How will growth in a neighbourhood impact both current and future residents? One key component that is often central to this conversation is the phenomenon known as gentrification. Ever since 1964, when the term was coined by Ruth Glass, this process has played a central role in the growth of Ontario’s inner cities, suburbs, and even rural townships. However, this phenomenon is misunderstood, and the issues commonly associated with gentrification are not a predetermined outcome.

The term *gentrification* encompasses the continuum of a neighbourhood transitioning from a lower-status to an upper-middle-class neighbourhood. A neighbourhood is considered to be gentrified if it has become a high-income neighbourhood and the existing working class and low-income tenants have been displaced. But gentrification is not simply a one-way, all-encompassing process, but rather it occurs at both sporadic spatial and temporal levels.

While distinct in character and streetscape, gentrifying neighbourhoods in Canada often share several commonalities. They have relatively affordable housing

stock, and are typically near amenities, such as parks, universities, city centres and major transit stops. In other words they tend to be well-planned communities. In addition, along with renovating dilapidated housing and undertaking rental conversions, a neighbourhood undergoing gentrification includes new in-fill developments, such as the construction of townhouses and high-rise apartments.

When left unchecked, the negative effects of gentrification—reduced affordable housing opportunities, amenities, and services for low-income earners—lead to displacement and negative economic, social and health outcomes for long-term residents.

Displacement can occur in two ways: direct and indirect. Direct displacement occurs when older housing units are demolished for new development, also known as instant gentrification. Indirect displacement occurs when property values and rents appreciate due to the increased desirability of the area. Resident may move voluntarily, for example, when the landlord sell their house, or involuntarily, for example, through unaffordable rent increases or eviction. This displacement

disproportionately affects minorities and low-income residents.

Municipal policy that supports urban regeneration is not inherently undesirable as it can lead to the recovery of declining neighbourhoods and enable a city to grow using its existing infrastructure. But the negative impacts of gentrification need to be anticipated and mitigated through a variety of tools. These include the provision of a stock of affordable housing, and a range and mix of housing forms, community empowerment, property taxes, and a region-wide planning perspective.

Continually monitoring neighbourhood demographics will help determine who is truly benefiting from the perceived growth in a city. Prudent policy and community engagement will ensure that the reinvestment in the neighbourhood can be appreciated by both the current and future inhabitants of the area. 🙏

*Mural in Toronto’s West Queen West neighbourhood by artist Jesse Harris.*

Credit: Jesse Harris, You’ve Changed, 2012. Public artwork commissioned by The City of Toronto. Courtesy of Jesse Harris and Cooper Cole, Toronto.

**Gurraj Ahluwalia** is a second year planning student at Queen’s University.

# INSPIRE



## POP-UP INFRASTRUCTURE: WHEN SCARCITY OF SPACE DEMANDS OUT-OF-THE-BOX THINKING

High growth in urban centres has stretched affordability to the limits. This has left many underserved neighbourhoods to look for alternative community spaces from which programs and services can be delivered.

One option, which is proving to be a viable alternative, is building what is being termed

pop-up infrastructure using shipping containers. Providing considerable flexibility, these containers are stackable, sustainable, adaptable and economical. In several cities around the world, where space is at a premium, they are being used for classrooms, social housing and community spaces.

**"THE MARK OF A GREAT CITY ISN'T HOW IT TREATS ITS SPECIAL PLACES, BUT HOW IT TREATS ITS ORDINARY ONES"**

– Aaron M. Renn, senior fellow,  
Manhattan Institute for Policy Research



This pavilion in Dongshan county in the Shanxi province, built by Beijing-based People's Architecture Office, demonstrates how shipping containers can be stacked, shifted, and layered in elevation to maximize rooftop views and provide shaded public areas below. What's more, the entire structure can be disassembled and moved to another location.



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