ISSUE 5 | SPRING/SUMMER 2020

IDEAS AT THE CROSSROADS OF INSPIRED COMMUNITIES

THIS ISSUE:

DEMOGRAPHICS:

A look at how planners are addressing demographic challenges and trends in their communities. 06

Planners bring people together and work through challenging and complex situations to define solutions that are in the public interest. 05

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INSPIRE

THANK YOU

Planners plan for the public good – for people. As the COVID 19 situation continues to unfold, OPPI wants to acknowledge the people who are on the frontlines, working and supporting us all.

To everyone who helps inform choices and inspire communities – the doctors, nurses, paramedics, and other health care workers, police, firefighters, grocery and retail store staff, pharmacists, vets and pet food retailers, suppliers and makers of food, delivery people, truck drivers and people related to the transportation of needed supplies, public transportation workers, security people, cleaners, and many others who are out there still working and inspiring all of us – thank you.

> "Planners bring people together and work through challenging and complex situations to define solutions that are in the public interest."

For this issue of Y *Magazine*, I had intended to write about the importance of demographics as an indicator of historic trends to help us prepare for the future. As planners, we need to understand the reasons behind trends and find ways to leverage them towards creating a better future for all. And if I had written this article when I had initially intended, I may have had something eloquent to say.

But amid the COVID-19 crisis, our ability to predict the future seems more overwhelming than ever before. Certainly, we can see that largely unforeseen events can have a dramatic impact on every aspect of our life, far greater than can be predicted by demographic or other trends. So how can we plan, when the future is so unknown?

As I write this, in late March 2020, the current pace of change makes it very difficult to predict where we will be or what will be relevant in May, when Y *Magazine* is issued. But instead of dwelling on the unknown, I have chosen to be optimistic about the future and think about an opportunity to revisit the way we live, work, and interact during and post COVID-19.

People are currently working differently, living differently, and finding new ways to connect. I never thought I would be playing dress-up party with my son at 8 a.m., meeting with thought leaders about the future of the planning profession at 9 a.m., assessing the capacity for intensification within the Region of Waterloo's Built-Up Area at 10 a.m., and back into the world of toddler imagination by 11 a.m. How can we see these new challenges as opportunities for growth and development? I know I am learning new ways to juggle – and as someone who was never very good at taking breaks, I am finding some joy in the mental breaks my son injects (even when utterly inopportune).

Planners are change agents. We know change is inevitable, and times of significant disruption are excellent opportunities to set forth new behaviours and ways of life. We work for government, private industry, community agencies, Indigenous communities, and academic institutions to improve the livability of our communities today and for the sustainability of those communities in the future. We bring people together and work through challenging and complex situations to define solutions that are in the public interest. There is now an urgent need to revisit the way we live, work, play, and connect with each other.

As we look to new methods of doing things, let's ensure we are adding value, facilitating meaningful discussions, and envisioning sustainable communities that will serve humanity for decades and centuries to come. Let's define the change that serves the broader public interest and allows us all to grow and prosper, especially those who need it the most. Let's all lean in during this time of crisis, so we can come out of this stronger, more compassionate, and with new sustainable behaviours that will leave our communities better for future generations.

Justine Giancola, RPP
President
Ontario Professional Planners Institute

Demographics

In the Spring/Summer issue of Y *Magazine*, we look at how planners are addressing demographic challenges and trends, as well as some of the most effective tools and methods planners are using to predict or monitor demographic change in their communities. To introduce this issue's theme, Markus Moos, RPP, offers his perspective on the role planners have in demography.

Locally, Planning Explains Two-Thirds of Demography

BY MARKUS MOOS, RPP

Forecasts are prone to be wrong. The future is uncertain and determined by a combination of largely unforeseeable events. Yet demography has long offered planners a beacon of light in an otherwise uncertain world. After all, "[d]emography explains two-thirds of everything," demographer and economist David Foot has famously said.[1]

Certainly, demography's impact is somewhat foreseeable. For instance, the future health care implications of the aging baby boom generation are undeniable. "Demography is destiny," we are often fittingly told in this context, a phrase commonly attributed to French philosopher Auguste Comte. Yet, I argue that "demography is destiny" is a bit of a fallacy in the context of local community planning.

WHY AND HOW THIS MATTERS TO PLANNERS

First, there is the question of scale. While demographic trends can have tremendous momentum, demography's predictive power is highest at a broad scale. In general, this is true for most forecasts.[2] The smaller the scale the higher the likelihood that one individual factor can severely derail our attempts to predict the future.

Consider a low-density neighbourhood with 800 people: an unanticipated up-zoning, for example, allowing the construction of an 80-unit apartment building, would derail any prior forecasts that assumed low-density would prevail. Contrary, at a national and international scale, demography is largely a function of fertility, mortality, and immigration, which are usually either slow to change or, as in the case of immigration, at least explicitly visible in policy, making our predictions less vulnerable to error.

Second, demographics are an outcome of historic societal trends and policies. For instance, high fertility rates following the second world war (resulting in the baby boom) were a product, in part, of the Keynesian-inspired welfare state policies, family-wages, and investments into infrastructure and housing policies that contributed to suburban expansion. While it is certainly true that the eventual size and composition of the baby boom generation had tremendous implications in shaping urban housing markets and development, this demographic force was already in and of itself a product of prior social and economic policies and political decisions.

Third, there is the potential power of planning itself in shaping the future. That is to say that in terms of neighbourhood or community planning, demographic forecasts are in some ways a self-fulfilling prophecy. At the local level, planning is often an arbiter of community needs, wants, and market pressures. In doing so, planning plays an important role in influencing future demographic trajectories.

"The future is uncertain and determined by a combination of largely unforeseeable events."

A useful example is the growth of small condominium apartments in the downtowns of major cities. Although often positioned as merely responding to the growing segment of childless households, once built, the stock of smaller housing units actually becomes a factor in shaping the demographic future of a community. Sociology professor Nathanael Lauster, among others, has argued that smaller (and more expensive) housing units lead some young adults to delay or forego childbearing.[3]

> "the types of communities we plan for are not only responding to demographic change; at the local level, they very much help shape it."

In other words, the types of communities we plan for are not only responding to demographic change; at the local level, they very much help shape it. Demography is socially embedded, meaning it is both a product of and contributor to societal trends. Locally, planning shapes two-thirds of demography, we might therefore say.

But why does this matter? Well, when demography is treated as a natural force acting on our communities purely from the outside, it (falsely) allows us to position planning as merely reactive, when, in fact, it has fundamental structuring power in terms of who can move into, or perhaps who is forced out of, our communities. For instance, we can assume we don't have to

> "we give a disproportionate amount of attention to the predictive power of demography"

plan for larger housing units in the centre of major cities because these units will be filled by the growing share of smaller households. But then actually building a city or neighbourhood based on this prediction means larger households are much less likely to move in because of the housing market we helped plan in the first place.

Yes, demography is partly out of our hands because populations are linked through time via fertility, mortality, and migration; and demographic analysis remains a fundamental component of planning. But this does not mean that our own planning and policy decisions don't have implications for future demographic trends. As planners, we give a disproportionate amount of attention to the predictive power of demography and generally underestimate how our own planning actually shapes the demographic composition of our communities. At least locally, planning for demographic change is a bit of a self-fulfilling prophecy. Ⓨ

Acknowledgments: *The author would like to thank Pierre Filion for helpful comments on an earlier version of this article. Any errors or omissions remain the responsibility of the author.*

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[1] Foot, D. (2000). *Boom, Bust & Echo: Profiting from the Demographic Shift in the 21st Century.* Toronto, Ontario: Macfarlane Walter & Ross.

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Understanding the potential of age-friendly communities in the decade of the old

BY GLENN MILLER, RPP

According to United Nations forecasts referenced in a recent edition of the *Economist*, 2020 marks "the decade of the old." The impact of the peak of the baby boom – people born between 1955 and 1960 – is finally being felt around the world, as health care professionals, policy makers, and marketing practitioners alike come to grips with the long-awaited "grey tsunami."

In Ontario, and most of North America, the 65 to 74 cohort often referred to by health professionals as "the young-old," is generally healthier, wealthier, and likely to keep working beyond traditional retirement age than previous generations. The current generation of seniors also see themselves as productive members of society and reject the idea that they are a special interest group. The size of this demographic bulge explains, in part, why bookstore shelves are bending under the weight of a glut of books that relentlessly stress the positive benefits of aging, with titles like *The Psychology of Successful Aging*, *The End of Old Age: Living a Longer, More Purposeful Life*, and *Bolder: Making the Most of Our Longer Lives*.[1]

But for urban planners tasked with the practicalities of fixing a

car-dependent built environment poorly suited to the needs of an aging population, the decade of the old will be marked by

"By 2041, one in four Ontarians will be 65+. In at least nine smaller cities in Ontario, the percentage of seniors has already hit 24 per cent."

our struggle to find practical solutions for protecting the quality of life for Ontario's seniors. By 2041, one in four Ontarians will be 65+. In at least nine smaller cities in Ontario, the percentage of seniors has already hit 24 per cent.

"By 2036, 42 per cent of residents over the age of 75 will no longer be driving."

In the sprawling suburbs surrounding Toronto, for example, Ministry of Transportation officials estimate that by 2036, 42 per cent of residents over the age of 75 will no longer be driving. In suburbs dominated by single family dwellings, where shops, health facilities, and other essential amenities are rarely within walking distance, this poses significant problems for aging baby boomers who will be in their 80s in 15 years' time.

Another significant challenge, detailed by the IRPP in 2017,[2] is that suburban neighbourhoods in the GTA – and thousands like them across the country – offer few housing alternatives for anyone wishing to relocate to more walkable, amenity-rich places in the familiar neighbourhoods where they raised their families. This suggests that the goal of creating compact, walkable suburban communities remains largely aspirational. This view is compounded by results from the 2016 census, which shows that the percentage of residents 65+ living in suburbs surrounding the GTA increased by 20 per cent between 2011 and 2016.

THE CONCEPT OF AGE-FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES

Just over a decade ago, with considerable help from Canada through the Public Health Agency of Canada, the World Health Organization (WHO) launched the concept of age-friendly communities (AFCs) as a framework designed to engage with older adults to help preserve their quality of life. The concept has since been widely adopted by municipal councils across the country (and around the world), but as research by the Canadian Urban Institute (CUI) has shown, planning departments in Ontario's larger cities have been slow to embrace AFC in ways that acknowledge political commitments by their councils to become age friendly. There are several possible reasons for this.

One is that the eight domains comprising the AFC framework (Outdoor Spaces and Buildings, Transportation, Housing, Social Participation, Respect and Social Inclusion, Civic Participation and Employment, Communication and Information, and Community and Health Services) are a poor fit with how municipalities actually function. The City of Toronto's recently adopted Seniors Strategy 2.0 tackled this shortcoming by organizing its recommendations under headings that better fit with the functional responsibilities of city departments (while still acknowledging the WHO framework).

A second explanation is a natural hesitation among planners to expend scarce resources on AFC when it can be argued that existing policies (such as policies focused on complete streets and walkability) are consistent with or complementary to the goals of AFC. For municipalities in the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the 2017 edition of the growth plan represented a potential sea-change in this thinking, however, by explicitly urging planning departments to promote and support age-friendly design and development.

Toronto was the first major city to make such a commitment. Through its Seniors Strategy 2.0, the City of Toronto has agreed to integrate AFC-specific policies into its new official plan. The rationale is to send an unambiguous message to developers and their consultants (and planners reviewing applications!) that city council is serious about its commitment to become age-friendly and fulfill its promise to WHO. An important additional practical benefit is that including AFC-specific language in an OP can have an impact when it is time to allocate scarce dollars in departmental capital budgets and provide a rationale for recalibrating city-wide standards affecting roads, parks, and more.

"the percentage of residents 65+ living in suburbs surrounding the GTA increased by 20 per cent between 2011 and 2016."

A third reason AFC initiatives remain separate from mainstream municipal activity is the not unreasonable misconception that the focus of AFC is exclusively on seniors. "Age-friendly" is, in fact, intended to embrace the needs of all ages, although communicating this is admittedly an uphill battle. To paraphrase a quote from famed gerontologist Bernard Isaacs, "Developments and neighbourhoods designed for the young, exclude the old. Developments and neighbourhoods designed for the old, include everybody." Not a bad way to think about tackling the challenges of the decade of the old.

References

[1] American essayist Arthur Krystal, writing in the *New Yorker* in 2019.

[2] G. Miller, "No Place to Grow Old: How Canadian Suburbs Can Become Age-Friendly." Institute for Research on Public Policy, 2017.

Glenn Miller, RPP, FCIP, is a member of OPPI, a former editor of OPPI's Ontario Planning Journal, and a Senior Associate with the CUI in Toronto. He been advising the City of Toronto on its Seniors Strategy since 2014. He also led CUI's contributions to the CMHC publication "Housing for Older Canadians" (with Ed Starr). An updated version reflecting the results of the 2016 census is due in 2020.

Friendly Streets lead the way with healthy, connected neighbourhoods for all

BY BEATRICE EKOKO

The modes of transportation we prioritize reflect the types of communities we build and for whom. For over 70 years, sprawl has been the accepted consequence of the dominant way we get around, i.e., by private automobile, accommodating, especially, the white, male worker.

Now, with changing demographics influencing the makeup of our communities, as well as a climate imperative to reduce our carbon emissions, there is a renewed call for "people places" – neighbourhoods that are accessible by active travel and

connected, inclusive, and equitable. Our streets must embody this long-overdue shift not only as an integral component of the built form but also for the health, well-being, and quality of life of the community.

"in Paris, the concept of a "15-minute city" is underway to turn the French capital into neighbourhoods where amenities and services can be found within 15 minutes from home on foot or by bike"

Where communities are already long established, the movement to reclaim the streets for people is happening with increasing urgency. For example, in Paris, the concept of a "15-minute city" is underway to turn the French capital into neighbourhoods where amenities and services can be found within 15 minutes from home on foot or by bike and where every street will be cycle-friendly by 2024.

In Hamilton, the Friendly Streets Hamilton Project, an initiative of Environment Hamilton and Cycle Hamilton since 2017, works towards more walkable, bikeable, vibrant neighbourhood streets. To this end, we engage residents and community stakeholders, from anchor institutions to business improvement areas, city council, and staff.

"bringing around the table voices not typically heard — those of the most vulnerable road users, including seniors, the disabled, children, and newcomers."

Central to the project is bringing around the table voices not typically heard – those of the most vulnerable road users, including seniors, the disabled, children, and newcomers. We do so by involving the people where they are: at neighbourhood associations and hubs, schools, English language classes for newcomers, seniors' breakfast clubs. With the goal of creating Friendly Streets working groups in neighbourhoods to continue the work we initiate, we conduct walking and cycling audits, surveys, host regular meetings, and offer a Friendly Streets Toolkit and online "desire map" for street improvements that we share with city department staff.

An example of direct improvements emerging from our efforts is the designation of a hospital zone around the Hamilton General Hospital and surrounding areas. The hospital zone is intended to provide safe and accessible active travel routes for everyone. We have a steering committee composed of members from various local groups and Hamilton Health Sciences. To date, a signalized pedestrian crossing has been installed at a very busy intersection and other traffic calming measures are being planned, including a council motion to study diverting heavy industrial truck traffic away from the area.

The committee has been exploring alternative pathways for walking and cycling to the hospital, including a signed bike route and the use of existing spaces, like alleyways for healthier active travel routes. Other efforts include tree and native species pollinator plantings on campus, and most recently, plans to create a parkette by the hospital grounds.

Because of the location of the hospital (many arterial roads on truck routes close by industry), we have been measuring air quality and conducting truck counts, and this data will contribute to a city-wide truck-route review study.

We believe our learnings in improving the liveability of neighbourhood streets by engaging people of all ages, backgrounds, and abilities can be useful to planners and city builders as they design communities that match the needs of these, until now, neglected demographics.

Beatrice Ekoko, Senior Project Manager, Environment Hamilton and a long-time environmental justice advocate.

MORE INFORMATION

Friendly Streets Hamilton Project:
friendlystreetshamilton.wordpress.com

Environment Hamilton:
www.environmenthamilton.org

Cycle Hamilton:
www.cyclehamont.ca

Planning for Student Accommodation: A Primer on School Board Planning

CHRISTIE KENT RPP, MCIP, JACK AMMENDOLIA, AND CASSANDRA HARMS

School board planning is a delicate balancing act influenced by evolving land use policy and political mandates, but centred on providing sustainable, appropriate, and fiscally responsible accommodation solutions to students across the province. Establishing where publicly funded school boards provide school-facility accommodation for millions of students is a core responsibility of school board planners and other officials, and typically includes projecting student enrolment, optimizing facility capacity and utilization, and striving to harmonize these variables through dynamic accommodation planning.

Recognizing and adjusting projections and accommodation plans for transitions in land use planning and the emerging settlement patterns, alongside demographic change, is an exercise enhanced through synergic relationships with municipal partners, the development industry, community organizations, and other stakeholders.

The Province's 2018-2046 population projections outline a familiar reality for planners across Ontario: a population pyramid characterized by an aging boomer generation, where negative or minimal natural increase is supported by migration and immigration to facilitate overall population growth. As the demographic characteristics and needs of communities change and evolve, school boards face increasing pressure to maintain facilities and preserve or enhance access to educational and programming opportunities. A significant number of school facilities across the province were located and constructed based on settlement patterns from over 50 years ago, and this has resulted in an imbalance between supply and demand – the locations of school facilities and student populations are not always in alignment.

School board planners typically have a range of options available in their planning toolkit to facilitate permanently addressing or temporarily mitigating student accommodation needs. Attendance area or boundary reviews can re-designate portions of a catchment area to assist with balancing enrolment and available facility capacities, while identifying and redirecting areas of planned residential development can provide interim accommodation during periods of expected growth and capital investment. Portable or modular classroom structures placed on existing school sites can be used to supplement existing space while longer-term student accommodation solutions are developed and implemented. As the province-wide moratorium on pupil accommodation reviews remains in place, school boards are without the ability to contemplate school consolidations or closures as a means to reducing sub-optimally located school facilities in poor condition or with surplus space.

To advance the efficiency and effectiveness of student accommodation planning in a time of province-wide transition and growth, school boards are in need of connected and community-based approaches to student accommodation planning best facilitated through interdisciplinary and multi-jurisdictional collaboration, open communication, and transparency.

"In August 2019, TVDSB welcomed over 40 planning professionals from across southwestern Ontario to participate in an interactive workshop"

PLANNING ACROSS THE VALLEY

Not so long ago, Thames Valley District School Board (TVDSB), a district covering approximately 7,000 square kilometres, could be characterized as a school board with declining student enrolment and a surplus of unused space in a number of school facilities. More recently, a different picture has begun to emerge, one that has resulted directly from the changes brought about by a demographic shift occurring across southwestern Ontario. Migration and immigration to the London Census Metropolitan Area and Census Agglomerations across Oxford County are key drivers behind the current trends in population growth, economic stability, and a strong development industry.

The TVDSB includes a vast geographic area with diverse landscapes, including urban areas and prime agricultural lands, which are locally governed by two single-tier, three county-level upper-tier, and 23 lower-tier municipal governments. Without a formal regional governance structure (or structures), it is challenging to efficiently collect data and develop long-term accommodation plans fully appreciative of local context for Thames Valley's 159 elementary and secondary schools. To encourage iterative and progressive student accommodation planning across this large district, a key question is used to explore the system-wide school facility needs through a student accommodation planning lens: *What does TVDSB need, for what purpose(s), in which locations, and in what timeframe?*

Responding to this question as a school board alone is challenging; however, capitalizing on the expertise, knowledge, and observations of planning colleagues and other professionals across the district and beyond has proven invaluable to the planning team at Thames Valley.

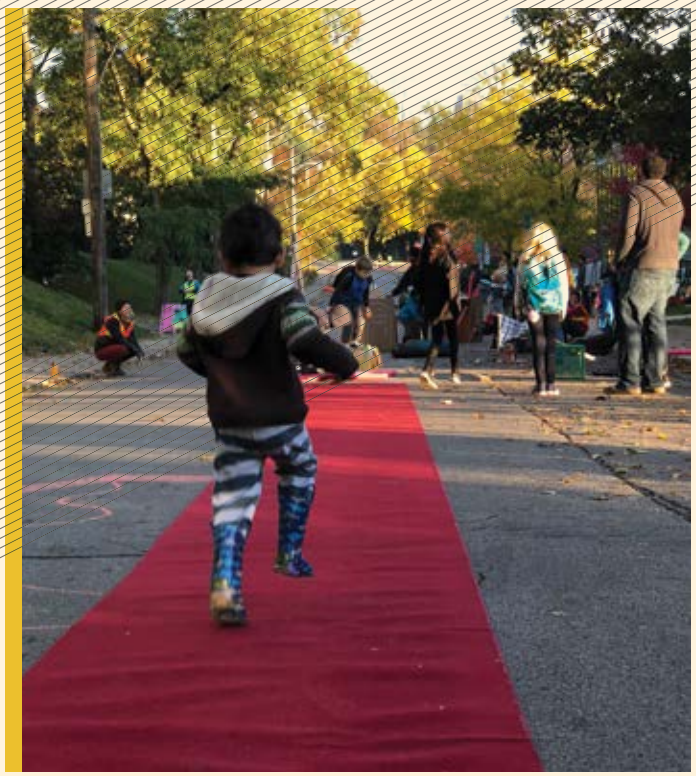
PlanED: A LOCAL INITIATIVE

In August 2019, TVDSB welcomed over 40 planning professionals from across southwestern Ontario to participate in an interactive workshop focused on knowledge-sharing, reciprocal learning, and relationship-building. In partnership with staff from Watson & Associates Economists Ltd., WSP, the City of London, Elgin County, and a team of academic researchers, attendees had the opportunity to learn about school board accommodation planning, local growth-management strategies, and development trends and engage on the topics of perceived impacts of school closures and future professional collaboration opportunities.

With London as the host city for OPPI's 2020 Conference: Finding a Place in Evolving Communities, TVDSB looks forward to welcoming planners from across the province to the district and connecting with colleagues at the interactive session *Managing Space, Recognizing Place and Having What It Takes: The Realities and Challenges of School Board Planning at Thames Valley.*



Christie Kent, MPI, RPP, MCIP, is a member of OPPI and the planner for Thames Valley District School Board. **Jack Ammendolia,** PLE, is managing partner and director, education at Watson & Associates Economists Ltd. **Cassandra Harms** is a 4th year student at the University of Waterloo in the School of Planning.



Child-friendly Cities: Designing for children with children

BY SIVA VIJENTHIRA AND CANDICE LEUNG

Canada's five fastest growing urban areas are all in Ontario, and 16.4 per cent of our province's population is 14 and under. With more children growing up in Ontario urban centres each year, we have a real opportunity to adopt a child-centred lens to make our already great cities even better, more inclusive, and more joyful.

"risk-averse policies that have focused more on limiting liability than on creating exciting places to play"

But we have much to make up for. We haven't always worked to create a public realm that people of all ages and abilities are able to enjoy, and that has come at a cost to children's health, development, and well-being. Streets are not always safe and welcoming for walking, bicycling, or taking public transit, which are the only means of independent mobility for children and youth.

Today, fewer children walk or bike to school than in the 1980s, with fear of car traffic the number one reason parents and caregivers say they do not let their kids walk or bike on their own. Children in Ontario and across Canada are also spending less time outside playing than previous generations, in part because of their lack of independent mobility and in part because of risk-averse policies that have focused more on limiting liability than on creating exciting places to play.

There is an urgency for planners and municipalities alike to create more child-friendly cities by improving access to outdoor free play (the ability for a child to play creatively and experiment with risk on their own, outdoors) and independent mobility (the ability for a child to get around the city on their own by walking, cycling, or taking public transit). When kids are able to walk, bike, or take transit on their own, they are more likely to play outdoors on their own as well, learning important skills by creatively exploring boundaries, following instincts, and getting to know themselves. These early experiences correlate with better adolescent mental health, physical health, and sense of connection to community.

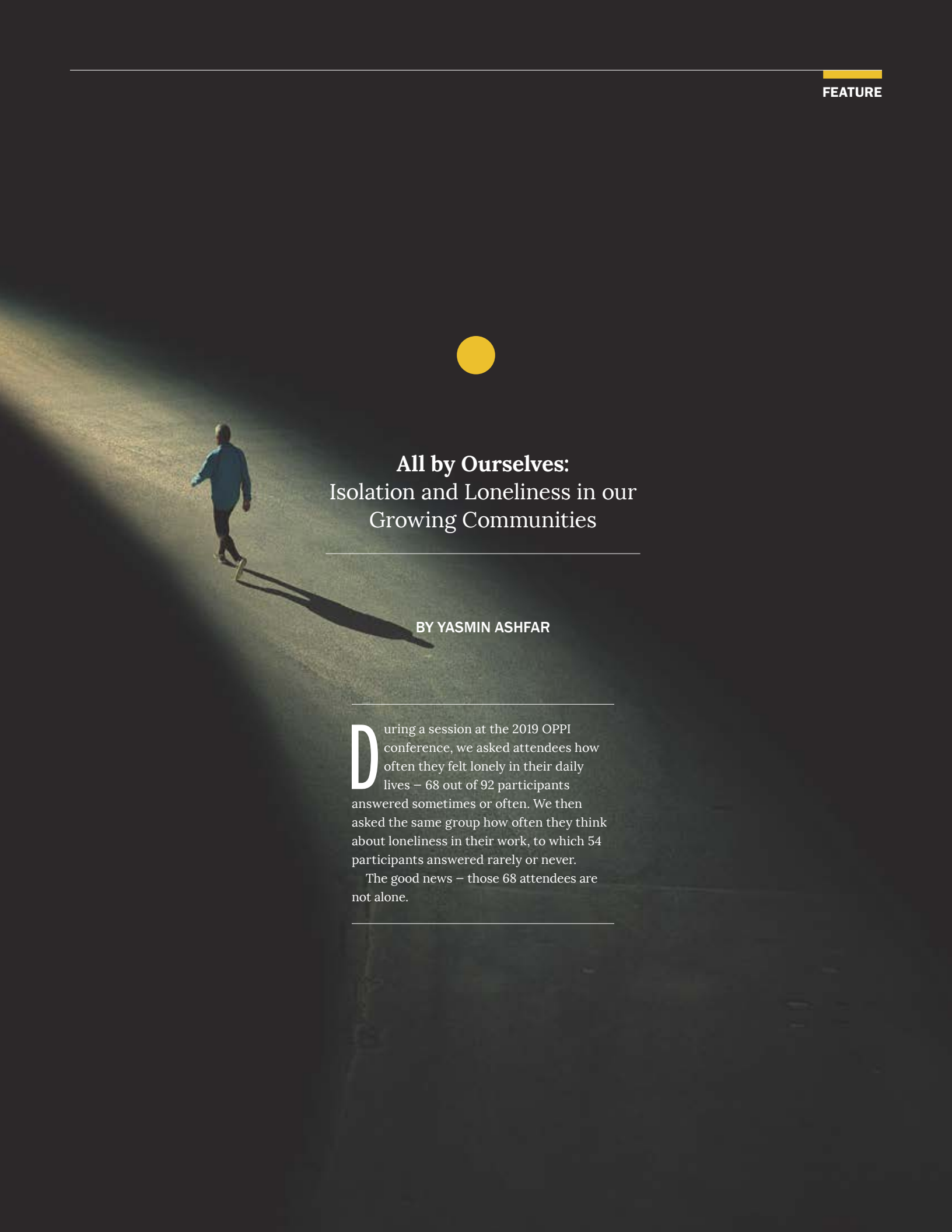
"When kids are able to walk, bike, or take transit on their own, they are more likely to play outdoors on their own as well"

We witnessed the delight that child-focused planning can bring when we facilitated Toronto's first pop-up demonstration of the European "School Streets" model on Mountview Avenue as part of their 8 80 Street series of urban experiments. Working collaboratively with city staff, the local city councillor, community members, school staff, and students, we created a temporary car-free zone on Mountview Avenue during pick-up and drop-off hours at Keele Street Public School, enabling hundreds of children to travel safely to school and play safely in the street.

The pop-up was based on learnings from *My City Too*, a report that highlights global and local best practices for child-friendly city planning, with 10 major design, policy, and programming recommendations focusing on child-led inclusive play; safe, healthy, playful streets; and child-centred decision-making.

The *My City Too* report as well as 8 80 Cities newsletter are available at www.880cities.org.


Siva Vijenthira is project manager at 8 80 Cities and **Candice Leung** is project coordinator at 8 80 Cities.



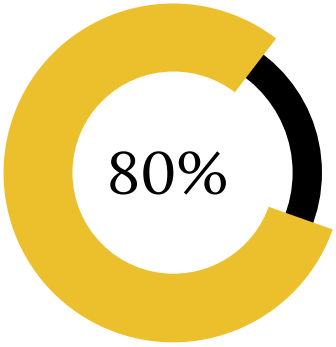
All by Ourselves: Isolation and Loneliness in our Growing Communities

BY YASMIN ASHFAR

During a session at the 2019 OPPI conference, we asked attendees how often they felt lonely in their daily lives – 68 out of 92 participants answered sometimes or often. We then asked the same group how often they think about loneliness in their work, to which 54 participants answered rarely or never.

The good news – those 68 attendees are not alone.

Loneliness – and social isolation – is a rising global public health epidemic resulting from our modern lifestyles. Loneliness is having significant impacts on our physical and mental health – impacts recognized by the UN as unignorable and equating to smoking 15 cigarettes a day and associated with increased risk of mortality. Health implications of loneliness exceed those from obesity and physical inactivity. Yet, as a profession responsible for the progression of our cities, we are doing little to directly address this issue.



It is estimated that 80 per cent of Canada's population lives in cities, surrounded by more buildings, people, amenities, and opportunities than ever before. Urbanization, supported by both physical and digital connectivity, has culminated in a dichotomy between increasingly "connected" communities that feel more disconnected than ever. Humans crave interaction and belonging, yet our built environments are clearly falling far short of fulfilling these needs. Rapid urbanization is resulting in a diminishing sense of community, arising from the self-sufficiency built into our lifestyles and cities.

"Connection and community were key to our survival."

HOW WE CONNECT

When you think about humans and their first tribal nature, it was to work together, to be together. Connection and community were key to our survival. Fast forward to today and you can travel in a single-occupancy vehicle, work from home, access endless food-delivery options with a click of a button, find love with a swipe, keep up with family and friends on social media, join virtual fitness classes, the list goes on. Our virtual presence is affecting the number of interactions we have in a day and the quality of these interactions. A more technologically dependent world may be efficient and productive, but it may not provide the types of connections we need to feel fulfilled. And the rate of uptake for different cohorts results in generational divides within our communities.

WHERE WE LIVE

Coupled with technology is the way in which we design our communities. High-rise living has been found to impact residents, employees, and passersby, as outlined in various studies, from the neurological effects of structural vibrations and swaying motions in tall buildings to the mental health impacts of blank and monotone facades, commonly found in central business districts.

On the other hand, the suburban housing model gained rapid uptake in the post-war era partially due to the social status associated with privacy but has now left these communities isolated by design.

WHAT WE CAN AFFORD

Affordability is also at play in terms of isolation, presenting barriers to participation. Individuals often feel isolated as their communities change, whether it be through displacement due to high costs of living or the changing need in the type of housing as we age. This not only affects our ability to participate in our communities, but also decreases the community's overall resilience, destabilizing the social infrastructure to support these individuals.

Together, these trends are changing the way we define community, in ways which are no longer location-based, and present feelings of instability and affect us neurologically in undetectable ways. In turn, this is changing the way we relate and interact with each other and participate in our cities.

From an urbanists point of view, I wondered how we could design cities to promote social connections and engender

"changing the way we interact and relate to our environments and to one another because of our environments."

communities where everyone feels they belong. What started as pure curiosity turned into a year of research, writing, and discussion on why cities make us lonely. Through this, I've found that amidst the rapid growth of our cities, we've lost sight of what this growth is doing to our communities: changing the way we interact and relate to our environments and to one another because of our environments. We strive for "complete communities," which are indirectly addressing some causes of isolation and loneliness yet focus more on the physical structure of our communities rather than the social infrastructure affected by the physical aspects.

As I write this article at a time when social distancing is necessary to protect our communities, I realize how much connection matters in our daily lives. Although feelings of isolation are amplified in these current conditions, many individuals experience these feelings, more subtly, on a daily basis. So, I challenge you and the profession at large, to consider how community builders can plan and design for places, spaces, neighbourhoods, and cities, which equitably and intergenerationally allow our communities to build resilient social networks in a fight against the loneliness epidemic.

Yasmin Afshar, is a candidate member of OPPI and a planner at Urban Strategies Inc. and presented at OPPI's 2019 Conference in Toronto.

Is the Missing Middle Really Missing?

BY RUSSELL MATHEW, RPP, AND TRAJCE NIKOLOV

Recent updating of demographic trends has revealed a relationship between the rapidly growing population, especially non-permanent residents (NPRs), with a portion of "missing middle" housing. The City of Brampton provides the clearest example of the housing and population that may be missing from statistics more than it is missing on the ground. But, "missing" means that we can only offer at least as many questions as answers.

Improving understanding of demographic and housing relationships is a critical piece of our current work with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs to update the growth forecast for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) in *A Place to Grow*. While focused on the GGH, the growth patterns discussed here are occurring in communities across the Province.

As we write, Ontario is in the second week of the COVID-19 state of emergency. The associated economic effects along with travel restrictions will have enormous short-term effects on all aspects of growth, including what follows. At least today, the longer-term view on demographic growth in Ontario remains intact, if a bit foggier.

ONE-THIRD OF ONTARIO'S RECENT POPULATION GROWTH IS NON-PERMANENT RESIDENTS

In the most recent three years available, 2016 to 2019, Ontario's population has grown at the highest level in decades owing to higher international and domestic in-migration. The novel element of recent migration has not been just the numbers, but the particularly large growth in the number of NPRs. According to Statistics Canada's *Annual Demographic Estimates*, 34 per cent of Ontario's almost 700,000 population growth in the three years has been NPRs. About 38 per cent of population growth from 2016-2019 in the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton (GTAH) has been NPRs. Not just the large number is new, but a much higher share is now in the regions around Toronto, especially the Region of Peel, as shown in the chart below, where NPRs are also a very large 38 per cent of population growth.

But, who are they? Nearly all of the increase in NPRs has been in international students and associated people. Much of the increase has been to colleges, which have been quite aggressive in recruiting international students in recent years. While data do not permit precision, almost three-quarters of NPRs in Ontario are students, spouses of students (granted a work permit while in Canada), and graduated students who enjoy a work permit to stay in Canada for up to three more years. The post-graduation group matters in the long-term growth, too, as many ultimately apply to become permanent immigrants.

NET POPULATION GROWTH IN BRAMPTON IS ALL INTERNATIONAL

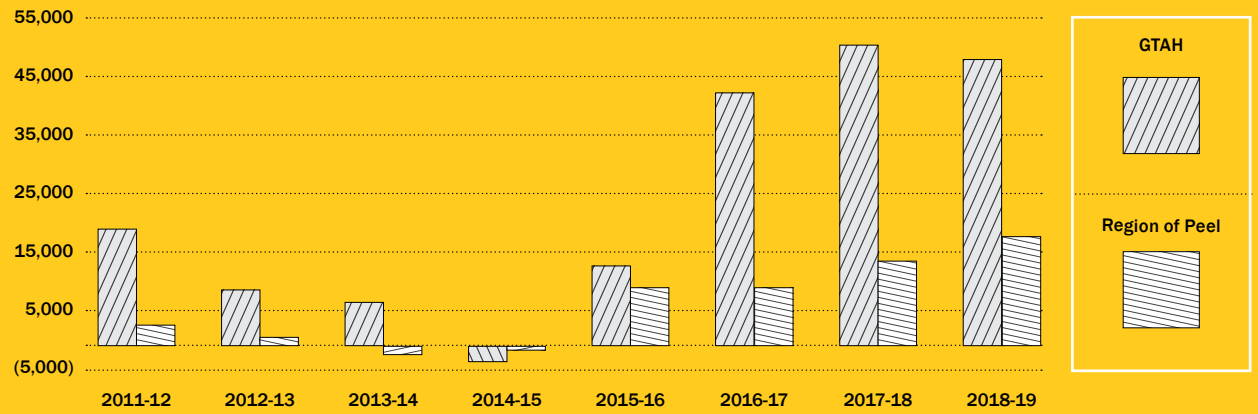
For the first time, Statistics Canada prepared population estimates for local municipalities in the 2020 *Annual Demographic Estimates*, showing Brampton had grown by 79,000 people, a very large amount in three years for a city of nearly 700,000 and triple the rate of growth of the rest of Peel Region. Using the sources of population growth data for the Region of Peel, we estimate that Brampton had a three-year total of 17,000 natural increase, 84,000 net international migrants, less 22,000 net domestic out-migrants. Among the international migrants, about 18,000 are the NPRs, mostly international students.

"Brampton had grown by 79,000 people, a very large amount in three years for a city of nearly 700,000 and triple the rate of growth of the rest of Peel Region."

Very likely, a substantial portion of the rest of the international migrant growth in Brampton are those who arrived in Canada as students and became permanent immigrants some years later. Many will stay in the same community as the school, but many who become permanent residents will follow the behaviour of other immigrants, initially settling in locations with familial or cultural ties. With a majority of Brampton's population born outside of Canada, including one-third of Ontario's population born in India, the city's likelihood of attracting international students before and after graduation is higher than most.

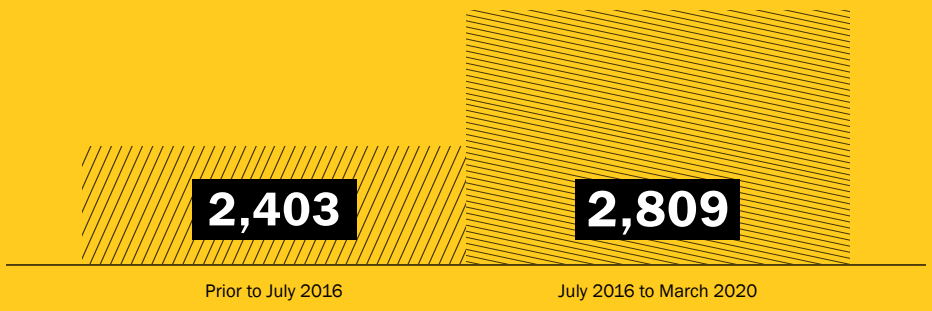
NET CHANGE IN NON-PERMANENT RESIDENTS

GTAH and Peel Region



Source: Statistics Canada, *Annual Demographic Estimates*, 2020

REGISTERED TWO-UNIT DWELLINGS IN CITY OF BRAMPTON



Source: City of Brampton, Open Data, Registered Two-Unit Dwellings to March 2020

"During the three years of adding 80,000 people, less than 13,000 new housing units were constructed."

BUT WHERE ARE THEY LIVING?

On the other side of the equation for population growth is housing growth. During the three years of adding 80,000 people, less than 13,000 new housing units were constructed. While new housing is not necessarily occupied by new residents, the net effect is that about 45,000 people are in the new units. And the other 35,000? They must be somewhere else in the existing building stock.

The census indicates that, in 2016, there were about 5,600 accessary units, meaning that nearly five per cent of single and semi-detached houses contained a second unit. The City of Brampton's registration of second units, available through open data and in the chart above, shows about half that number in 2016. But, as all planners know, every community has many more accessory units in existence than are shown by any official statistics. From mid-2016 to now, the City of Brampton has registered another 2,800 accessory units, many of which are in new houses, designed and built to accommodate a second suite. If the actual number of additional units were double, a third of the extra 35,000 might be explained. All of these additional units, legal or not, are part of missing middle housing that is much more present than the suburban streetscapes of Brampton suggest.

The rest of the people are somewhere in Brampton. The City of Brampton knows this well. Rising demand for services, particularly transit services in recent years, has led the City of Brampton to believe that its population is far higher than what is counted by the census.

"All of these additional units, legal or not, are part of missing middle housing that is much more present than the suburban streetscapes of Brampton suggest."

Perhaps there is no way of knowing quite what the living arrangements are of some tens of thousands of Brampton's population. What is most likely the case is that the Toronto area is becoming an expensive city like New York or London, where there are accessory units, rooms, bed-sits, boarders, or just too many roommates in buildings across the landscape and unknown to officialdom. Is this a planning problem or not? Good question, indeed.

Russell Mathew, RPP, MCIP, is a member of OPPI and a partner at Hemson and **Trajce Nikolov, P.ENG,** is a consultant at Hemson.

Spatial Justice on Turtle Island: Indigenous, Black, and Newcomer Perspectives

BY ABIGAIL MORIAH, RPP, AND BENJAMIN BONGOLAN

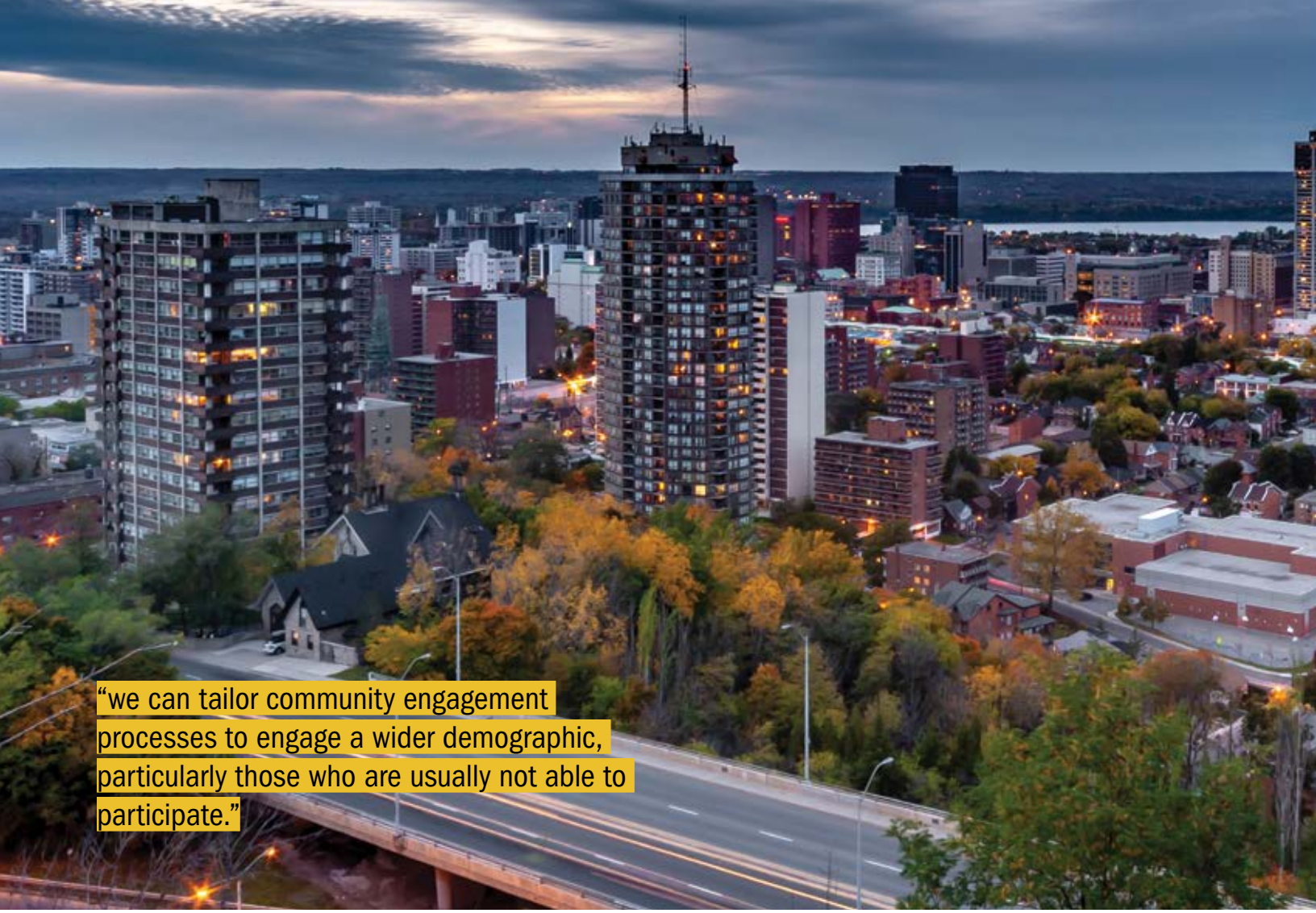
"While urban populations are becoming more diverse in our identities and are composed significantly of Indigenous, Black, racialized, and newcomer communities, these communities disproportionately experience urban inequality."

Building strong, resilient cities, requires a collective impact approach and collaborative effort amongst planners and the communities they are serving. This is becoming increasingly necessary as communities in Ontario become more demographically diverse. The planning profession has traditionally been understood to allocate and organize space for the public good. However, historically it has had a poor track record in Black, Indigenous, and People of Colour (BIPOC) communities and has played a role in perpetuating inequity in BIPOC communities. More recently, newcomer, foreign-born, and refugee communities face comparable systemic challenges, pointing to a disconnect between planners and the immigration and settlement sector.

While urban populations are becoming more diverse in our identities and are composed significantly of Indigenous, Black, racialized, and newcomer communities, these communities disproportionately experience urban inequality. In many ways, we are reaching a critical point in planning history, where the intensification and urbanization of land has profound and enduring implications on the people who live within these spaces.

THE GAP IN THE PROCESS

There is a gap between planning aspirations and planning outcomes. This gap can be attributed in part to what has informed planning processes, who is engaged in the planning process, and what is valued in the planning process. Planning is often bound to targets and deliverables in a very short timeframe, which makes it very challenging to engage in planning more inclusively. Many perspectives and voices still do not inform or influence the planning process.



"we can tailor community engagement processes to engage a wider demographic, particularly those who are usually not able to participate."

While important, planners cannot depend only on their professional and technical training or their lived experiences but must also explore some of the interconnections between planning and other sectors, planning and local communities, and how these may inform planning decisions and outcomes in communities.

To achieve better outcomes and reverse some of these trends in BIPOC communities, we must move beyond the traditional discourse and practice of land-use planning to understand the deep intricacies of the social development sector and community-led planning. This includes striving to possess a thorough understanding of the histories and lived experiences of immigrants and the economic and social marginalization of BIPOC communities within the history of urbanization.

So how can planning be repurposed and re-imagined as a tool to generate more equitable urban outcomes?

MAKE BETTER USE OF DATA

Consider new ways of collecting, analyzing, and applying data. As planners, we are constantly collecting data to analyze and make decisions for the "public good." Without this information, we would be ill-equipped to properly plan. Ironically, even with the breadth of data we collect, as planners, we have failed to achieve positive outcomes in BIPOC communities.

It is not because there is a lack of data on these communities, but rather that we have not always collected the relevant data and analyzed and used it to shape how we engage in planning practice or to produce different planning outcomes. As a result, planning has historically played a role in perpetuating inequity for Indigenous communities (stolen land, forced removal from land, destruction of communities, reservations); Black communities (destruction and forced removal of communities, public housing); and communities of colour (displacement of ethnic retailers, housing, education and employment precarity, and poor access to social and health services, food, and transit).

What if we collected data to deepen our understanding of communities we're working within? In the creation of public consultation strategy in new development applications, there is an opportunity to collect and analyze demographic data to create broad-based, inclusive processes for community engagement and outreach. That is, we can tailor community engagement processes to engage a wider demographic, particularly those who are usually not able to participate. This can result in a better understanding of the community and more opportunity to understand the interests and needs of the community. If engagement processes and information can be used to inform how resources are allocated in communities, they can also work towards building trust and producing more responsive results.

A planning consultant, city planner, or developer does not have to do primary research – much of this data is collected by municipalities and is valuable in shaping an inclusive consultation process.

> "As planners, we have a window and a tremendous opportunity to plan differently to create different, more inclusive outcomes in communities."

UNDERSTAND THROUGH COLLABORATION

Opportunities exist to collaborate with social service organizations for understanding communities, developing community consultations, creating community plans, or planning for community facilities or investing.

One strategy is to take time to understand the non-profit sector and the service provision offered by frontline social service staff. Ask questions about immigration policy and the implications these policies have on the lives of immigrants living in cities. Try to determine if there is a dearth of affordable and accessible services within the specific site you are working in. With this knowledge, you will be more informed on how to add social development components to your master plan.

For example, if you are working on a development in a community such as Lawrence Heights, our urban planning training would lead us to review key reference documents, including the area's social development plan and Lawrence-Allen secondary plan. However, drawing from the deep knowledge within the social services sector of this neighbourhood could lead us to the immigrant-serving sector to engage with settlement workers and human service agencies and to learn from these key informants how to better support these communities. Drawing from these experiences and your newfound knowledge base, you, as a planner, would be further informed on community needs.

Another example is how the City of Hamilton aligned their economic development and city planning department with the Hamilton Immigration Partnership Council (HIPC). For context, the HIPC "facilitates community partnerships to coordinate and enhance the delivery of services to newcomers." This divisional realignment demonstrates how immigrants and newcomers are crucial to both the economic development and urban planning function of a city.

INVITE CO-CREATORS

Finally, planners can proactively engage more with community groups and organizations who already know the needs and pulse of their communities and invite them into the process to co-create their communities. For example, even before a plan is being developed or a development application is submitted or considered, it may mean taking time to learn the diverse histories of Indigenous communities, accepting a different planning process, and being willing to co-create community-based solutions with Indigenous communities. Or it may look like engaging with organizations such as Black UrbanismTO, which is exclusively focused on re-envisioning Black neighbourhoods to support their advancement and has been exploring how to protect local businesses and develop affordable housing in rapidly changing neighbourhoods.

As planners, we have a window and a tremendous opportunity to plan differently to create different, more inclusive outcomes in communities. But this is not a solo exercise. Given the complexity of our cities, it must be something we do collaboratively with those who have been most closely working alongside BIPOC communities to serve and address inequities.

Abigail Moriah, RPP, MCIP, is a member of OPPI and a senior development manager at New Commons Development and **Benjamin Bongolan** is a student member of OPPI and a MES planning candidate at York University.

COVID-19

As COVID-19 rapidly changes the reality of public interaction across the Province of Ontario and Canada, OPPI is monitoring news and information coming from all levels of government, public health agencies, and other sources. A resource webpage has been created for members, which includes updates from the Institute, an FAQ with questions received from the membership, and resources for you to access during this period. This page will be updated regularly as more information becomes available.

If OPPI members have any questions or want to share resources, please email them to us at info@ontarioplanners.ca, and we can include them on this webpage. Information will also be shared on OPPI's social media channels. Feel free to follow along and share our information with colleagues and friends.

The business of the Institute continues but is being modified as the public health situation changes. OPPI staff are working from home and are conducting video calls and conference calls with members as needed. We are working with our District Leadership Teams to provide CPL opportunities for members, whether virtually as a webinar or in other formats that allow members to access information from home. Other opportunities to continue learning include OPPI's Digital Learning site, the Planning Exchange Blog, and the Indigenous Planning Perspectives webpages.

For more information, please visit ontarioplanners.ca/covid-19-information-for-members

OPPI encourages its members to prioritize taking care of their mental and physical health and their families. Be well.

OPPI staff at the 2019 OPPI Conference. L-R: Ryan Des Roches, Robert Fraser, Mary Ann Rangam, Miriam Salazar Véjar, Brian Brophy, Rupendra Pant, Maria Go, Rob Kirsic, Carolyn Camilleri. Absent: Stephania Panini-Gautreau.

OPPI'S EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MARY ANN RANGAM IS RETIRING IN JUNE: CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU!

After serving as Executive Director of OPPI for the past 20 years, Mary Ann Rangam is retiring on June 30, 2020. On behalf of the OPPI membership, past and current Council and Committee members, and OPPI staff, we want to thank Mary Ann for her many years of dedication to OPPI and her leadership, particularly, her determination to keep the spotlight shining on OPPI's Council, volunteers, and staff. Please join us in congratulating Mary Ann and wishing her the very best for a rewarding and fruitful retirement.

ACADEMIC

What qualifications does the planning profession demand?

BY DAVE GUYADEEN,RPP, AND DANIEL HENSTRA

The planning profession is growing. Planning schools continue to attract and graduate high numbers of planning professionals. The planning industry, particularly within the municipal sector, is regularly engaged in recruitment, hoping to attract skilled practitioners to fill various positions. This article sheds light on the planning-relevant qualifications in demand by Canadian municipal governments and forms part of a larger study to examine the supply and demand of planning practitioners across Canada.

This article is based on an analysis of 150 planning advertisements collected between 2018 and 2019. Advertisements were collected from sources across Canada, including postings from local planning chapters (e.g., OPPI, PIBC, etc.), the Canadian Institute of Planners, municipal websites, and other municipal organizations. The advertisements were analyzed to assess municipal government expectations regarding the education, specific knowledge areas, skills, and tasks of planning practitioners. Below is an overview of our key findings.

EDUCATION SOUGHT AMONG MUNICIPAL PLANNING PRACTITIONERS

Degree	# of ads	%
Planning	128	85.3
Geography	21	14
Environmental Studies	11	7.3
Urban Studies	10	6.7
Business Administration	8	5.3
Architecture	7	4.7
Public Administration	7	4.7
Urban Design	5	3.3
Engineering	4	2.7
Social Sciences	4	2.7
Economics	3	2.0
Landscape Architecture	2	1.3
Applied Science	1	0.7
Building Technology	1	0.7
Communications	1	0.7
Political Science	1	0.7
Transportation or Traffic Planning	1	0.7

Table 1: Education sought among municipal planning practitioners

EDUCATION AND YEARS OF EXPERIENCE

Most municipalities sought candidates with a university degree, undergraduate and/or Masters. As summarized in Table 1, the most frequently cited academic discipline was planning distantly followed by geography, environmental studies and urban studies. The emphasis on the planning discipline is expected given its focus on the specific knowledge and skills obtained from pursuing a planning degree, especially from an accredited university. A planning degree (accredited) also provides a more direct route to obtaining full membership as a Registered Professional Planner.

TABLE 2: YEARS OF EXPERIENCE SOUGHT BY EMPLOYERS

3+ years	51.3% | 77 ads
3 years	16% | 24 ads
1-3 years	22% | 33 ads

The majority of advertisements targeted senior (e.g., senior planners, managers and directors) and junior (e.g., planning technicians, planning analysts, policy planners, etc.) professionals. Roughly half of advertisements sought candidates with three-plus years of experience followed by one to three years of experience (see Table 2). The majority of advertisements (80 per cent) also sought candidates with full membership with, or eligibility for, respective provincial planning chapters (e.g., OPPI) and the Canadian Institute of Planners. The strong emphasis on professional membership is interesting and reassuring as it demonstrates a recognition by municipalities of the importance of hiring candidates possessing the core functional and enabling competencies required of planners (see Canadian Institute of Planners, 2011).

TABLE 3: KNOWLEDGE AREAS SOUGHT BY MUNICIPAL PLANNING PRACTITIONERS

Provincial legislations, regulations, & procedures	104 ads 69.3%
Municipal environment	38 ads 25.3%
Emerging and current issues	13 ads 8.7%
Policy process	9 ads 6%
Political and corporate environment	9 ads 6%
Urban design	9 ads 6%

SPECIFIC KNOWLEDGE AREAS SOUGHT

Table 3 highlights frequently cited knowledge areas found in advertisements. Roughly 70 per cent of advertisements required that candidates possess knowledge of provincial legislation, regulations, and procedures. This includes knowledge of various planning acts, general planning processes, principles, and planning methodologies. Candidates are also expected to have technical knowledge regarding the process of official plan and zoning by-law amendments, subdivision and site plan approvals, and be able to interpret technical plans and drawings.

Roughly a quarter of advertisements required that candidates have knowledge of the municipal environment, while a handful sought candidates with an ability to identify current and emerging planning issues and solutions. These knowledge areas generally align with core functional competencies set out by the Canadian Institute of Planners e.g., government and legislation, policies and application, and emerging trends and issues (see Canadian Institute of Planners, 2011).

Skills	# of ads	%
Communication	120	80
Computer (inc GIS)	98	65.3
Interpersonal	60	40
Presentation	58	38.7
Analytical	56	37.3
Teamwork / Team Building	54	36
Organizational	52	34.7
Problem solving	51	34
Customer service	45	30
Negotiation	41	27.3
Project management	40	26.7
Report writing	39	26
Leadership	36	24
Work independently	34	22.7
Research	29	19.3
Collaboration	26	17.3
Time management	25	16.7
Facilitation	23	15.3
Meet deadlines	20	13.3
Prioritization	20	13.3
Conflict resolution	16	10.7
Mediation	15	10
Multi-tasking	15	10
Relationship building / Partnerships	15	10
Manage	13	8.7
Public relation	11	7.3
Supervisory	10	6.7

Table 4: Skills expected of municipal planning practitioners

Task	# of ads	%	Task	# of ads	%
Advise or provide recommendations	103	68.7	Provide planning information	35	23.3
Process planning application	94	62.7	Review	35	23.3
Report writing (incl planning report)	81	54	Direct and supervise	32	21.3
Conduct research	62	41.3	Act as a representative for department / municipality	30	20
Liaise	61	40.7	Lead	29	19.3
Policy and plan development and formulation	57	38	Support	27	18
Presentations	54	36	Analyse	26	17.3
Provide expert advice to OMB (or tribunal)	53	35.3	Manage services, files, projects	26	17.3
Conduct planning projects, studies and plans	49	32.7	Interpret and apply legislation and policy	24	16
Monitoring and evaluation	46	30.7	Departmental management	22	14.7
Public (stakeholder) engagement	46	30.7	Conduct long range planning work	22	14.7
Coordinate	45	30	Data collection	21	14
Respond to inquiries	44	29.3	Site visits and inspections	21	14
Policy implementation	43	28.7	Budgets and financial management	20	13.3
Attend meetings	42	28	Facilitate	18	12

Table 5: Tasks expected of municipal planning practitioners

EXPECTED PLANNING SKILLS

Table 4 highlights frequently cited skills sought by municipal employers. The top skills expected of municipal planning practitioners were strong written and verbal communication, advanced computer skills (Microsoft Office and GIS), strong interpersonal skills, ability to make effective presentations, analytical capacity, teamwork, organizational, and problem-solving skills. These skills also generally align with the core enabling competencies specified by the Canadian Institute of Planners. Planners are expected to be able to complete a variety of tasks in municipal planning. Table 5 highlights common tasks specified in advertisements. The majority of advertisements expect planners to advise and provide recommendations to municipal councils and various committees on a range of planning matters, from land use to transportation to heritage. Over half of advertisements required planners to process different planning applications, including official plan and zoning amendments, site plans, draft plans of subdivision, minor variances, and severances. Planners are also expected to write various reports, conduct research on planning matters, and liaise with numerous stakeholder groups (e.g., public, elected officials, consultants, and developers).

Planners play an important role in guiding the development of communities. They are expected to possess specific knowledge and skills and perform a variety of tasks. Our analysis found that employers prefer recruiting candidates with membership or eligibility to become a Registered Professional Planner, and, more importantly, consistently demand qualifications that are directly linked to the competencies for professional planners specified by the Canadian Institute of Planners.

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Dave Guyadeen, PhD, RPP, is a member of OPPI and an Assistant Professor in the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development at the University of Guelph. **Daniel Henstra, PhD,** is an Associate Professor in Political Science at the University of Waterloo and co-lead of the Climate Risk Research Group.

ACADEMIC

A Changing Demographic and the Potential of Urban Planning: Indigenous and Newcomer Communities in Toronto

BY NIKO CASUNCAD

In 2016, Toronto was home to 17.5 per cent of all recent immigrants to the country and currently has the fourth largest urban Aboriginal population.[1,2] By 2031, Toronto will become a so-called "majority-minority," a jurisdiction in which one or more racial and/or ethnic minority makes up a majority of the local population.[3] This increase in Indigenous and immigrant population means the City of Toronto is faced with a new demographic reality that will change how the city plans, engages, and designs.

The changing demographic will impact the land use and the physical development of communities, especially in terms of how different ethnic groups use public space and how cities use their diversity and cultural assets as tools in the arts and cultural sector and economic development.[4] Looking ahead, cities such as Toronto need to adapt their physical development and land use practices, support cultural assets and diverse populations, and fairly represent diverse ethnic groups in the public realm.[5]

"To overcome current local spatial, social, and cultural segregation in Canadian cities, it is important to determine how Indigenous Peoples and immigrants can be empowered simultaneously"

URBAN PLANNING, RECONCILIATION, AND ETHNOCULTURAL DIVERSITY

In 2015, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada released 94 calls to action urging all levels of government to work together to change policies and programs in an active effort to repair the harm caused by residential schools and move forward with reconciliation. The Ontario Professional Planners Institute recognizes its responsibility to participate in the national discussion on truth and reconciliation and respond to the calls to action. In discussions around reconciliation and ethnocultural diversity in cities, it is important for the urban planning profession to work in the process of reconciliation for non-Indigenous and Indigenous Peoples.

This demographic trend should be addressed at the municipal level to accommodate cultural diversity, avoid conflict, further reduce incidents of racism and discrimination, and manage land use issues related to culturally appropriate housing and space. For example, consider the way ethnic/cultural groups use public space and organize and plan physical development and land use to recognize and celebrate their cultures.[6] The role of planners in "managing difference" between different ethnocultural groups is the work of negotiating fears and anxieties, mediating memories and hopes, and facilitating change and transformation between different cultural groups in our cities.[7]

To overcome current local spatial, social, and cultural segregation in Canadian cities, it is important to determine how Indigenous Peoples and immigrants can be empowered simultaneously to achieve equal opportunities in cities to express their cultural identity, fulfil their claims to urban space, and gain access to services in an inclusive context.[8] As such, municipalities and their planning divisions must include discussions on Indigenous-immigrant relations and how they can collaborate in the planning process, as well as consider how planners are trained in cultural competency to work on diversity challenges.[9]

Lastly, urban planning should support Indigenous and immigrant communities to collaborate in the decision-making process and design of transforming a multicultural city for all (i.e. physical development and design and placemaking).

CASE STUDY: CITY OF VANCOUVER DIALOGUES PROJECT

Little research has been done to examine the relationship between Indigenous peoples and immigrants in Canada.[10] However, in cities such as Vancouver and Winnipeg, action has taken place at both municipal and community levels through policy implementation.

An important example of intercultural interaction between Indigenous and immigrant peoples is the City of Vancouver Dialogues Project (2010-2011) led by the social planning department in collaboration with community partners. Through in-depth interviews, surveys and participatory research, cultural exchanges, celebratory events, and youth and Elder engagement, the Dialogues Project involved hundreds of participants and created a legacy of understanding between Canada's original inhabitants and newcomers to Canada in Vancouver.[11] The ultimate goal of the Dialogues Project was to promote increased understanding and stronger relationships between Indigenous and immigrant communities within the city and create a welcoming and inclusive city for all.

> "the Dialogues Project involved hundreds of participants and created a legacy of understanding between Canada's original inhabitants and newcomers to Canada in Vancouver"

LOOKING AHEAD

Through writing my MA research paper and in talking with City of Toronto staff, it is clear to me that there is an appetite for Indigenous-newcomer relations and municipal planning in Toronto. The Toronto Newcomer Office has started discussions with Indigenous and immigrant settlement organizations to discuss how to facilitate Indigenous-newcomer relations. This is a signal for planners to pay attention to and better understand this demographic change. The coming years will be an interesting challenge and planners will play an important role in helping to facilitate cross-collaborations to ensure our diverse population thrives and prospers in a multicultural city that celebrates its diversity.

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ACADEMIC

Rural Demographic Opportunities: Insights for Planners

BY EMILY SOUSA, WAYNE CALDWELL, RPP, AND RYAN GIBSON

If Ontario's rural population comprised a single province, it would be the fifth most populous province in all of Canada.[1] While some may be surprised with this statistic, it speaks to the importance of understanding the dynamics of rural Ontario's demography and its broader implications for planning. While there are many similarities between Ontario's rural and urban communities, there are also differences, and many of these differences originate in changing demographic trends. This article focuses on three critical implications for rural planning and development.

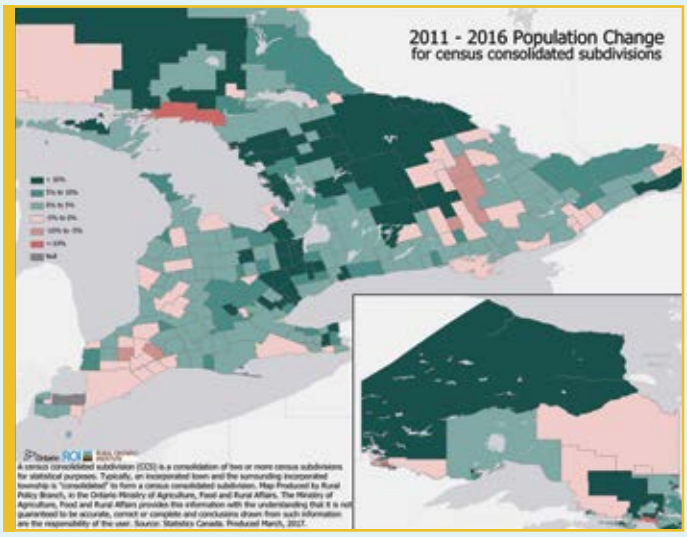
"rural is not a homogenous group, and no one definition will encapsulate all of what makes a place "rural."

It is essential to distinguish what we mean by "rural." The first is to note that rural is not a homogenous group, and no one definition will encapsulate all of what makes a place "rural."[2] Planners must account for the nuances of rurality when posing solutions to the complex challenges in a rural environment. To bring focus to our discussion, we apply the definition of non-metro census divisions (NMCDs) when referring to rural.[3] As of 2016, Ontario is home to 2.5 million rural residents, representing a growth of two per cent from 2011.[4]

Rural Ontario contains both declining and growing regions, each with both shrinking and expanding communities within them (Figure 1). Areas experiencing decline pose several opportunities to improve the future and resiliency of the rural community at hand. Rural communities are taking affirmative action to address an aging population, youth retention, and newcomer attraction to build more complete communities and improved quality of life. As such, there are valuable opportunities for planners to address the demographic issues facing these "small" places.

AGING POPULATION

Some NMCDs in Ontario saw upwards of 28.5 per cent increase in the share of seniors 80 years and older between 2011-2016, compared to the 14.4 per cent growth rate for the provincial average.[5] While



some urban CDs also have a broad population growth range of seniors, such as York Region with a growth rate of 33.9 per cent between 2011-2016,[6] rural Ontario tends to be older with a higher share of seniors.[7] An aging population poses opportunities for rural communities to reassess their assets and design appropriate strategies. A key component is aging-in-place policies and age-friendly planning to ensure the provision of services for rural seniors, including health care, community support, housing, transportation, and recreational service needs.

Aging-in-place and age-friendly strategies involve adopting an aging rural population needs assessment and supporting the environmental, social, and economic perspectives to allow people to safely and healthily remain in their homes and communities of choice. Improving walkability and active living, housing affordability, and shared housing opportunities are a few approaches to promote aging in place.

Enhancing a sense of community or personal development can be supported by providing senior programming opportunities, or by establishing seniors' clubs and organizations. Take the City of Temiskaming Shores, which created an age-friendly community plan in 2016 and uniquely embedded an "Age-Friendly Coffee Hour"

in municipal operations.[8] This recreational aging-in-place tactic uses local partnerships between the municipality and health care organizations to offer monthly meetings for seniors to socialize and learn about available community services.

Reliable service access is improvable through possible community or voluntary care services, creative and viable alternatives for transit services, or even door-to-door service provision. The above tactics can build into existing or potential community assets and partnerships to provide flexible solutions for aging rural communities. Employing aging-in-place principles in rural planning processes can alleviate the tensions associated with an aging and declining population in rural communities in ways that benefit and relate to the optimal standard of living for rural seniors.

"From 2011 to 2016, every NMCD in Ontario experienced a net loss of individuals 18 to 24 years of age."

YOUTH RETENTION

From 2011 to 2016, every NMCD in Ontario experienced a net loss of individuals 18 to 24 years of age.[9] While innumerable factors contribute to the out-migratory patterns of rural youth, many youth 18 to 24 years of age leave to pursue post-secondary education or economic opportunities. A challenge for rural communities is the low return rate for youth after achieving education and training. This represents an opportunity for rural communities to succeed in encouraging a higher return rate to help replenish an aging and declining population and skilled workforce.

The solution for retaining rural youth does not lie in preventing them from leaving in the first place but instead providing supports for their emigration and return. Evidence shows that return rates for post-secondary graduates are higher when rural youth are actively engaged or feel a sense of belonging before leaving their community.[10] Planners in Ontario's rural communities need to create strategies to attract and retain all young adults. Branding rural communities as a choice destination by building a unique sense of place and highlighting opportunities are strategies which may draw youth to rural areas. Lastly, recruitment campaigns, such as the Prosper in Perth Initiative,[11] highlight motivations for staying or returning home including, family ties, community roots, and opportunities for personal social and economic growth.

NEWCOMER ATTRACTION

Rural communities across Ontario are attracting newcomers unlike before. From 2011-2016, almost 8,000 immigrants selected rural communities as their home.[12] Although this number is rising, there remains a considerable opportunity to further attract and welcome newcomers to these regions. In considering that immigration will account for nearly 100 per cent of Ontario's population growth by 2035,[13] rural communities need to ensure they have strategies to attract and settle new immigrants to provide a skilled labour force, revitalize neighbourhoods, and alleviate some of the growth pressure in the GTA.

There are several strategies planners can employ to help attract newcomers to rural Ontario. There is a need to showcase the long-term opportunity that prevails in rural communities, as many newcomers equate moving to cities with "opportunity." Opportunities and assets of rural communities include the presence of a present and flourishing immigrant community, employment, low costs of living, as well as supports for newcomer integration, such as skills or language training.

Other strategies include recognizing how immigration leverages opportunities for economic development, tourism, and service provision at the municipal level. Establishing welcoming initiatives and policies to promote inclusivity and diversity at either the institutional or communal level is another strategy for demonstrating a commitment to welcoming and retaining newcomers in an area.

Lastly, planning with a long-term horizon in mind is critical to facilitating attraction and retention. Understanding community context, relationship building, meaningfully engaging key stakeholders, involving newcomers, and building support networks all take time.

MOVING FORWARD

Demographic trends in rural Ontario vary by community. While all rural communities are changing in one way or another, changes do not necessarily follow the adage of decline. Policy needs to recognize the linkages between an aging population, youth retention, and newcomer attraction. Planners are at the forefront of helping communities to develop strategies to help address these changes and need to be proactive in understanding local and regional population trends to ensure long-term prosperity.

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Planning consultant, professor, writer, speaker, social media guru, visionary... the list of what Sean Hertel, RPP, is working on right now might make your head spin.

Registered Professional Planner

PROFILE

NAME:
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POSITION:
Urban Planning Consultant

He's helping the City of Markham coordinate the first development phase of the massive and complex Langstaff Gateway redevelopment project. He's affixing an "equity lens" to the City of Ottawa's transportation master plan review on a team led by IBI Group. He's aligning land use planning and implementation tools in Peel Region with the major transportation station area policies of the growth plan on a team led by Perkins + Will.

With R.E. Millward & Associates, he's conducting the land use planning analysis for the O.R.C.A. Project, proposing an over-building of the rail corridor in downtown Toronto. Then, on a team led by Common Bond, he's supporting a cultural heritage landscape area study for the Oakville Harbour. Plus, other projects at various stages of ramping up or down.

Hertel is also a research fellow at the City Institute at York University and a lecturer in the planning schools at Ryerson University and University of Waterloo. He does quite a bit of public speaking, and he writes. He recently contributed two chapters, with Blair Scorgie, RPP, of SvN Architects + Planners, to the housing anthology *House Divided*, published by Coach House Books.

You describe yourself as "visionary incrementalist" — what does that mean?

A visit to Hamilton two years ago to meet with Chief Planner Jason Thorne, RPP, inspired the term. Walking around downtown, you could see that change was slowly percolating through the streets, lots and buildings. You could feel that something significant and transformational was happening, but it was happening slowly, almost like honey moving over the surface of warm toast. Step by step. Block by block. Building by building. And not the sexy stuff, either. Zoning changes. Adjusting parking requirements. Grants. Partnerships. Talking with and listening to pretty much everyone. The heavy lifting. Having the vision to think big and the patience and commitment to getting the small wins along the way. This really resonated with me.

How can visionary incrementalism be applied to demographics?

I've got the perfect story: former Toronto Chief Planner, Paul Bedford, RPP, just after amalgamation in 1998, would corral his planners (including a young me) into large rooms to get his key points across. One time he showed a picture of a kid, who was about five years old, standing on the Humber River pedestrian bridge with the city towering behind. "We're planning for him!" Paul said, pointing at the screen. "Where will he go to school? What kind of neighbourhood will he grow up in? Will he be able to afford to stay there when he gets older?" And he went on and on. I was stunned at the beautiful simplicity of the image. Suddenly, planning for 25-year horizons was no longer an abstraction. It's something I think about often. Thanks Paul!

What is your perspective on changing demographics?

Perhaps more than ever in our professional history, we're planning for an uncertain future. Change used to be measured in decades, and now it's measured against the latest release of a social media platform (Hello TikTok! Goodbye Snapchat) or smartphone. Thinking about pre- and post-Facebook, for example, is almost quaint compared to the technological, biological (I see you, COVID-19), and political whiplash we've endured in the past year alone. Change is no longer an act of extrapolation, plotting a predictable arc along which we'll end up. We're living in a new calculus. We can't solve for X with a Y variable anymore. There are multiple Xs and there's more to find than Y. We don't know what we don't know.

What do communities/municipalities need to be paying more attention to build a better future?

People! Planning for people sounds so obvious but it's anything but. Just take a look at the *Planning Act*: show me where it says we're planning for people. It's

the "use versus user" conundrum. We planners talk a great deal about "the public interest" – I certainly do! – but just who is the "public" and what are their interests? I challenge planners to think of the last public consultation they attended: who was the audience? Were they a representative sample of the community with the biggest stake in the issue you were meeting about? Probably not! As my friend and colleague, Jay Pitter, challenges us to ask, "Who's not in the room?"

Take transit debates across Ontario, from London to Toronto to Ottawa. I like to be provocative and say that the "public" we're planning for most these days isn't those who use transit but those who drive. Just recently, Premier Ford posted a video on Twitter of himself in the passenger seat of an SUV, speaking to Ontarians to promote his government's latest transit announcement: "We're sitting in bumper to bumper traffic here… familiar to thousands of people every single day. It's costing us billions and billions of dollars in gridlock throughout Toronto and the GTA. We're building subways for the people… we're finally going to get the city moving again." This is so weird! If this were true, he would have made that video in a packed slow-moving bus or subway car or waiting five-people deep to get onto a train in rush hour.

What are some demographic trends that affect your areas of speciality?

People are making more and longer trips, and likely the best reason is the lack of affordable housing. "Drive until you qualify" is certainly not a new thing, and now there's the phenomenon of "transit-based sprawl" in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area. Housing and jobs are creeping farther out, along the tentacles of the GO Rail network from Union Station in downtown Toronto. People are now commuting from Kitchener! London, too! I don't think this type of sprawl is really any better than the highway sprawl emblematic of Los Angeles or any other large North American city. People are still largely driving alone to train or bus stations and parking in vast parking lots.

The other challenge to this kind of sprawling housing-travel relationship is growing social inequity. Planners (me included!) call for the creation of compact mixed-used communities where people are less dependent on their cars and instead walk, cycle, or take a quick transit trip. All good stuff, but here's the rub: how many people can actually afford to live in these places? Who is the "public" we're planning for? The consequence, which I do think (and hope) is unintended, is that the mixed-use "main streets" and "transit nodes" we're creating are increasingly becoming enclaves for the wealthiest (and, generally, whitest) among us. The most vulnerable, including racialized communities, become squeezed out and pushed further to the social and geographic peripheries of our planning areas.

Are there any projects, past or present, that have particular significance for you?

There's one moment, on a transit corridor project just outside of Chicago, when so many core values as a planner crystalized and which really shapes the way I go about my work. Someone on the project team said to me, point blank, "Tell us how to get more white people taking the bus." I felt like my head was going to explode and all I could do was to burst into laughter. When the person didn't join in, I knew this was going to be a very challenging project. From that moment on, I became laser-focused on social equity and planning for people.

With respect to demographics, what do you tell your planning students?

I tell them that we're planning for people not buildings or infrastructure. It's easy to get lulled into planning for the big shiny things and making things look nice, but if things don't work for people, we've failed. I tell my students to make things personal, to think of real people when analyzing housing, employment, transportation, etc.

Do you have a message for your fellow RPPs and future RPPs?

Unlike engineers, we're not bound by the laws of gravity. Planners don't live in a binary world, where the laws of gravity either keep a bridge up or make it fall down. Our currency is not Newtonian. We deal in nuance, because we live in a nuanced world. Our profession is a social science, which is virtually limitless in perspectives and approaches. We need to embrace that!

This interview has been condensed and edited for length.

PREVIEW

NEXT ISSUE PREVIEW: RESILIENCY AND RECOVERY FROM COVID-19

Originally, the next issue of Y *Magazine* was going to focus on the very important topic of Truth and Reconciliation. We will return to this topic in 2021 and bring you the stories and perspectives you need to hear and know about.

But Y *Magazine* cannot ignore what is happening in communities here and around the world. The world doesn't operate within a vacuum and neither does planning. Despite all the challenges faced globally and the dark days experienced by families dealing with terrible loss, the stress our frontline healthcare and emergency responders, grocery store workers, and all essential workers during the COVID-19 pandemic, there is hope around the corner. Humanity is resilient and we will recover. If there is a profession that is well equipped to lead communities out from these dark days, it is the planning profession and Ontario's Registered Professional Planners.

Our next issue of Y *Magazine* focuses on the examples of resiliency and how and what we should be thinking as we recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Be ready for the future: Get a Registered Professional Planner on your team

Major issues such as climate change, aging populations, and the implementation of artificial intelligence show no signs of stopping — and they affect every sector. The only way to be ready for inevitable change is with sound planning. Hiring a Registered Professional Planner (RPP) is a pivotal step in building actionable plans in preparation for the future.

Ontario's RPPs gather and analyze information from every side of an issue and provide the critical unbiased perspective and expertise necessary to help guide the crucial decision making that will shape the future of our communities. The more than 4,000 members of OPPI work in government, private practice, universities, and not-for-profit agencies in the fields of urban and rural development, community design, environmental planning, transportation, health, social services, heritage conservation, housing, and economic development.

RPPs are the only professionals with the experience and specialized skill set required to fill the very specific role and title of Planner. RPPs who are certified by OPPI have met rigorous entry-to-practice standards and follow the Professional Code of Practice.

Find the RPP who meets your exact needs in OPPI's Consultant Directory at **ontarioplanners.ca/hire-an-rpp.**

Informing Choices. Inspiring Communities.

Ontario Professional Planners Institute

COVID-19 stopped everything. And it remains sticky as communities consider what's next. There are no best practices for the usual consultants to preach. Few if any case studies for coming out of a pandemic this extreme. No playbook for convincing tourists to come back. No plug-ins to align your digital footprint with new human behaviors. No good reason for new entrepreneurs to fill empty storefronts.

Creative communities will develop new ways to leap from stop to go. Those who invest in new thinking now will emerge stronger and faster. The alternative is sticking with what worked in the past. Sounds like being stuck there to us.

Is your tailored post-pandemic playbook ready? Of course not - there's no such thing. Thankfully, we're expert in custom change audits and creative strategies - so you can leap ahead in business attraction/retention and tourism and community brand building when the time is right.

Contact Gary Lintern to get unstuck.
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