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Setting Sail

Charting a Course for the Continuing Evolution of Hamilton's West Harbour

Tim Smith and Diana Tavares-Morreale

In the most recent issue of the Journal, readers were introduced to Hamilton's diverse West Harbour and to Setting Sail, the land use and transportation study recently completed for this area of historic neighbourhoods, significant brownfield sites, an active rail yard and waterfront amenities. This article delves deeper to tell the story of a master plan and secondary plan process that may be unprecedented, at least in Ontario, in its approach to integrating issues and engaging the public.

West Harbour has been a vital, mixed-use community and recreational destination since the 19th century, but in many respects has remained Hamilton's best-kept secret. In the view from the Skyway, it is dwarfed by steel mills. And although it lies immediately north of downtown, the waterfront is difficult to find. The City recognized that waterfront access, and transportation generally, would be a central issue for Setting Sail, so decided to follow the integrated master plan process under the *Environmental Assessment Act*. The EA process demanded a rigour unusual for a secondary plan, but meant that the City would end up with comprehensive land use policies and clear directions for the infrastructure improvements needed to support the land use vision.

As it turned out, some infrastructure improvements were not needed. In the 1960s, the City had proposed building a road through West Harbour to link Highway 403 with the City's then-thriving port industrial area. Land was acquired, but the so-called Perimeter Road was never built. Setting Sail provided the opportunity to revisit the Perimeter Road idea and determine once and for all if it will ever be needed. The conclusion was no. Given lower-than-previous traffic projections, the availability of alternative routes, the difficulty of connecting to the 403 and the enormous cost of the undertaking, the concept was rejected. Council agreed. Hamilton has thus avoided erecting the kind of barrier that has hampered waterfront renewal in many other cities.

The Perimeter Road was just one issue discussed in the Opportunities and Challenges report that concluded Phase One of the EA process. From our analyses of land use, open space,

access and barriers, traffic, public transit, servicing infrastructure and environmental concerns, five opportunities emerged:

- create a cohesive, multi-use waterfront that capitalizes on its harbour setting;
- strengthen existing neighbourhoods by phasing out noxious industrial uses and redeveloping vacant and underutilized land;
- create a linked system of open spaces and trails;
- improve the function, appearance and accessibility of existing neighbourhood parks;
- improve connections between the waterfront and the city.



One of West Harbour's greatest assets is its rich built heritage

Phase Two involved developing land use options for West Harbour and criteria for evaluating those options. Since the study area is large and complex, the options focused on three "areas of major change," where redevelopment and public investment is most needed. These were the waterfront and two other brownfield areas. "Corridors of gradual change" and "stable areas" make up the remainder of West Harbour.

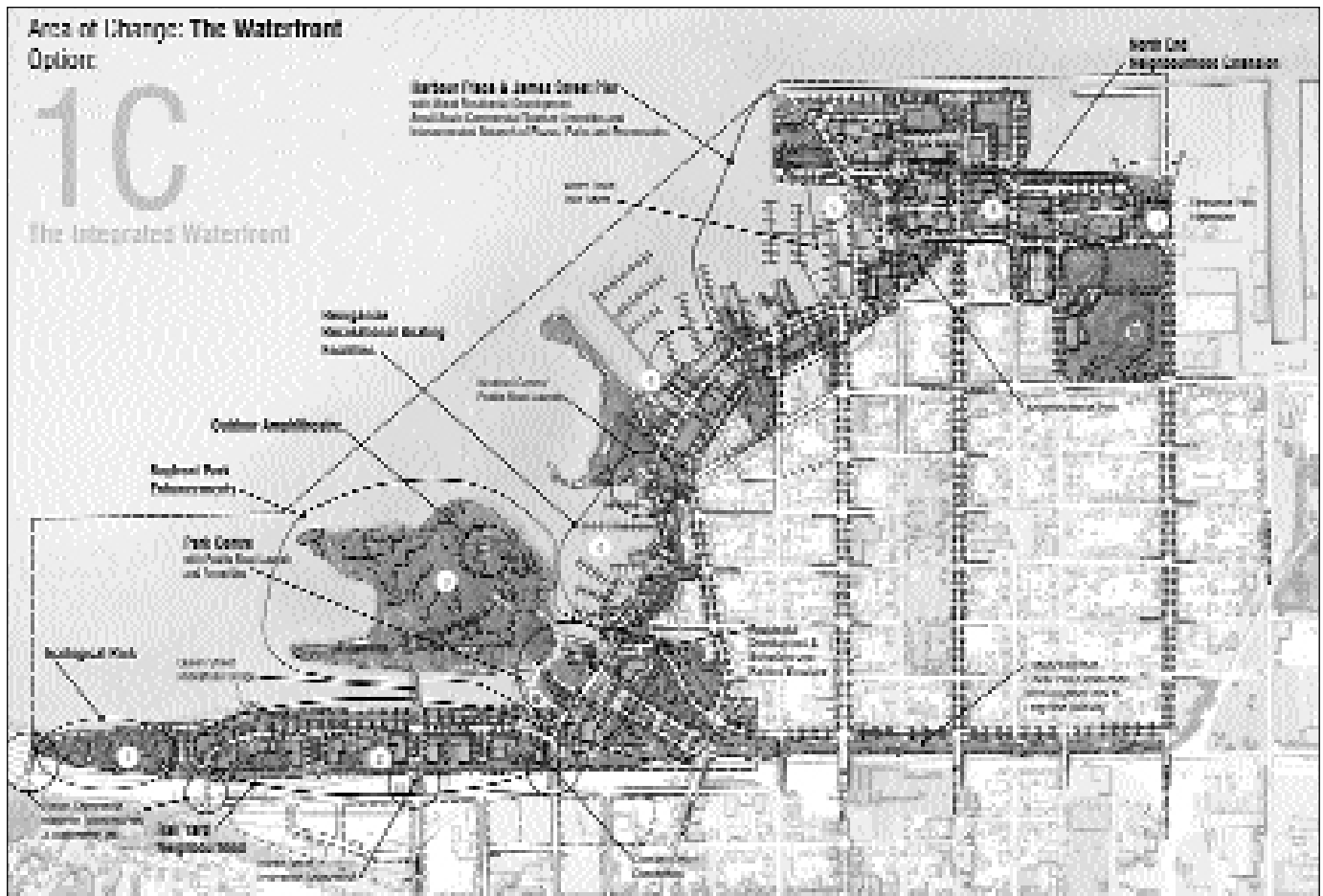
The waterfront options included apartment housing, cultural attractions, small-scale commercial amenities and continuous open space systems. The land use options for the brownfield areas proposed extensions of adjacent neighbourhood fabric at varying densities. We evaluated the options using more than 50 environmental criteria as well as public feedback. Overall "best-case" and "worst-case" scenarios were analyzed from a traffic perspective. The resulting Preferred Land Use Strategy was a hybrid, balancing the need for a critical mass of population to animate the waterfront year-round with the desire to moderate building heights, protect existing parkland and preserve land for marine recreation.

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A very public process

We engaged local residents and the larger Hamilton community in different forums and provided regular project updates, as well as reports and other documents, on the City's website.

We began in fall 2002 by interviewing more than 60 represen-



Demonstration plans illustrated the land use options

tatives from neighbourhood associations, business groups, industry, marinas and boat clubs, and other organizations, as well as city staff and councillors. A visioning workshop brought together key stakeholders. The themes from the workshop were translated into eight core principles that are the foundation for the West Harbour Secondary Plan. The first in a series of public open houses was held in January 2003 to invite feedback on Opportunities and Challenges. The second, at which the Land Use Options were on display, was attended by more than 300 people.

The Preferred Land Use Strategy was presented at a third open house in fall 2003. In March 2004, open houses were held at Liuna Station within the study area, and in Ancaster and Stoney Creek. Draft land use policies and mapping, along with the recommended alternative for the transportation master plan, were presented at an open house in fall 2004.

A Community Liaison Committee (CLC) was created early in the process to ensure regular input from key stakeholders. With a membership of over 50, representing the full spectrum of interests in West Harbour, the CLC proved unwieldy at first, but as the Secondary Plan and Transportation Master Plan began to take shape, its contribution became critical. A series of issue-specific meetings, co-chaired by members of the CLC, focused on concerns such as traffic, parking and the height and density of new development. We used a database of Issues and Replies to track CLC comments, responses from the study team, and revisions to the draft Secondary Plan.

The plan

In March 2005, City Council approved the West Harbour Secondary Plan and Transportation Master Plan. The land use vision calls for the conversion of industrial lands to residential, neighbourhood commercial, and institutional uses in a manner that reinforces and extends the existing grid of streets. Additional policies support the intensification of West Harbour's transit corridors to strengthen their commercial role and improve the pedestrian realm. Infill development must respect the character of the existing neighbourhoods. The Transportation Master Plan establishes a hierarchy of streets, describes the role and cross-sections for each type, and sets out a strategy to ensure the impacts of waterfront development are monitored and mitigated.

The plan for the waterfront might be best described as balanced. The existing major parks, with added amenities, remain central, and new residential, mixed-use and institutional development is focused on Pier 8. The policies for Pier 8 allow for a mix of mid-rise housing, shops, restaurants and cultural attractions that complement the new Marine Discovery Centre. Extensions of existing streets will create a grid and terminate at a 30-metre-wide water's edge promenade. Pier 9, home to a naval base, and the Catherine Street Basin provide a buffer between the urbanized waterfront and the commercial port to the east. The civic heart of the waterfront will be at the foot of James Street, Hamilton's north-south main street, where the plan calls for a public pier and a plaza.

Challenges ahead

Although the EA approach lengthened the study process, it ensured clear answers to tough questions and broad community support for the Secondary Plan's vision.

As always, further hurdles lie on the path to implementation. CN has appealed the secondary plan, arguing that new housing is inappropriate within 300 metres of its active rail yard. Not all residents are satisfied that traffic issues have been resolved. A Recreation Master Plan is needed to improve the appearance and accessibility of the boating areas on the waterfront. The City and the Hamilton Port Authority, which continues to lease much of Pier 8, must work cooperatively to facilitate development on this pivotal site.

Nevertheless, the city is well on its way to creating a one-of-a-kind waterfront and supporting downtown living. The Hamilton community will find ways to overcome any remaining barriers.

For more information about Setting Sail, attend the West Harbour Mobile Workshop at the OPPI Conference or visit www.hamilton.ca/settingsail.

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The new Marine Discovery Centre is joined by other cultural attractions and a residential community in the land use vision for Pier 8

A black and white aerial photograph of a city and waterfront area. The image shows a grid of streets, buildings, and a large body of water on the right side. The text is overlaid on the image in a white, sans-serif font.

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Edward Burzynsky

Nature Transformed Through Industry

Every picture worth 1000 words

Alissa Mahood

Edward Burzynsky's large-scale photos can take your breath away, with their rich colour and detail exquisitely portraying industrial landscapes. However, as you look deeper, you will see humanity unveiled in what Burzynsky describes as "metaphors for the dilemma of our modern world existence."

As planners, we influence the decisions that shape landscapes. Through his artwork, Burzynsky reminds us that we need to consider the hidden implications of these decisions.

Burzynsky provides a glimpse of a world few of us see: open-pit iron ore mines, marble quarries, oil refineries and hydroelectric dams. These are the places that provide us with our daily necessities and comforts: cars, food, clothes and buildings. His photos reveal the disconnect between what we have and where it comes from.

Burzynsky grew up in St. Catharines. His took his first photographs when he was 11 with a Minolta A camera and a roll of black-and-white film, and produced 36 pictures of his dog jumping in the snow. From that day forward, the camera became his way of "depicting and explaining the world." He earned a B.A. in Photography and Media Studies from Ryerson Polytechnical Institute, and for a decade took photos of active and abandoned quarries in Ontario, Quebec, Vermont and Italy.

His 1996 series, *Tailings*, documents rivers of nickel production waste that cut through the landscape of Sudbury's burned and blistered landscape. He went on to photograph waste in local scrap yards, where garbage was being crushed and bundled for recycling. Burzynsky has also done a series on tire scrap yards. These works illustrate the enormous scale of human consumption of natural resources.

His Three Georges Dam Project on the Yangtze River shows how entire cities are being taken apart to make room for the world's largest hydroelectric project. He captures the landscape of human displacement and the remarkable spectacle of entire settlements being dismantled to make way for government-sponsored progress. When completed in 2009, the dam will have displaced more than 1.8 million

people and submerged more than 8,000 archaeological sites to produce 84.7 billion kilowatt-hours per year.

Through his work, Burzynsky draws attention to the troubling aspects of progress. He agrees that there are no easy solutions, but feels that examining human impacts on the environment is a good start. As Burzynsky remarked to writer Noah Richler, who accompanied him on a journey to Bangladesh for an article in *Saturday Night* magazine (May 19, 2001):

"Does one believe man is a part of nature, or outside it? If you think man's a part of nature, then all of this [ship breaking activity] has as much right to exist as a beaver dam. But if you think we're unnatural, then man's industry is yet another blight on landscape, something that spoils the natural environment we were once given."

Burzynsky does not assign blame, but uses his images to encourage us to contemplate our imprint on the land. These landscapes are the products of our time and they reflect the dilemma between society's desire for prosperity and the inevitable suffering it inflicts upon the environment. He explains that:

"We are working to supply the kinds of materials that are necessary for the lives we've built for ourselves. One of the things I want to show is the scale of that impact, that there is a reciprocal to our big cities with those big skyscrapers, there is a reciprocal phenomenon on the same scale out in nature. You can't have one without the other. The only thing we can do tomorrow that is different from today is to manage what we are doing in a better way."

And that is the message that we as planners can take with us: we must manage the environment in a better way as we formulate plans for growth, policies for development and visions for our future.

Edward Burzynsky will be one of the keynote speakers at this year's conference in Hamilton. Alissa Mahood, MCIP, RPP, is on the conference committee and is a planner with the City of Hamilton. She can be reached at amahood@hamilton.ca.





Photo: Eduard Burynsky—Dam #4, Three Gorges Dam Project, Yangtze River, China

Owen Sound

Using a Creative Community as a Tool for Economic Development

Role as a cultural leader new for Owen Sound

Craig Curtis

2004 was Owen Sound's year to wear the crown of "Cultural Capital of Canada." But while the designation brings prestige to our City, it also raises questions about what the honour actually means.

For the cynic, the award represents another trophy destined to gather dust at the back of City Council Chambers. For the sentimentalist, it represents a reaffirmation of Owen Sound's renaissance as a cultural centre of major importance and a key to the City's economic future. As always, the truth lies somewhere in between.

The Cultural Capital Program

The federal Cultural Capital Program recognizes communities of all sizes that have developed unique cultural programs and strategies. Each year, five municipalities are selected for the title "Cultural Capital of Canada." The award has three components:

- recognition of what has been achieved in the individual municipalities;
- enhancement, with a \$250,000 matching grant to enhance cultural programming in the City during the year;
- legacy—an ongoing impact on cultural development both now and in the future.

Owen Sound's Initiatives

Owen Sound's winning application included a range of projects under the overall banner "People and the Land." These included:

- The Limestone Barrens Exhibition at the Tom Thomson Memorial Art Gallery, combining photography and painting in a collaboration between communities in Ontario and Ireland.
- The introduction of new educational programming at the Billy Bishop Museum, recently designated a National Historic Site.
- The expansion of "Doors Open Owen Sound," including free admission to heritage sites in Owen Sound and Grey



Owen Sound has a new self image

County, which attracted visitors from across the Province.

- New workshop programs at Owen Sound's internationally acclaimed Summerfolk festival.
- The development of a Black History Cairn at Harrison Park to recognize Owen Sound's role as the most northern terminus of the Underground Railway, unveiled at the annual Emancipation Day Picnic held in Owen Sound, with visitors from across North America.

Funds were also allocated to market and promote Owen Sound's cultural events on a larger scale than is normally possible within the City's annual budgets. This helped position Owen Sound for an expansion of cultural tourism.

Culture is Big Business

Arts and culture are sometimes dismissed as unnecessary frills and in times of downloading, essential services like police, fire and

infrastructure consume much greater proportions of municipal budgets.

The Cultural Capitals Program was designed to encourage local taxpayers to view investments in culture as a positive way of bringing dollars into the community. Culture is big business. According to a recent report commissioned by the Department of Canadian Heritage, consumer spending on cultural goods and services grew 36 percent from 1997 to 2003, whereas the Consumer Price Index grew only 14 percent over the same period. In 2003, direct expenditure on culture in Canada was \$22.8 billion.

New Choices and Attitudes

Richard Florida, in *The Rise of the Creative Class*, describes a society in which the "creative ethos" is increasingly dominant. Florida argues that businesses will locate where they have access to talented and creative people. These people are to modern business what coal and iron ore were to

steel-making. Creative people, in turn, don't just cluster where the jobs are—they cluster in places where they want to live. Instead of subsidizing companies, stadiums and retail centres, Florida advocates investment in the kind of lifestyle options and amenities people want.

In this context, arts and culture is a growth industry. Creative cities have the ability to outperform other communities in economic growth. Cities like Owen Sound, with a wealth of creative energy, are well-positioned to take advantage of these trends.

New Municipal Direction

Owen Sound has been moving in a new direction since 1995 when it adopted a new Strategic Plan and Tourism Action Plan. These plans recognized cultural and natural heritage assets as part of the city's marketing strategy. The strategy emphasizes Owen Sound's unique setting on the Niagara Escarpment, its well-developed cultural facilities and events, and its historical architectural character.

Since 1995, the City has embraced programs such as Communities in Bloom and the National Winter Lights Competition; becoming a champion at the provincial and national levels. Most importantly, however, the programs have been used to boost the city's reputation as a major regional centre. The downtown core has been renovated and its heritage character emphasized as part of an effort to create a downtown specialty niche market.

Although we cannot compete directly with many communities on the basis of our transportation infrastructure, we can compete with any city in providing a unique and affordable environment on Georgian Bay.

Three months ago, urban geographer Warren Bland, released his new book *Retire in Style*, which listed Owen Sound as one of the top 60 places to retire in North America, one of only a handful of selected communities in Canada. Owen Sound scores well on criteria such as landscape, quality of life and cultural opportunities.

The City must continue to support and invest in Owen Sound as a creative community. In my view, it is one of the keys to the city's economic future. The designation as a Cultural Capital of Canada is a big boost along the road.

Craig Curtis, B. Arch., M.C.P.U.D., MCIP, RPP, is City Manager, City of Owen Sound.



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E-Consultation

New Opportunities for Community Involvement?

Overcoming the digital divide

Tracey Ehl

Involving stakeholders in decisions that will affect their lives is critical to building healthy, livable communities. Community engagement in its various forms has become an essential and regulated part of the planning process. To do this effectively, planners use a variety of methods, including open houses, workshops, focus groups, questionnaires, and public displays. Planners are also connecting with stakeholders through electronic means, such as e-mail and websites.

Traditional methods of consulting with stakeholders are criticized for being exclusive to a small group of active citizens or groups and not conducive to learning what the majority really thinks. In contrast, e-consultation brings with it the promise of inclusivity. Advanced telecommunications technology can be used to advance democratic decision-making.

An increasingly wired world

According to Statistics Canada, an estimated 7.9 million (64 percent) of Canada's 12.3 million households had at least one member who used the Internet regularly in 2003, either from home, work, school, a public library or another location. Internet use was highest at home. About 6.7 million households had at least one member who regularly used the Internet from home, a gain of 7 percent since 2002.

Households with high income, those with members active in the labour force, those with children still living at home, and those whose members have higher levels of education have been in the forefront of Internet adoption. But lower-income households are making strides too. Nearly 45 percent (1.3 million) of the households with income between \$24,001 and \$43,999 had someone who used the Internet from home

in 2003, up 13 percent from 2002.

The highest rates of use were in British Columbia, Ontario and Alberta, where roughly six out of every ten households were connected to the Internet at home. If one compares this statistic to the number of people who are available to attend or would

Terms like "e-quality" and "webocracy" suggest that the electronic world is somehow different from the usual face-to-face democracy—and, in some ways, it is.

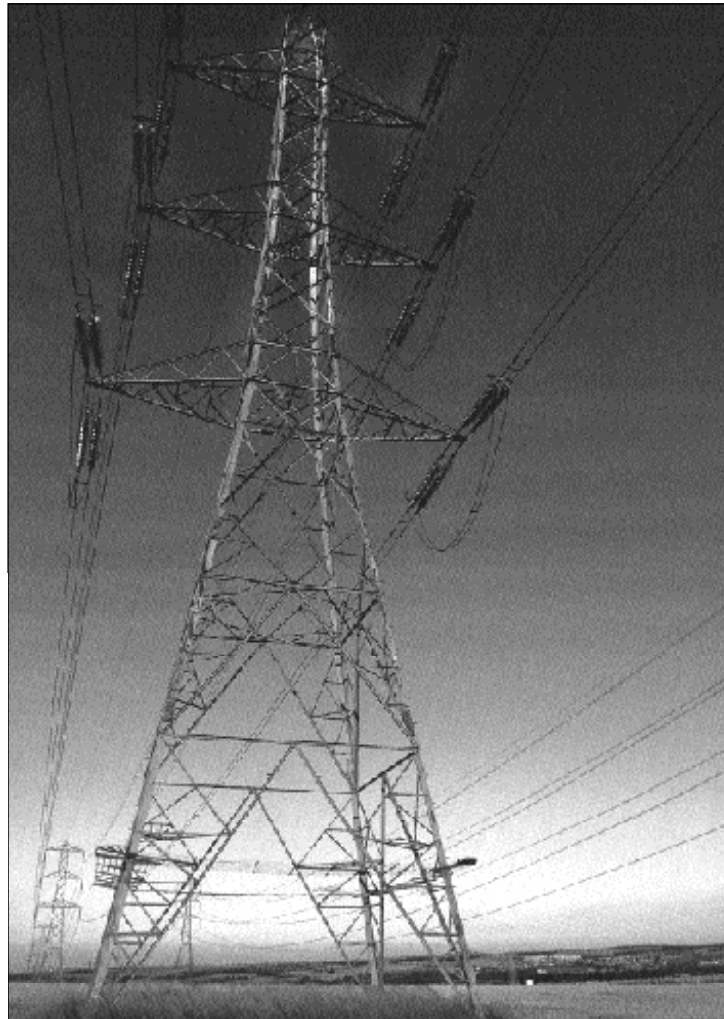
E-consultation is an opportunity for planners to connect with a broader audience and to manage feedback in an efficient manner.

Those who are not able or interested in dedicating blocks of time to attend a meeting can read about a project and submit comments at a time and place that is convenient for them. Comments or survey responses can be automatically compiled in a database and forwarded to the appropriate staff for response, eliminating the time it takes to manually enter comments. The technology also offers opportunities for exchanging ideas, and starting or continuing relationship- or community-building.

Face-to-face consultation is still the most effective way to hear and understand stakeholder perspectives. But one of the biggest challenges remains getting people interested in a particular project. Experience has shown that if a project garners great interest, stakeholders will participate in the consultation activities that are available to them, no matter what medium is used. In contrast, a project that evokes little public interest is unlikely to stimulate large amounts of participation in any type of forum, electronic or otherwise.

The convenience of e-consultation adds to the opportunities, and usually increases the

number of participants, sometimes dramatically. It is convenient, and, if done right, informative and ongoing. Otherwise unheard voices may offer different perspectives or reinforce what is being said by the stakeholders who are active in face-to-face discussions.



Ontario recently consulted stakeholders about energy

consider attending a public meeting, the argument to consider e-consultation becomes more compelling.

Opportunities and challenges

Like so many areas of planning practice, e-consultation has spawned its own jargon.

Taking a public discussion into the electronic world

All levels of government are using electronic means to consult with constituents. For example, Consulting with Canadians (www.consultingcanadians.gc.ca) is a website hosted by the Government of Canada to demonstrate its commitment "to finding new and innovative ways to consult with, and engage Canadians." It provides Canadians with a "single-window access to a list of consultations from selected government departments and agencies."

The Ontario Ministry of Energy recently conducted an electronic consultation in which stakeholders were invited to consider a paper concerning the future of electricity transmission and distribution in Ontario (www.energy.gov.on.ca/index.cfm?fuseaction=electricity.sector_review).

The City of Toronto set up a website to engage citizens in developing a new comprehensive zoning bylaw for the entire city to replace the 41 existing bylaws that were in place at the time of amalgamation (<http://www.toronto.ca/zoning/index.htm>). On this site, citizens are invited to fill out comment forms and submit them electronically.

In more rigorous e-consultation processes, real-time chats can provide the opportunity for idea exchange, instant feedback and relationship building. These types of e-consultation, however, are not yet the norm. Many proponents have settled for more static, one-way means of using electronic technology, such as inviting e-mail submissions or encouraging responses to an electronic survey.

The bottom line

Resources need to be dedicated to creating a user-friendly and interactive e-consultation environment. Simply posting information and collecting responses does not really begin to get at the heart of "effective consultation," nor does it touch the technical capabilities of current technology. Good consultation is transparent, traceable, flexible, accountable, inclusive, timely, and continuous. Good use of technology makes connecting with a wider group of stakeholders possible and efficient, but should also be used as an interactive tool to build relationships and communities.

Tracey Ehl, MCIP, RPP, is a principal at Ehl Harrison Consulting Inc. a firm specializing in environmental planning, stakeholder consultation and communications. Tracey will be hosting an interactive session on e-consultation at the upcoming OPPI Connections Conference.



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Little Black Dresses and Shoes To Die For: Does Your City Rate?

Know your city's heart

Jack Dougan

Shopping downtown is a special occasion. It is an excursion to the heart of the city, a return to a lost era of great ambition, optimism, elegance and architecture, an opportunity to dream of the best life has to offer, a place to indulge in rich colours, textures and flavours, a place to see and be seen by everyone that matters, and an occasion to celebrate life's significant moments.

The quality of that experience is a measure of the character of the city. If the downtown shopping experience is good, it indicates that the downtown is healthy and the city has a good image of itself. As much as anything else, it creates the gut feeling on which major investments are made in downtown offices, high end condos, tourist facilities and cultural institutions. It is a testament to the effectiveness of almost every aspect of urban planning. But planning for downtown shopping is typically the weakest component of most city plans.

The Fashion and Entertainment District of the City

Downtown is where visitors and tourists arrive and expect to find the essence of what the city is all about. You haven't been to a city until you've been to its downtown. Visitors and tourists are looking for what is special about the city, what makes it different from home. Downtown is therefore the natural location in the city for serving the tourist market with the pride of the city's creativity, hospitality and entertainment.

Downtown is the hub of influential businesses, especially financial services, insurance and real estate companies, legal and accounting firms, advertising, publishing and design offices. This core of businesses employs most of the professional people in the city. These are the people who are most likely to be leaders in whatever they do. They include the most highly motivated, educated and independent people in the region. They are also among the city's most affluent and discriminating shoppers. Downtown is therefore the natural location for the best in the marketplace, the high fashion clothiers, top-of-the-line furnishings, flower shops, fine restaurants and exotic personal services.

Downtown is the cultural heart of the city. It is the oldest part of the city and typically has many historic places, heritage buildings and major institutions, including museums, libraries, churches and colleges. It conveys a sense of the values that make this city different from any other. It is the soul of the city and the place where the city celebrates its joys and sorrows. It is the place to see and be seen. It is the natural location for meeting places, from public squares and distinctive street corners to trendy bars and restaurants, and for such cultural businesses as book stores, theatres, galleries and studios.

Downtown has the greatest variety of building types, sizes, rents and character. This is where independent businesses and start-ups find the space they need, at the right price, and with abundant foot traffic. This is the preferred location for business services from office supplies to caterers. It is also the necessary location for independent retailers and personal service shops, intimate restaurants, craft shops, decorators, specialty food retailers and second hand shops.

In order to fulfil these many roles in supporting the city's central business area, the downtown shopping district must provide the best that the city has to offer. It must be the premier fashion district of the city.

For all of the same reasons that the downtown is the natural home of the city's premier fashion district, it is also the necessary location of the entertainment district. Visitors and tourists, downtown office workers and transit riders need entertainment as much as entertainment needs the ambiance and culture of the downtown. When entertainment gets separated from the downtown, it loses the anticipation of the journey downtown, the vitality of the large numbers of people and its relevance to the city's distinctive culture.

Downtown Businesses Thrive on Great Shopping

The city's culture is, by far, its strongest asset in attracting new businesses, tourists and residents. This culture is most evident in the downtown buildings and public spaces, the quality of the shopping area and in the attitudes of people in the streets. A high fashion shopping district contributes to the city's

cultural image through the quality of storefront design and window displays, to the pride with which properties are maintained, to the dress and attitudes of downtown workers and shoppers, and to the vitality of the city's cafes and sidewalks. The fashion district is an ideal complement and attraction to new institutions, associations and non-profit organizations.

Shopping is also a powerful complement to office uses. Retail uses provide essential goods and services to both businesses and their employees. Where the shopping is good, employee turnover is generally low. When the shopping district remains open for business through the early evening hours, late working employees feel a welcome sense of security and comfort. A hot fashion scene is a winning asset in hiring new talent.

Tourism enriches the downtown as a place of business. A lively tourist market creates evening shopping and entertainment as tourists take in the city's special experiences, get to know the city, participate in its festivals and celebrations, and take home distinctive memories of their visit. Tourists provide an important market for downtown retailers but, more importantly, they add immeasurably to the excitement and vitality that are so important in attracting and keeping downtown businesses.

Planning for the Fashion and Entertainment Centre of the City

The economic and cultural health of the city requires that the downtown be its pre-eminent fashion and entertainment district. To be effective in this role, downtown shopping must be dominant in both the number of stores and the gross floor area in each of these sectors over any other retail district in the city. In particular, the downtown must offer the best selection and service in each of the following sectors: clothing, jewellery, shoes, personal services, gifts, souvenirs, meals and entertainment. The health of downtown shopping must therefore be a prerequisite to the development of new fashion and entertainment facilities elsewhere.

In most cities there is a need for carefully considered policies, which set out the relative roles of commercial districts throughout the city. The extent and use of new retail



Retail can define the character of downtown

floor space in each district must be consistent with the role and significance of the district in the city's retail planning structure. For some cities, until existing deficiencies in the downtown are corrected, a moratorium on new fashion and entertainment development outside the downtown is absolutely necessary.

Every city needs to quantify and monitor the various sectors of the commercial market and to maintain a dominant downtown shopping area as the city grows. The downtown must always be capable of expansion, intensification and change to maintain its role. In many cities, brownfield development presents an unprecedented opportunity to reinforce and rejuvenate the downtown. But if there is no brownfield opportunity available, some expansion into the areas immediately adjacent to the downtown will be necessary.

Business Improvement Area Associations alone cannot possibly be effective in maintaining the currency and vitality of the downtown through streetscape and related improvements. Cities need to be aggressive in supporting the heart of the city. Every downtown needs to be the primary focus of public investment including government offices (especially city hall), cultural facilities (universities, colleges, museums, libraries and art galleries), health care facilities (hospitals and clinics) and public spaces (urban parks and street spaces).

10 Steps To Great Downtown Shopping

Every city has a duty to its citizens to be the best that it can possibly be. It needs to be

itself—to express its own heritage, culture, hopes and aspirations. The character and qualities of the downtown are the most important signs that the city is satisfying those expectations. Getting from where we are now in the development of our downtowns to where we ought to be will require new approaches to planning for retail development and very determined and sustained effort by city planners.

Retail development is the most competitive sector of the land development business and the most volatile form of land use. It is also the most difficult for municipalities to manage. But it is so critical to the effectiveness of our downtowns that we absolutely must get a handle on it. Today's convention of big box retail warehouses built around highway interchanges cannot and never will satisfy the "quality of experience" test. Interference with conventional market forces in this matter is necessary for the economic and cultural health of every city and is essential public policy.

If the downtown of your city is not the city's premier fashion and entertainment centre, here are 10 steps that planners can take to redress this problem:

1. Impose a moratorium on any further development of retail facilities that conflict with the re-establishment of the downtown as the fashion and entertainment centre of the city.
2. Focus economic development strategy on downtown shopping.
3. Strengthen the market for downtown retail through new office, institutional

and residential development.

4. Leverage the city's capital works to generate maximum private investment in the downtown.
5. Relocate public institutions such as city hall, hospitals, colleges, recreation and cultural facilities to the downtown.
6. Create a plan for the expansion of the downtown to accommodate appropriate growth over the next 30 years and to become the dominant fashion and entertainment centre of the city during that time frame.
7. Make all the usual downtown improvements to public spaces, public parking, street furnishings and public and private utilities.
8. Create a culture of design sensitivity in the public works department as a way of avoiding future need for item 7.
9. Identify and work with the people and organizations that will make change happen in the quality of the downtown shopping experience.
10. Get the best help possible—rebuilding a downtown fashion and entertainment district is the challenge of a planner's lifetime.

Any one of these steps is worthy of an extensive discussion. I hope to continue this conversation in subsequent issues and look forward to your comments.

Jack Dougan, MCIP, RPP, is a planner with the law firm of bingthorpe, heatherington and lysol. This is his first article for the Ontario Planning Journal.



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Moving in new directions to elevate the role and recognition of planners in the public agenda

Sue Cumming

At the recent Association of Municipalities of Ontario conference held in Toronto, I had the opportunity to engage many of our elected officials throughout the province in conversations about the importance of planners to their communities. Mayor Dan Mathieson of the City of Stratford shared his perspective with me, commenting that, "Much of the future success and recognition of the need for sustainable development will rest with the politicians accepting the professional advice of OPPI members."

The discussion of quality of life, health and community issues in the context of decisions on growth management, rural policies, natural environment and infrastructure have become mainstream public interest issues in communities throughout Ontario. The issues may vary from small to large, urban to rural communities, but it is fair to say that how people live and what impacts them on a daily basis has now become a topic around dinner tables, in business meetings and on the municipal and provincial government agendas. Perhaps never before in our history has there been a better time to seize opportunities for the planning profession to step up to the plate and weigh in on significant public issues.

Over the past months, OPPI's Recognition Committee has been tackling questions of how

to increase awareness and recognition of OPPI and our members. With the support of OPPI Council we are moving forward to put into action a number of initiatives that will "up the ante" in the recognition and awareness of the profession and the Institute with the goal of striving to increase outreach around these key

public issues to shape decision-making at all levels. This discussion is set in the context of capitalizing on the significant infrastructure that has been put in place in the first four years of the Recognition Committee and the work being undertaken by the Policy Development Committee in developing policy positions on issues that are important to members including responses to government policy initiatives.

There is a concerted effort to be both proactive and responsive.

There has been increasingly more exposure through meetings with government officials, through media interest, and through World Town Planning Day events that are having an impact on how planners are viewed as to the value to their communities. There is a sense that there is more confidence amongst the members of the importance and relevance of planners and OPPI. Most believe that planning as a function has value and that planners ought to "own" planning. There are more tools avail-



Sue Cumming

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able to OPPI to communicate with the various audiences what we are doing (website, brand statement, Ontario Planning Journal, and electronic newsletter, to cite just some of the tools).

The feedback received from the recent OPPI survey confirms that there is strong support among members to have a stronger voice for OPPI on key public issues. There is an agreement that the "stronger voice" must be effective and strategically aligned with our ongoing programs and activities. There is a desire for stronger public recognition of the value of planners and a positive engagement with the public through more mainstream promotion of ideas, approaches and knowledge.

A key question remains of how we will get there. A key element will be our ability to leverage our membership as a key delivery agent for carrying the voice forward and for developing ways for OPPI to speak out on issues when individual planners cannot. There is a desire to broaden the impact of OPPI and gain more recognition amongst other associations and organizations that we have not traditionally formed alliances with but who are involved in public issues to build the profile and to increase the effectiveness of our messages.

I for one have never been prouder to be a Registered Professional Planner and am excited about being able to talk with planners from all areas of our Province on

issues in their communities where the voice of OPPI could strengthen ongoing efforts by our members. As we move forward over the next year we need your views and assistance. We hope that you will join members of OPPI's Recognition Committee at this years Connections Conference in Hamilton at the session "Hmmm—Planner, what is that?" and help shape our key directions.

Sue Cumming, MCIP, RPP, is Director of Recognition and the principal of Cumming + Company. She invites calls anytime at 416 406-6607 to set up a brief meeting or send an email to cumming@total.net to share your ideas.

Defining a District's Unique Character

Matt Pearson

As I approach the end of my first term as Southwest District Rep it would seem to be an appropriate time to provide a synopsis of observations and comments on how "it" is working out. "It" being that intangible unknown, probably best described as the function of the District. Southwest District was the final district to come into line with the OPPI model of district role and governance. Two years ago, prior to my being elected Rep, the District had both a Rep on Council, and a District Executive Committee led by a chair, who performed different roles. Now the District Rep sits at the Council level and leads the District Committee. Beyond that though, the District Committee has been significantly strengthened by the inclusion of our representatives that sit on the OPPI Working Committees—Recognition, Policy Development, Membership Outreach and Professional Practice and Development.

Our role as a District is two-fold. First, we are a part of the collective of OPPI. We are more than 500 planners who practise over a large area of southern Ontario, generally from Windsor to Waterloo. Even though we are the second largest District by numbers, we are considerably smaller than Central District. One role of the District is to provide input into OPPI on how OPPI can provide services to us. OPPI provides the services largely through the Strategic Plan, which is implemented through the Working Committees, and brought into the Districts by the Committee Representatives. This brings us

around to the second role of the District—the delivery agent for the Strategic Plan initiatives.

So, how is "it" working? "It" seems to be working okay, but "it" is challenging. The District looks to provide opportunities for networking between colleagues, professional development forums, and events that promote the profession. To this end there are World Town Planning Day events, dinner presentations of issues, and small conferences such as the Creative Cities Seminar in London. In the recently completed OPPI Membership Report, the members rated SW District favourably in providing services to members. The challenge is to continue to develop these opportunities, for a range of planning interests, across a wide geographic area. There is a constant search for new ideas and suggestions are welcome.

We are fortunate that the size of our District membership affords us the luxury of more personal knowledge of our colleagues. We network well. We also volunteer our time to District activities and other events that provide value to the membership. Throughout a year there are at least 75 members who volunteer at some level, be it judging OPPI awards, reviewing membership applications, speaking at an event or planning a golf outing. That is our strength in making "it" work.

Continuous Professional Learning (CPL) is one of the themes of the Strategic Plan. To better promote our profession, to maintain our credibility in guiding the

direction of the Province, and to do our jobs better, it is important to maintain our professional level. CIP and OPPI have developed a framework to undertake this opportunity in a structured manner. At the District level we will be encouraged to provide opportunities on the ground for the membership. Forums such as Creative Cities in London, and the Reurbanism Conference held in Kitchener are such opportunities. Last year OPPI held a Planner as a Facilitator workshop in London, and this November 4th there will be a Planner at the OMB workshop held in London.

Being a member of a professional organization carries with it more responsibilities than just paying membership fees. There is a responsibility to ensure that the organization meets the needs of its members. We do this in OPPI by being involved in "it." In Southwest District "it" is going well. I invite you all to keep "it" so.

Matt Pearson, MCIP, RPP, is Southwest District Rep. He can be reached at 519-524-2641 x216 or by email at mpearson@bmcross.net

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Member Status: The Importance of Being Clear about Where You Are in the Process

Ron Keeble

OPPI has received several enquiries about the way in which individuals should identify themselves as members in OPPI and CIP. I would like to clarify the rules, so that all members can be complete and accurate in stating their membership status in both OPPI and the Canadian Institute of Planners.

Only Full Members of the Institute are entitled to refer to themselves as RPP (Registered Professional Planner) or MCIP (Member; Canadian Institute of Planners). All other members are required to identify their membership status as Student Member, Provisional Member, or Public Associate.

Most professional bodies have several stages in the process by which an individual moves to full professional status in the organization. At OPPI, the first stage is a program of

study at university (Student Membership), followed by a probationary period (Provisional Membership). During this probationary period, candidates for full membership complete a specified period of appropriate work experience and may take qualifying examinations before taking the final step, which for OPPI consists of an oral examination.

Only when all these stages are complete may the candidate use the designation MCIP, RPP. As long as the individual is a member in good standing, pays the annual fees, and meets the requirements of any ongoing Continuous Professional Learning requirements mandated by the profession, he or she may continue to

use the designation. We cannot stress too strongly that individuals who are still making their way through the membership process are not entitled to

use the designation MCIP, RPP. All members at all stages of the membership process must provide a complete and accurate statement of their membership status in the Institutes when communicating with members of the public, clients, employers, potential employers, and fellow members.

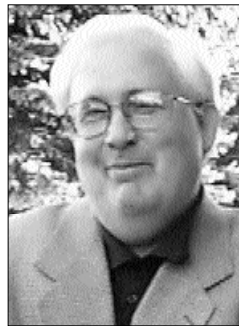
For those who are Provisional Members of the Institute, the correct terminology for use on résumés, CVs, correspondence, and business cards would be Provisional Member, Ontario Professional Planners Institute, or Provisional Member, Canadian Institute of Planners. If you are listing your affiliations on a résumé, you may say Ontario Professional Planners Institute (Provisional Member) or Canadian Institute of Planners (Provisional Member).

For student members, the correct terminology would be Student Member, Ontario Professional Planners Institute, or Ontario Professional Planners Institute (Student Member). Public Associates may describe themselves as Public Associate, Ontario Professional Planners Institute, or Ontario Professional Planners Institute (Public Associate Member).

Long-standing Full Members who have retired are entitled to use the designation MCIP, RPP (Ret.) while they continue to be members of the Institute.

In any professional culture, it is both desirable and expected that all individuals are accurate in identifying which stage they are at in terms of meeting the requirements of the membership process.

Ronald M. Keeble, MCIP, RPP, is Registrar and Director, Membership Services. He is also a professor at Ryerson University's School of Urban and Regional Planning.



Ron Keeble

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Burlington Reaches out to the Community

Jody Wellings

Public participation and consultation have long been hallmarks of the City of Burlington's planning initiatives. With the downtown experiencing significant redevelopment, an Official Plan review and urban design guidelines study under way, and Places to Grow identifying downtown Burlington as a growth centre, the city decided to embark on an ambitious and innovative communications program.

The Downtown Initiatives communications strategy was designed to engage the broader community in the changes happening in the downtown. Another goal was to raise awareness of the importance of a healthy downtown to the overall health of the city. The strategy also included developing a clear understanding of public opin-

ion and viewpoints on Burlington's downtown.

Core Commitment

The communications strategy was a logical next step to Council's adoption earlier this year of "Burlington's Core Commitment: Strategies to Achieve our Downtown Vision." The subject of its own extensive public consultation process, Core Commitment includes strategic initiatives for the continued development of a successful downtown.

The Downtown Initiatives communications strategy is composed of a public opinion survey and a community outreach program, including town hall information sessions and a fall summit hosted by the mayor. Information on the downtown, the town hall meetings, and the fall summit is posted on the city's website, www.burlington.ca.

MKI and the Logit Group conducted the public opinion survey of 601 homes to get a detailed picture of residents' opinions, pri-

orities and concerns about the downtown and development. In addition, they collected information on how residents use the downtown amenities and services. This information will support decision-making tool on current and future downtown initiatives.

Town hall sessions

Public meetings on controversial development applications are almost sure to draw a crowd, but it is often a challenge to engage residents in discussion about broader issues. To overcome this challenge, a series of Downtown Initiatives town hall information sessions were held in each of the city's six wards. Promoted through direct mail, local newspaper articles and notices, and radio and cable television interviews, the town hall meetings were co-hosted by the mayor and the ward councillor, along with the downtown ward councillor.

To create an informal atmosphere, the events began with a barbeque, where resi-

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dents could talk with the mayor, councilors and staff. Another innovation was the use of a 3D computer model, developed in partnership with Niagara College, which provided a unique opportunity to “fly” through the downtown waterfront district. Several developments either under construction or in the planning process have been added to the model to spark discussion about the changing face of downtown, demonstrate planning principles as they are applied to buildings and public spaces, and allow residents to see how the development could fit into Burlington’s downtown.

The evening included a presentation by staff of the various City initiatives designed to manage change, including a comprehensive transit and transportation study, transit terminal expansion, official plan review and urban design guidelines. Information stations were set up around the room on each of the key areas – transportation, planning, culture and the waterfront – to allow attendees to speak to project staff.

Attendees at the town hall sessions could complete comment sheets to evaluate the sessions and the information they received. Participants were also able to request further information on topics of interest and provide general comments. Comments collected from the sessions have been channelled into the Official Plan review and other initiatives. Those seeking additional information were put in touch with the city staff who could provide more detail.

In total, close to 300 residents attended the town hall sessions and feedback has been overwhelming positive. From the comment sheets submitted, 100 per cent indicated that the session met their expectations and the information provided had been of value. The quality of information was rated by 53 per cent of attendees as “good” and by 46 per cent as “excellent.” The sessions succeeded in reaching widely across the community, as 56 per cent of the meeting attendees live outside the downtown core, illustrating how important downtown is to the city as a whole.

Fall summit

As a final step in the strategy, the mayor will host a fall summit on the downtown on October 12. The all-day session will bring together stakeholders and residents to hear speakers on traffic, culture, planning, and social issues in a downtown context. Participants will then have the opportunity to confirm principles and will be challenged to use those principles to create their own vision for downtown. All of the results will then be considered in the Official Plan review for downtown.

Jody Wellings, MCIP, RPP, is Downtown Coordinator for the City of Burlington.

Bringing Toronto’s Planning and Development Community Together

Joseph Guzzi

The University of Waterloo Planning Alumni of Toronto has been bringing Toronto’s Planning and Development Community together for the past 15 years through its annual Toronto Planning Dinner. The idea was hatched in 1990, when the school, working with a small group of alumni, developed the Planner-in-Residence program as an innovative way to bring professional practice to the classroom. The annual

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Downtown Burlington

Photo: City of Burlington

dinner became the vehicle to raise funds to finance the program, and also took on a role in raising the awareness of the planning profession within the Toronto area development community.

The following year, a group of planning alumni, living and practising planning in the Toronto area, incorporated a not-for-profit organization as the framework for what is now known as the "Waterloo Dinner." What began as a small gathering of alumni sitting at their graduating-year's class tables has grown to become the largest, most diverse gathering of professionals representing the entire industry. Some 900 people attended last year's event.

The organization raises awareness of planning with a keynote speaker, delivering diverse topics and themes. Previous speakers have included David Crombie and Larry Beasley of Vancouver—both Order of Canada recipients for their work in planning. There has also been a strong American component over the years as the organization tries to bring in new and emerging ideas to the Toronto audience. These have included planning directors from Chicago and Washington, DC. This year's dinner on November 15, 2005, introduces Joel Kotkin of Los Angeles, who is a contemporary urban thinker and renowned author of several planning books. He will be discussing the Evolution of the Global City.

Chris Tyrrell of Marshall Macklin Monaghan is the current chair. He leads a group of 15 members that plan and deliver the dinner, and other services to the school. In addition to raising money for the Planner-in-Residence program, the dinner also delivers scholarships and contributes annually to an endowment fund that will be used to enhance planning education and profession generally.

The University of Waterloo Planning Alumni of Toronto is a fine example how practising planning professionals working in partnership with their schools are raising the profile of the planning profession. Toronto's other universities are also working with their alumni and the planning and development community to raise the profile of the planning profession through their annual gatherings.

Joseph Guzzi, MCIP, RPP, is Manager of Development Planning for Wittington Properties Limited and has been a long serving member of the University of Waterloo Planning Alumni of Toronto. He can be reached at joseph.guzzi@weston.ca

Eastern

Eastern District Focuses on Professional Practice

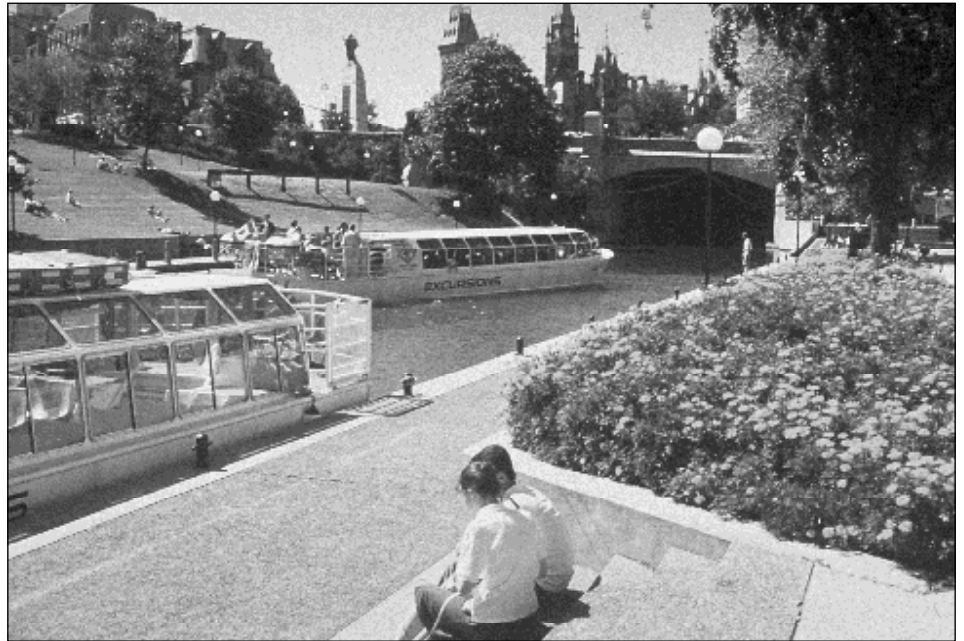
Don Maciver

As part of professional development activities in the East, about 50 professionals attended an OPPI-sponsored lunch on May 13 at the Lord Elgin Hotel. At the request of Eastern District Chair Ann Tremblay, Kathleen Waters, vice-president of TitlePlus, was our special guest speaker. TitlePlus, one of a number of title insurance providers currently operating in Ontario, is part of LawPRO, which is directly affiliated with the Law Society. It was an interesting and informative session, capped with a bit of controversy, as a strong

case was made for ensuring that property boundaries are clearly understood; this, of course, can only be determined with a proper legal survey.

An engaging Sustainable Planning Workshop was held in Pembroke on May 19, attended by 45 participants, mostly from rural municipalities or small private firms. The workshop consisted of a presentation which CMHC has been taking across the country for about the last year.

The one-day Planner at the Ontario Municipal Board course was offered June 10 to a packed house at the City's East End (Cumberland) Satellite Office. A panel consisting of Ricard Makuch, OMB member; Ron Clarke, Delcan Corporation; Grant Lindsay from the City's Planning and Growth Management Department; Marc LaBrosse from the law firm Vice and Hunter; Tim Marc from the City's legal



Summer in Ottawa on the Rideau Canal

Photo: Forem Consultants Inc.



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department; and William Hollo on behalf of OPPI presented expert leadership to the participants. The mock hearing was, of course, the highlight for all those who attended.

There was also an excellent turnout at the Summer Social on June 23 at the Earl of Sussex Pub in the shadow of the U.S. Embassy on Sussex Drive. Many acquaintances were renewed and some tall stories told over glasses of domestic and imported fermented barley-based beverages.

A big news item in the East is our involvement in building a Habitat for Humanity housing unit. We have chosen to work with Habitat to build one door of a duplex unit in Ottawa at a location yet to be determined. Our goal is to raise \$75,000 to support this worthy cause and, of course, to mobilize the Eastern District membership in constructing and finishing the unit.

On November 10 this year, a gala dinner will be held at the brand-new Canadian War Museum on LeBreton Flats near the Ottawa River. The always-entertaining Kurt Stoodley of CHRO TV will be master of ceremonies and Shirley Westeinde, chair of the Canadian Construction Association, will be our patron. A talented group of members is teaming up with the management team from the Habitat Ottawa office to plan and get this event rolling. OPPI's support of this important effort is greatly appreciated. We hope that this will also increase recognition for OPPI in the community.

And speaking of recognition, in addition to the gala dinner, arrangements will soon be getting under way for this year's World Town Planning Day, November 8. Stay tuned.

Don Maciver, MCIP, RPP, is Planning Director at the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, Ottawa. He can be reached at don.maciver@rideauvalley.on.ca.

Northern

Northern District Activities Build Networks

Mark Jensen

The District participated in and sponsored the Federation of Northern Ontario Municipalities (FONOM) Conference in Parry Sound in May, 5). The conference was well attended with over

200 participants. We also supported the Community Improvement Planning (CIP) Conference hosted by the City of North Bay in June, as well as the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing Technical Workshop in Sudbury this September. The North Bay event included a cruise on Lake Nipissing.

The Northern District also recently partnered with MMAH to assist in providing training for new Ministry staff. A session was held in Port Credit in March to provide training with respect to the new Provincial Policy Statement. Jeff Port, the Northern District's Membership Outreach Representative, attended the session and offered Ministry staff a sense of the challenges of applying the new provincial policy in the North.

Glenn Tunnock, the Northern District's Programs Coordinator, shared his "Planners without Borders" concept with the Northern Executive. Briefly the concept involves providing planning advice and expertise to assist other communities (locally and abroad) in dealing with major disaster events. What prompted this idea was the recent Tsunami. This is a good example of a situation where CIP could package and export their expertise to assist a region in need. The Northern District has fully supported Glenn's proposal.

The City of Timmins, like many other communities across the province, is currently undertaking a Community Improvement Plan. In developing the work plan for public consultation, planning staff at the City have identified an opportunity for a strategic partnership between the community and OPPI.

The partnership would include the City of Timmins, other community partners, OPPI, and the five local high schools. The idea is to engage senior level high school students into an important planning process. The benefit to the City would be to realize public input into the planning process and to engage its youth. The benefit to local high schools would be that the minds of their students would be broadened and school spirit would increase. The benefits to OPPI would be that we would promote the planning profession to students at an earlier age.

Mark B. Jensen, BA, MPL, MCIP, RPP, is Northern District Representative.



Recipients OPPI Excellence in Planning Awards

URBAN/COMMUNITY DESIGN

Judges

Paul Moore, MCIP, RPP, City of Hamilton (chair)
Tony Sroka, MCIP, RPP, The Haven Group
Leslie McEachern, MCIP, RPP, City of Thunder Bay
Ben Billings, MCIP, RPP, Township of Middlesex Centre
Silvano Tardella, NAK Design Group

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Fort York Neighbourhood Public Realm Plan

The Fort York Neighbourhood will be a high-density, primarily residential community made up of ten point towers, as well as midrises and townhouses, near Toronto's waterfront. The Public Realm Plan was intended to go beyond the area's Secondary Plan to provide more detail about how the community will develop. The plan, which includes a park, cycling routes, and "green corridors," was developed in consultation with City staff, landowners, and stakeholders. It integrates public and private spaces through street design and landscaping. The jury found the plan "an innovative, creative, and comprehensive document...prepared in an extremely clear and concise manner."



PLANNING STUDIES/REPORTS

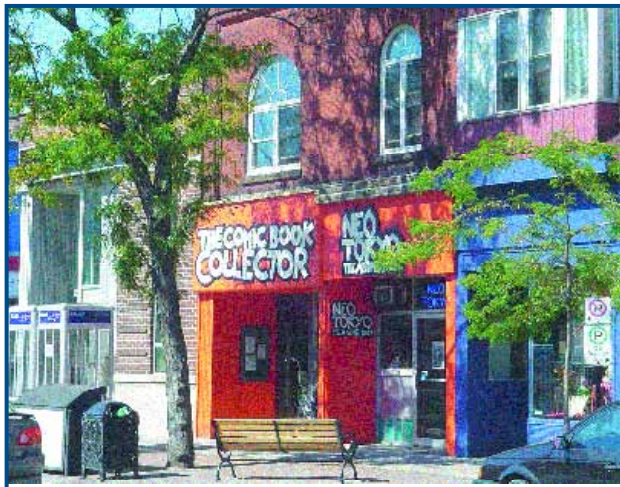
Judges

Brian Treble, MCIP, RPP, County of Huron (chair)
Chandra Sharma, MCIP, RPP, Toronto & Region Conservation Authority
David Gordon, MCIP, RPP, Queen's University
Lanny Dennis, MCIP, RPP, Wayne Simpson & Associates
Chris Williams, Aird & Berlis LLP

PLANNERS ACTION TEAM OF THE ONTARIO PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS INSTITUTE

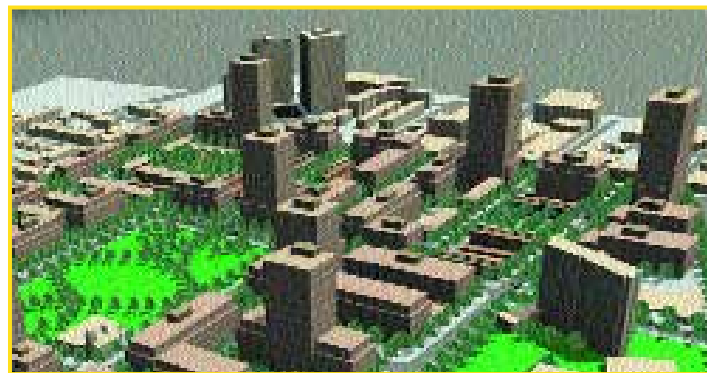
Renaissance in London's Old East Village

Over the past four years, 18 planners in the southwestern district, 12 of them Full Members of OPPI, have collectively volunteered 1,500 hours to prepare and help implement a revitalization plan for the Old East Village Neighbourhood in London, Ontario. The neighbourhood was in decline, but in the space of four years, the group has helped the community make positive changes and build on its existing capacities. The jury was particularly impressed by the way the Action Team audited its own work, and by "the ability of the Team to design unique projects (like the convert to rent pilot project) and obtain financial support from Municipal Council."



TORONTO COMMUNITY HOUSING CORPORATION, MARKSON BOROAH ARCHITECTS INC., GHK INTERNATIONAL (CANADA) LTD. Regent Park Revitalization Plan Urban Design Guidelines

The 28 hectares of Regent Park in Toronto currently house about 7,500 people in 2,083 rent-geared-to-income units. Over the coming years, the site will be redeveloped as an environmentally sustainable neighbourhood containing 5,400 units of market and social housing, as well as shops, offices, parks, and streets. The Urban Design Guidelines include a public realm master plan that establishes the quality and character of the site's open spaces, a landscape plan based on sustainable design (for example, rainwater will be collected to irrigate street trees), and a public art plan to celebrate the cultural heritage of the community. The jury found the submission usable, well-written, and practical, and noted that it has the full support of Toronto City Council.



RESEARCH/NEW DIRECTIONS

Judges

Brian Bridgeman, MCIP, RPP, Town of Ajax (chair)
Pamela Sweet, MCIP, RPP, FoTenn Consultants Inc.
Ian Kilgour, MCIP, RPP, City of North Bay
Richard Zelinka, MCIP, RPP, Zelinka Priamo Ltd.
Ismail Issa/Philip Rowe, Trow Associates Inc.

WAYNE CALDWELL, JENNIFER BALL, AND ALICIA EVANS, UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

Conflict Resolution in Rural Ontario: Strategies for Responding to the Environmental, Economic and Social Impacts of Agriculture

The researchers provide a practical, community-based approach to responding to conflict in rural communities. Having documented best practices for local conflict resolution, studied the experiences of farm communities with the Ontario Municipal Board and the Normal Farm Practices Protection Board, and evaluated the role of local committees in mediating disputes, the researchers made their findings available in multiple formats. Two training videos are available for municipal councillors, farmers, and planners. Information is also available on a website and in printed reports. The jury found the case studies and manuals “effective and practical implementation tools that can be used by a diverse audience.”



COMMUNICATIONS/ PUBLIC EDUCATION

Judges

Nancy Farrer, MCIP, RPP, City of Barrie (chair)
Michael Otis, MCIP, RPP, United Counties of Stormont, Dundas
and Glengarry
Bill Wierzbicki, MCIP, RPP, City of Sault Ste. Marie
Kathryn Dietrich, MCIP, RPP, Waterloo Region District School Board
John McHugh, GPC Canada

GEOSCAPE TORONTO TEAM Geoscape Toronto

Geoscape Toronto is an initiative of Natural Resources Canada intended to heighten the awareness of earth sciences among students and decision makers in order to encourage the wise use and management of natural resources. The largely volunteer team of planners, scientists and educators that make up Geoscape Toronto has created lesson plans, a colourful and informative poster, and web-based materials on the geology of the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The poster has been sent to 1,300 schools in the GTA as well as to MPs, MPPs, mayors and planning directors. The jury found the poster “an innovative and refreshing educational tool...well-organized and easy to comprehend; the graphics have great ‘kid appeal.’”



Member Service Awards

Daphne Wretham

Daphne has served in Executive positions with OPPI throughout her three-decade career, most recently as Secretary-Treasurer for the Eastern Ontario District.

She has also served on the Membership Committee, where she reviewed many applications for membership. Recently, she has been assisting with the fundraising for OPPI House, which the Eastern District initiated with Habitat for Humanity. Daphne has furthered the interests of OPPI and the planning profession through her work with small rural and semi-urban municipalities in Eastern Ontario by helping Clerks, Treasurers, and Council members introduce Official Plans and Zoning By-laws and assisting with their implementation.



Peter Smith

Peter is a long-serving and dedicated volunteer for OPPI. After OPPI's formation, Peter chaired the Private Sector Consultants' Committee for several years. From 1998 to 2000, he was Director of Public Presence on OPPI Council.

More recently, Peter has made important contributions to OPPI's Excellence in Planning Awards. Under his leadership, the number and quality of entries for this highly visible part of OPPI's recognition of our members' professional accomplishments have grown tremendously. The program has raised the bar and quality of planning projects across Ontario as well as the work of OPPI members.



Wayne Caldwell

Wayne is currently a member of the Southwest District OPPI Executive, and a four-time winner of Awards for Excellence in Planning for his research on important issues in rural planning. Wayne has contributed to the OPPI in many ways, including as an examiner, awards juror, member of the Publications Committee from 1993 to 2000, and OPPI Representative on the Provincial Committee to develop an approach for siting large livestock facilities. Although he has been recognized by the OPPI through the Award for Excellence in Planning, he has yet to receive recognition for his numerous hours of volunteer time to OPPI and to the planning profession.



Scholarships

GERALD CARROTHERS GRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

Jessica Paterson

Jessica Paterson is a master's student at the University of Guelph in Rural Planning and Development. An "A" student, she has already received two scholarships from the University of Guelph, as well as the Soden Memorial Scholarship and the Southwestern District OPPI Planning Student Scholarship. In addition to her excellent academic work, she has been OPPI student representative for the university, president of the Planning and International Development Students Society, and a founding member of the Guelph Ultimate Players Association. Jessica has worked with Trout Unlimited Canada on the development and implementation of a community-based process for conservation in the Upper Credit River watershed. In early 2005, Jessica, who had earlier lived and worked in Sri Lanka, started a fundraising initiative for tsunami relief.



UNDERGRADUATE SCHOLARSHIP

Joe Nethery

Joe Nethery is a 2005 graduate of the planning program at the University of Waterloo. In addition to his studies, he has been the Environment Commissioner for the University of Waterloo Sustainability Project and was responsible for coordinating the activities of the student union's environmental service. He also served as president of the faculty's student society, Orientation Week coordinator in 2002, a member of the election committee for the student union, and the OPPI representative for Waterloo's undergraduate program. In November 2004, he helped organize a design workshop for World Town Planning Day that involved 40 planners and students, who created a community plan for an area of west Kitchener. He also writes a monthly column for the Guelph Mercury and serves on the newspaper's Community Editorial Board.



Beate Bowron and Glenn Miller Elected as Fellows

Five new Fellows were inducted into the College of Fellows at the CIP conference in Calgary. **Larry Beasley** (who recently was made a Member of the Order of Canada), **Dr. Ann McAfee** (Larry's co-director at the City of Vancouver), **Bill Shaw** (recently retired Director of Planning, Red Deer, Alberta), as well as Ontario's **Beate Bowron** and **Glenn Miller**. Before her retirement, Beate (see Opinion in this issue) was Community Planning Director with the City of Toronto, and is now the President of Beate Bowron Etcetera. Glenn Miller is the founding editor of this magazine, and Vice President, Education and Research with the Canadian Urban Institute. The College of Fellows recognizes excellence, identifies prominent role models, promotes advances in planning practice and draws leaders to the forefront of planning in Canada.

Rod Bovay has been appointed the Director of Development Services for the City of Belleville. Rod joined the City in 1988 and was formerly the Manager of

Approvals. Prior to joining Belleville, Rod was with the Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority.

Adrian Smith has been appointed as the Director of Planning and Land Development Services for the City of Brampton. Adrian joined the City of Brampton in 1999 and has been the Manager of Growth Management and Special Policy. Prior to joining Brampton, Adrian worked in the Planning Departments at Markham and Pickering. Adrian replaces John Corbett who earlier this year was appointed the Commissioner of Planning, Design and Development at Brampton.

Carolyn Ross has joined RFA Planning Consultant in Belleville as a Senior Planner. Carolyn was formerly the

Manager of Policy Planning at the City of Belleville where she worked for 14 years before taking time off to spend with her family. Ruth Ferguson Aulthouse started RFA Planning Consultant 11 years ago and the firm provides planning consulting services primarily to develop-

ment clients in the Quinte and Kingston area.

Larry Masseo, formerly Manager of Design and Development for the City of

Kitchener, has assumed the position of Director of Planning for the Activa Group effective July 1st. The Activa Group is a residential land development company with substantial land holdings in Waterloo Region and Southern Ontario. In his new position, Larry will oversee planning matters for all of Activa's land development projects.

Paula Tenuta has been promoted to Director, Municipal Government Relations with the Greater Toronto Homebuilders. Paula will spend much of her time working with high growth municipalities in the GTA. She is a graduate of Ryerson's School and Regional Planning.

Judy Josefowicz has been named as Associates at UrbanStrategies Inc. Judy, a planner, is involved in the AGO Transformation and Don Mills Centre Redevelopment projects in Toronto.

Brian Bridgeman who has been the General Manager of Planning at the Town of Ajax for the last 6 years is joining the Region of Durham Planning Department at the beginning of October as the Director of Current Planning. Brian is taking over from Jim Blair who

retired earlier this year.

The Ontario Planning Journal is pleased to announce that **Carla Guerrero** has been appointed as contributing editor for Sustainability, taking over from her former colleague, **Karen Gregory**, who has relocated to the west coast. Carla has extensive experience working with CMHC to advance the thinking on sustainability issues and, like Karen, will be seeking out practitioners with interesting projects to write about.

Lorelei Jones, MCIP, RPP, and Thomas Hardacre, MCIP, RPP, are the Ontario Planning Journal's contributing editors for People. They can be reached at ljones@rogers.com and thardacre@peil.net respectively.



Paula Tenuta



Judy Josefowicz



Carla Guerrero



Five fine Fellows:

Beate Bowron, Larry Beasley, Dr. Ann McAfee, Bill Shaw, Glenn Miller



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Obituary

A Tribute to Rasheed Mohammed

Former Commissioner of Planning for Halton Region

On June 28th, the planning profession lost one of its true visionaries with the sudden passing of Rasheed (Rash) Mohammed, former Commissioner of Planning for Halton Region.

Rash's career spanned nearly three decades and he was widely recognized as one of the true "regional" planners within the profession. As a planner with the former Ministry of Treasury Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs, Rash was directly involved in both the Toronto Centre Region (TCR) and Central Ontario Lakeshore Urban Complex Plans, which to this day serve as models for large scale "regional" planning.

Joining Halton in the mid 1970s Rash was instrumental in overseeing and inspiring the Region's first Official Plan. In developing that Plan and a new plan again in 1994, Rash challenged his staff to be innovative and to think regionally, he challenged Council to think differently about the future of their communities and he challenged the different interests within Halton to work collectively together towards a common vision.

Rash was more than a planner and a visionary, he was an implementer and a

builder. The creation of Halton's Waterfront Plan and the construction of its large waterfront parks, the establishment of the Halton Non-Profit Housing Corporation and the building of over 1500 units of affordable housing reflected his passion for Halton Region and planning.

Rash's influence and knowledge extended well beyond the boundaries of Halton, he was instrumental in the creation of the Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario and Ministers and Deputy Ministers and colleagues in other municipalities sought his counsel.

For those that knew Rash, a successful meeting, consisted of good food, good drink, good discussion and when ever possi-

ble, a hustle, money from the Province, support for a plan or idea or ways to create a new partnership.

Colourful, passionate, different . . . and a damn good planner. Rash's passing has not only left a hole in the lives of many family, friends and colleagues, but also in the planning profession.

David McLeary, MCIP, RPP and Ho Wong, MCIP, RPP, were friends and colleagues of Rasheed Mohammed.



Rash Mohammed

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Connections are yours to make

The devastation in New Orleans has stunned even the most worldly among us: the scale of the damage and the extent of its impact on the local population, powerful enough to reach right across the continent, and beyond. Interviews with survivors consistently remind us what counts and what is precious. Fresh water, shelter, family, social order and security. Energy.

That this issue of the *Ontario Planning Journal* brings us Ed Burtynsky's powerful image of China's Three Gorges Dam is as ironic as it is timely, illustrating in stark contrast what it means to deliberately flood cities for the sake of creating hydroelectric power versus the helplessness of a community overtaken by failed levees. When members of our Institute returned from a CIP-sponsored mission to China, we marvelled at the expectation that some 300 million people will arrive in China's cities in the next quarter century. Should that be 30 cities of ten million or 300 cities of a million each, was the question put to the Canadian visitors.


In the context of having to completely rebuild a city the size of New Orleans, the logistical challenge of having to supply infrastructure, reconstruct the social fabric (including law and order) and re-establish the supply chain for food and consumer goods for one city

let alone 30 comes into sharp focus. And once again, the need to supply all these needs with affordable energy is a calculus that simply fails to compute. Some time very soon, the penny is going to drop and society is going to figure out that there really are limits to growth. The Beijing Olympics is supposed to built "green." We can only hope that lessons learned during that process will find their way to the development sites for those new cities, wherever they are to be built.

This issue of your magazine offers a number of tasters of what you can expect at the OPPI conference. The signposts have been laid out. Making the connections will be up to you.

Our regular columnists will be back next issue.

Glenn Miller, FCIP, RPP, is editor of the Ontario Planning Journal and vice president, education and research with the Canadian Urban Institute in Toronto. We would like to thank Alissa Mahood and her conference colleagues for their hard work in helping to make this special issue of the Ontario Planning Journal possible.



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Welcome to the OPPI Annual Conference 2005

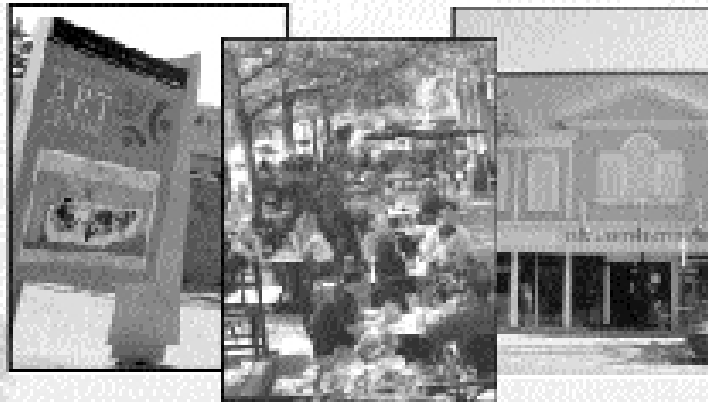
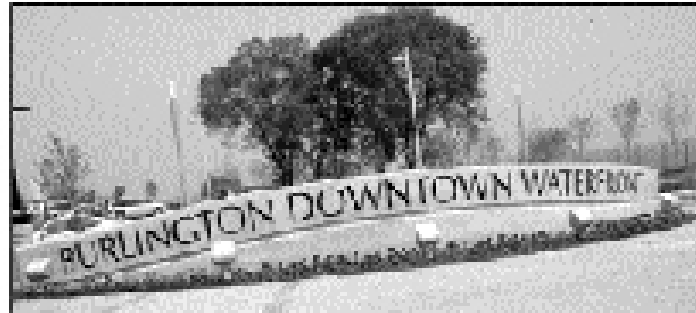
The City of Burlington is a proud supporter of **Connections 2005 OPPI Annual Conference** taking place in Hamilton-Burlington.

Welcome to all conference participants, we hope you enjoy your visit to our well-planned community and find the conference informative.

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For more information on what to see and do while you're in Burlington, visit www.burlington.ca.

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We Need to Explain Ourselves

Beate Bowron

The following is the text of Beate Bowron's remarks at the CIP conference in Calgary when she was inducted into the College of Fellows.

I am honoured to have been selected to join CIP's College of Fellows, this august and somewhat mysterious group of experienced, and purportedly wise, planning types who have contributed so much to our profession. I want to make a few brief comments about an issue that is very dear to my heart at the moment.



Beate Bowron

Municipal planning has changed a lot during my 25-year career. The field has matured, expanded vastly, and become professionalized. To quote myself, if I may: "As our hair got shorter and our dress more conservative, we began to move into the mainstream. Instead of acting as advocates, we became integrators. Instead of trying to bulldoze our way through the bureaucracy, we started building consensus. In the process we became part of the bureaucracy." (from the 100th issue of the Ontario Planning Journal, September/October, 2002). And that's where we have arrived, for better or worse.

It's a truism to say that, as planners,


we are in the business of change. To our great surprise, we have had to discover that people do not like change. If a developer cannot build high-rise buildings, at a transit hub in the heart of Toronto, on a site where these buildings will have no impact except visual, then where? And what planner can responsibly support building single-family housing along the line of a new and debt-ridden subway?

The problem is, the general public and organized citizens groups used to be

on our side. Now they see us, in many instances, as a branch of the development industry, hiding behind provincial policies, official plans and other planning rules that they feel they had no hand in making.

If Jane Jacobs can use an occasion that was meant to honour the great Canadian June Callwood, to lash out at the planning profession in general and Toronto planners in particular, and if there is even the slightest sympathy for her attack among people who should

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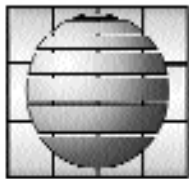
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know better, then we have truly failed to communicate what we are about.

(The occasion was the presentation of the Canadian Urban Institute's 2005 Urban Leadership Award for Lifetime Achievement, named for Jane Jacobs.)

Planners used to engage more in vigorous community debates with concerned citizens. Community meetings used to be a give-and-take among people with the technical knowledge, including planners, and people with information about the places they live in.

As newly minted "professionals," many of us have retreated from this front-line position to the safe role of "processors" of development applications. We provide technical information only, offer no opinions in public, and take no risks whatsoever for fear of stepping into an organizational or political quagmire. As a result, NIMBYism has been allowed to run rampant.

We need to communicate better, not only with our clients, politicians, developers, development lawyers, but with

the citizens of the community in which we are working.

It is time to stop investing our energy and resources in fighting rearguard actions against outraged citizens and start paying attention to the front end of the process. We need to challenge people's assumptions and fears. We need to reach out and explain ourselves, again and again and again.

This gulf between planners and the public is certainly not the only planning issue deserving attention at the moment, but it seems to be one that continues to cost the profession dearly, in trust and credibility, not to mention real time and money.

Members of CIP's College of Fellows might want to intervene and begin to engage in a dialogue with citizens groups and the general public, by invitation of course.

I certainly am very interested in getting involved.

Beate Bowron, FCIP, RPP, is the President of Beate Bowron Etcetera. She can be reached at beatebowron@sympatico.ca.

Letters

Praise for Liz Howson's Take on Intensification

Rarely am I inspired by what I read in our professional and trade journals however, I felt compelled to congratulate you on the article you recently did for Ontario Planning Journal. It was direct, forward and bang-on. It reflected well your years of experience in our industry which every professional member has benefited from at some point.

Bob Forhan, MCIP, RPP, President, iPLANcorp

MNR implementation guidelines still draft

As you know, the July/August 2005 issue (Volume 20, Issue 4) of the Ontario Planning Journal contains an article, entitled "OMB Hearings and the Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan." At the end of this article, there is a note from the Editor that implies MNR's implementation guidelines for ORMCP have been approved. This is not accurate. MNR's implementation guidelines continue to have 'draft' status.

*Denis LeMoire,
Municipal Planning Advisor,
Southern Region Planning Unit,
Ministry of Natural Resources,
Peterborough*

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Planning Futures

Mind the Gap

Brownfields is Hamilton's "ace in the hole"

Paul Bedford

Making Connections is the right choice for the theme of this year's OPPI Conference. Connecting the dots has never been more important to the profession, the public and the future of our cities and communities. As planners, our primary role is to guide change and explain to people how we can shape a better future. Making this connection is a complex task, but it is what we are all about. Although we have much to be proud of, I believe that we are losing ground in our ability to get our message across to the public and municipal politicians. We need both groups on board for planning to succeed.

The strong community backlash against change is not new, but the role of the planner in this increasingly hostile environment is being minimized. Instead of being seen as agents for positive change, we are getting lumped in with developers by the public. The public perception of municipal planners these days is often aligned more with uncontrolled growth than with city-building. We have always understood that change can be used successfully to help achieve municipal planning goals. However, our ability to convey this message and engage with citizens in a meaningful way has been eroded in the current wave of development in the GTA region. And the gap is growing.

Another gap seems to be the ability of planners to help municipal councils break with policies that have produced car-dependent growth, a geography of nowhere and monotonous condo development. The conference venue in Hamilton provides one of many examples in the province. Despite the recent adoption of the Places to Grow provincial growth strategy, the focus on brownfields and the huge opportunity to revitalize downtown Hamilton with an infusion of public infrastructure and private investment, the municipal council wants to open up 3,000 acres of undeveloped land on the mountain for suburban development.

With so much empty land in the downtown core, a unique geographic setting, an urban grid of streets and blocks and GO train service that could be expanded, Hamilton's downtown is a natural place to undertake a city-building exercise that could transform the core into a vibrant centre. Hamilton has

get better at making the connections that are so essential?

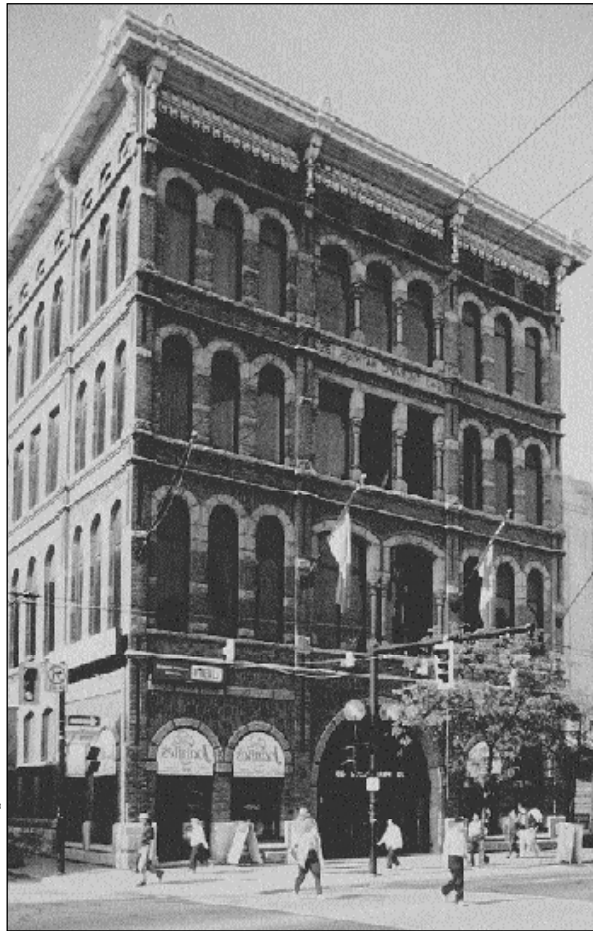
I think we should focus our energies on developing a different community engagement framework and getting serious about reforming the municipal planning system under which we operate. The following ideas may start the discussion.

Citizen Engagement Framework

I believe that much of the opposition to intensification is based on the lack of an up-front consensus-building opportunity between planners and the community. The core ingredient of a citizen engagement framework should be the chance to talk early and often throughout the evolution of policy, but especially during the development application stage. Time and staff resources must be built into the consideration of each application to enable a meaningful understanding to develop. If this means a reallocation of staff from other areas, then so be it. Perhaps strategies that involve a return to well-resourced community and neighbourhood staff and area offices need to be explored. The best communicators should be assigned to this task, as the stakes are simply far too high to leave to chance.

Connecting big-picture planning vision to people's lives is also essential, so they can visualize how they relate to both low- and high-density choices at different stages of their lives. Connecting land use and transportation with shopping, community support services, open space, the public realm, employment, entertainment and other quality of life choices can give people a better understanding of how new development can fill some of the gaps in the existing community.

Existing communities are connected to future communities, but people need time to engage in a discussion about how those connections should be made. One public meeting doesn't begin to fill this critical gap! Most people want clear answers to their questions, and we must be able to provide them.



Revitalization of downtown Hamilton should happen before expansion of greenfields

the potential to accommodate substantial increases in population over the coming decades and become the poster child for smart growth in Ontario, but only if the political will exists.

So what is going on? What should planners be doing about such gaps? How can we

Photo: UrbanStrategies Inc.

An investment of time by planners to achieve a consensus will go a long way to restoring our effectiveness and build a culture of trust and credibility for our profession.

The Planning System

Connections could also be substantially improved if our municipal planning and governance system can be seriously reformed. At present, the planning tools we use are archaic compared to those in other jurisdictions. The *Planning Act* has been adjusted only slightly over the years. It hasn't undergone real change in decades. The last attempt, by John Sewell's Commission on Planning and Development Reform in Ontario in 1993, was not implemented. Why must we rely on the baggage of yesterday to solve the problems of tomorrow?

Part of the problem is that our regulatory planning framework is designed to prevent negative activities rather than encourage positive ones. This approach needs to be turned upside down. Zoning is a cumbersome vehicle to encourage city-building, as it is actually designed to do the opposite. Since planning comes to life when ideas and concepts can be expressed visually, it would make more sense if we could use urban design tools to communicate our planning visions and explain their rationale to citizens and elected officials. In my experience, if people can see an idea for themselves and experience it through a real-life example, they will be in a better position to accept it. A true development permit system and complementary urban design system similar to the one in operation in Vancouver is long overdue and could give planners a toolkit that would help bridge the current gap in communities experiencing major change.

Major reform is also needed to municipal governance structures, the Ontario Municipal Board and the ability of municipalities to determine their own future. At present, local politics dominates at the expense of citywide matters. Private interests prevail over the public good. Place-making and a sense of co-ownership of the city do not represent the norm. In this environment, risk-taking by planners or speaking out against the weight of the bureaucracy is not encouraged. Despite heroic efforts by some planners, the amalgamation hangovers around the province are still with us. These realities work against planners who are trying to make connections in their planning work. These handicaps do not make for greatness, beauty and pride of place.

In Toronto, a strong case can be made to create a governance structure that responds to both local and citywide planning priori-

ties. The ongoing process to develop a new *City of Toronto Act* and reform the OMB may produce an improved environment. It is also appropriate to establish a Planning Act Reform Commission to bring our enabling legislation into the new century. Why should we continue to operate with our hands tied behind our backs?

Bottom Line

We have achieved a lot over the years, but we are truly missing the boat if we can't better demonstrate our relevance to citizens, councils and other stakeholders in a more persuasive manner. The good news is that

we have many talented and experienced planners who have devoted their lives to the planning profession. We also have an infusion of young, energetic planners who want to make a significant contribution during their careers. Together, it should be possible to make anything happen. Now is the time to search out better approaches to making connections—or risk the consequences.

Paul Bedford, FCIP, RPP, is the former chief planner for the City of Toronto, who is now embarked on a new career as an urban mentor. He can be reached at paulbedford@sympatico.ca.

Urban Design

Is Density Relevant?

Lance Alexander

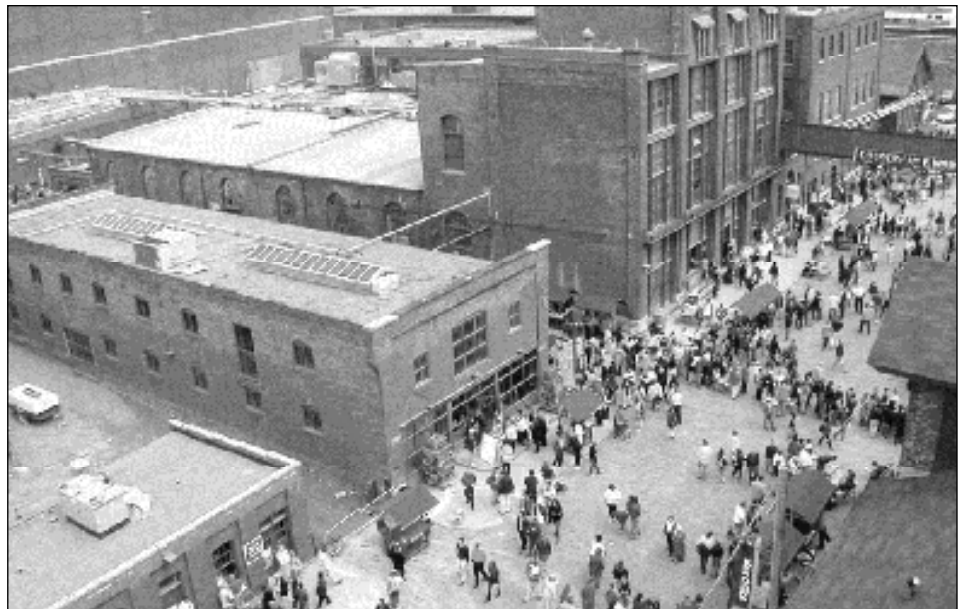
Density restrictions have long played a central role in the zoning "toolkit." However, the role of density limits needs to be rethought. Slavish focus on density to the exclusion of other considerations, such as the physical impact of development and the built form of buildings, can run counter to good planning.

What is the Purpose of Density Limits?

In theory, density limits mitigate the potential for negative externalities, help control building form and scale and promote mixed-used buildings. For example, an overly dense development may generate too much traffic

and parking demand for the building site, clogging the surrounding area with illegally parked vehicles.

Density is also used to control building scale and form indirectly. A low-density residential building constructed at under one times the lot area will be a two or three-storey house-form building, while a residential building built at three times the lot area will be a mid-rise apartment building. Density limits can also be used to encourage certain land use mixes. In the City of Toronto, mixed-use buildings are encouraged by placing density limits on commercial and residential uses that are less than the total density



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permitted. In this way density policies try to shape the market for built mixed-use space.

The Reality of Density Limits

Unfortunately, much of the theory relating to density restrictions is flawed. Density restrictions emerged during a more stable and less change-oriented era and assume a certain intensity of building use over time. But planners cannot predict the intensity of use or the results of changes to the use.

For example, despite a healthy economy, increased downtown office employment, and limited new supply of Class A office space, office vacancy rates in Canadian cities for the most part have remained stubbornly at over 10 percent. The demand for prime downtown office space has been dampened by outsourcing, space efficiency planning, relocation of routine jobs to the suburbs, greater reliance on telecommunications and computer technology, the growth of post-and-beam and home office markets, and even the advent of greater teamwork. An office building built in the 1980s is likely to be used less intensively than predicted and may have a lesser impact on its surroundings than expected.

Buildings can also gain intensity of use. This is the case with the development of for-

merly derelict brownfield sites when their existing buildings are re-used for new purposes. In cases where it is desirable to re-use buildings, density controls are of little use, because the building floor area is fixed. Often the planner must make careful trade-offs between re-using only some parts of the building and accepting some off-site impacts if the whole building is re-used.

Second, density controls also do not regulate built form well. Because different areas of a city have differing lot patterns and sizes, a uniform density limit in an area can produce different built form results, depending on how the density is sited and massed. Conversely, buildings with the similar built form may have different densities if lot sizes vary. For example, the approved Trump International Hotel and Residences is located near Scotia Plaza and First Canadian Place in Toronto's Financial District. All three buildings are about 70 storeys high. However, because the Trump project is on a 1500-square-metre infill lot, and the other buildings are on large assembled lots covering most or all of a city block, the Trump building is 49 times FSI, while the others are between 14 and 16 times FSI.

The third weakness of density limits is they can discourage new development by prescrib-

ing mixing of land uses. Density incentives are sometimes incorporated into the zoning to encourage the desired mix of uses by providing only for the maximum as-of-right density if mixed uses are built. If market conditions do not support mixed uses, the limits create a disincentive for new development. The owner will then seek planning approvals for a departure from the required limits. Not only are planning approvals time-consuming, but they introduce additional risk into the project.

In project financial analysis, this planning approval uncertainty will result in a higher discount rate and a lower net present value to future cash flows. Thus, more projects will be considered financially unviable and will not proceed. In cities or neighbourhoods where investment is needed, the use of density limits to encourage mixed uses should be discouraged.

The Real Tests: Physical Impact and Built Form

The tests of whether a building of a given size and use is appropriate are its physical impact and its built form, not its density. If a building casts heavy shadows on a street or park, creates unmanageable traffic impacts, or cannot be served by existing sewer and

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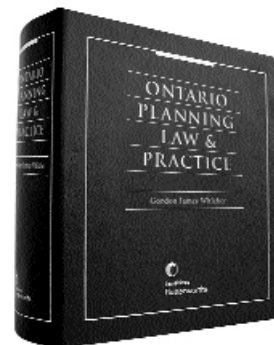
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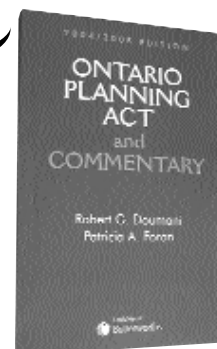
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water infrastructure, then the site is being used too intensely. This over-development may be a function of the density or the intensity of the land use proposed.

Planners also need to examine the built form of the proposed development. Does the building enhance or improve the urban design context of the area? Does it block significant views or intrude on privacy? Does it enhance street activity and the quality of the pedestrian realm? Density limits can only be a rough proxy for the technical assessment of impact and appropriate built form, and unfortunately one size does not fit all.

Where Density Didn't Matter

In 1996 the City of Toronto rezoned two areas of downtown, King-Parliament and King-Spadina, to encourage their revitalization as aging industrial areas. New regulations eliminated density limits and instead regulated built form through regulations on building heights, setbacks, setbacks and angular planes. Mixing requirements in the zoning were eliminated to allow the market to determine the highest and best use of sites. To encourage building conversions, parking and loading restrictions were loosened.

The result of the regulatory changes was dramatic—thousands of housing units were built and large amounts of commercial space were created. Today both areas are vibrant. The new buildings constructed are generally compatible with the surrounding built form context and many are of high architectural quality.



The Trump International Hotel and Residences, shown in the centre, has a much higher density, but similar built form and scale to its neighbours, Scotia Plaza and First Canadian Place

The planning of the Trump International Hotel and Residences is another example of where density considerations were secondary to those of built form and physical impact. Because the site was an unusual small infill site in the heart of Toronto's Financial District, as-of-right development would have produced a vastly under-scaled building. Instead, the development capacity of the site was measured through technical studies of shadow impacts, built form compatibility, traffic impacts, impacts on pedes-

trians, wind impacts, the availability of infrastructure to support development, and even economic impacts on downtown real estate development. The proposal was refined many times. The Ontario Municipal Board finally agreed the proposal was good planning, although the density was 49 times the lot area in an area zoned for 12 times FSI.

Is there a Role for Density?

In predictable or stable environments, density limits can produce predictable outcomes, especially in conjunction with other zoning restrictions such as setbacks and open space requirements. Low-density neighbourhoods, low-density mixed commercial-residential areas, industrial parks or even areas zoned for large-format retail uses could be candidates for density restrictions in zoning by-laws.

Density restrictions are useful in stable, homogeneous parts of the city, but they cannot ensure appropriate development in rapidly changing, heterogeneous urban environments. In these environments, the impacts of development need to be assessed using technical and built form analysis. After all, city planning is an art, not a prescriptive science.

Lance Alexander, MCIP, RPP, is a senior corporate management and strategic policy consultant to Toronto's City Manager. He has 20 years' experience as a city planner in Toronto. He can be contacted at Lalexand@toronto.ca or 416-392-7573.



Mozo by Context Developments Ltd, is a 183-unit retail-residential building that has won significant architectural praise and has helped revitalize the King-Parliament area in downtown Toronto



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Environmental Leadership in the Red Hill Valley Project

Michael R. Marini and James Rockwood



Idyllic setting clashes with modern need for mobility

For the past 50 years, the City of Hamilton has worked to carry out the most controversial and studied infrastructure project in its history: the Red Hill Valley Project. During this time, the project has been a lightning rod for opposition from various groups that have tried to stop it.

In 1982, what was then the Region of Hamilton-Wentworth volunteered the Red Hill Valley Project to be the first municipal infrastructure undertaking subjected to a Provincial Environmental Assessment. All aspects of the project (including the 20-kilometer roadway connection between Highway 403 and the QEW, eight kilometers of which run along Red Hill Valley), were reviewed and scrutinized by a Joint Provincial Hearing Board. The 99-day hearing offered many opportunities for public involvement. In fall 1985, the Joint Board approved the Project by a 2-1 margin.

Following unsuccessful appeals by opponents, construction in Red Hill Valley began in 1990. However, shortly afterwards, the provincial government withdrew its share of project funding for work in Red Hill Valley,

but not the approvals. What followed was a review of the design of the project in Red Hill Valley and the beginning of roadway construction along the mountain (the Lincoln M. Alexander Parkway). When funding for the Valley portion of the project was reinstated in 1995, the City of Hamilton proposed an impact assessment process to reduce its overall environmental impacts.

This redesign received provincial approv-

al in 1997 with a few conditions. Over the next five years, the project was substantially modified and experienced more setbacks, including a federal court case in which the City ultimately prevailed. In the end, the City made the following improvements:

- Four kilometers of concrete from the creek realignment work were eliminated. The new approach uses natural channel design techniques that add habitat diversity, eliminate existing blockages to fish migration and help stabilize the overall creek system. This seven-kilometer long creek channel work is the longest urban creek restoration project in North America.
- Wildlife and pedestrian corridors at the foot of the Niagara Escarpment were restored by replacing a fill embankment with a 220-metre-long bridge.
- One lane-kilometer of asphalt was eliminated through modifications to interchange ramps.
- For every tree removed, the City will plant 15 native seedlings or whips in the Valley and adjoining watershed. The restoration strategy also involves planting native shrubs and grasses, and salvaging seed mats to be used along the newly realigned creek. The City is providing the Six Nations community an opportunity to grow, install and monitor a large portion of the restoration program.
- For every hectare of wetland removed, the City will re-establish two hectares within the Valley system.
- The valley trail system will be realigned and extended across the QEW to connect with the waterfront trail system.

Recognizing the deep divide this project has generated in Hamilton and the need to ensure that all improvements are imple-

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mented properly, the City developed and implemented an Environmental Management Plan (EMP) to ensure that impacts on the environment are prevented where possible, or mitigated promptly when they occur.

The EMP does not simply address impacts to the natural environment, but includes social and cultural environs as well. It therefore identifies all the potential negative impacts during construction and outlines processes for prevention or mitigation. This approach is deeply rooted in the basics of an ISO 14001 Environmental Management System.

The associated Environmental Protection Plan contains 13 construction Environmental Operating Procedures (EOPs) to be followed by all individuals working on the site. The EOPs identify procedures to prevent negative environmental impacts and, if any occur, measures to mitigate them.

Communicating the EMP goals to those most capable of preventing or mitigating environmental impacts represented a sizable challenge, given the nature of heavy construction and the culture of its workers. Aside from making it a contractual obliga-

tion, the City avoided a carrot-and-stick approach and relied heavily on training and collaboration.

Training occurs in two parts. In the primary training process, the City of Hamilton provides an overview of the history of the Project, the ISO 14001 background, the environmental sensitivities involved, the likely impacts to the environment if an incident should occur, the EOPs that cover all operations, related standards and specifications, and six contingency plans for unforeseen events. Additionally, all of the documentation associated with the management system is introduced. Secondary training is delivered by the contractor. At that time, the types of operations that each individual will be engaged in are identified and the appropriate EOPs are reviewed.

Every trainee is required to sign a document indicating that training has been received. At the conclusion of the primary training, all trainees are invited to complete an evaluation of the session and receive a helmet sticker which identifies them as individuals authorized to be on site. The documentation associated with secondary training goes further, indicating that the trainee has not only received the training,

but also understands the information. It is made clear to the trainees that their signatures make them personally accountable for their actions regarding achievement of the Environmental Management Plan goals.

In addition to training for the workers, the City of Hamilton insists that any individuals who regularly visit the job site receive environmental training. This includes staff from government regulatory agencies, outside consulting staff and City staff. To date, almost 800 individuals representing 75 private-sector organizations and 13 public-sector agencies have received environmental training from the City of Hamilton.

Initially, training took place on an as-needed basis, at times involving several sessions per week. As the numbers of trained individuals in the labour pool grew, the frequency of training sessions decreased. However, whenever there are four or more new employees on site, these employees are trained as a group, with the contractor's supervisor assuming liability until they are trained.

The EMP also contains provisions for thorough documentation through inspection reports, training databases and inci-

Halton Region Connections

The diagram illustrates the Halton Region's connections to various stakeholders and plans. At the center is **Growth Management**. Surrounding it are:

- Stakeholders** (top left)
- Wellhead Protection** (top center)
- Aquifer Management** (top right)
- Citizen Advisory Committees** (middle left)
- Intensification Strategy** (middle right)
- Governments** (far right)
- Simply Local** (left side)
- GTA Agricultural Action Plan** (bottom left)
- Landowners** (bottom left)
- Regionally Forestry Plan** (bottom center)
- Environmentally Sensitive Areas** (bottom center)
- Public Consultation** (bottom center)
- Transportation Master Plan** (right side)
- Infrastructure Master Plan** (right side)
- HUSP** (bottom right)
- Halton Urban Structure Plan** (bottom right)
- Developers** (bottom right)

STRONG PARTNERSHIPS and **SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES** are also highlighted in the center.

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Care taken to minimize ecological damage

dent reports. Inspections are carried out on both a formally documented and informal basis by the City's Environmental Coordinator, the constructor's Environmental Coordinator and the contract administrator's Environmental Inspector, who make up the Environmental Management Team. All are engaged full-time in environmental management across the project area.

Every incident, no matter how small, is documented and subjected to analysis, allowing for continuous improvement. The incident reports include the who, what, where and when of the event, as well as a description of what worked and what didn't regarding the associated EOP and Contingency Plan.

The Red Hill Valley Project was the recipient of the Transportation Association of Canada's 2003 Environmental Achievement Award for innovative solutions to complex environmental problems.

For more information on the Red Hill Valley Project, visit: www.hamilton.ca/rhvp.

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Communications

The Type of Thing Most People Never Think About

Philippa Campsie

If I told you about a technique that could increase the readability of your writing at the click of a mouse, would you use it? Would you even believe me?

In fact, the technique exists, but it is astonishing how many people ignore it.

What I am talking about is typeface and type design. A well-chosen typeface and good design can keep readers reading longer and—this is the interesting part—help them to understand and remember what they have read.

The support for this assertion comes from research conducted in Australia by Colin Wheildon and published in a book called *Type and Layout* (Worsley Press, 2005). To the best of my knowledge, Wheildon is the only person to have conducted rigorous research into the readability of different forms of type and design.

He recruited more than 200 people of varying ages, occupations, and educational backgrounds. Wheildon asked them to read a variety of general-interest articles that differed according to their type and layout. Then he tested their comprehension of what they had read and asked how easy or difficult they had found the exercise and why. He defined comprehension as “The ability to read text and understand it to such an extent as to be able, if appropriate, to take action on any messages it contains.”

Keep up with the Times

Wheildon tested a variety of typefaces, both serif and sans serif (if you aren't familiar with these terms, see the box). For

years, graphic designers have extolled the virtues of sans serif typefaces such as Helvetica, Univers or Arial, calling them modern, uncluttered, clean, authoritative, elegant, and attractive. They can be all of those things, but unfortunately, in Wheildon's tests, “More than five times as many readers are likely to show good comprehension when a serif body type is used instead of a sans serif body type.”

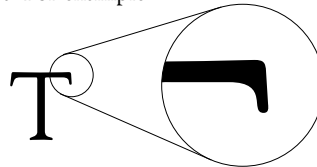
The participants complained that sans serif type made it harder to concentrate on the content of the material they were reading. Some had to backtrack frequently to reread points made earlier in the article. There is a reason why

nearly all newspapers and adult books written in English are printed in serif typefaces such as Times Roman, Bookman, or Garamond.

A capital offence

Text set entirely in CAPITAL LETTERS also scored poorly for readability (93% of readers found it hard going). We read by recognizing whole words or clumps of words in a fraction of a second. Because the shapes of words set in lower-case letters are

Serif type has small “tails” (serifs) that finish off each letter. Also, in most serif types, there is a slight difference in the thickness of the letter—vertical lines tend to be fatter than horizontal ones. For example:



Sans serif type lacks the little tails. Usually there is no difference in the thickness of the vertical and horizontal lines.



Spacing: To increase the spacing of a Microsoft Word document, go to “Format,” click on “Paragraph” and look for the heading “Line spacing” in the pop-up menu. Select “At least” or “Exactly” in the window, and set the number so that it is larger than the font size (16 for 12-point type, for example).

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distinctive, the eye recognizes these words much faster. When type is set in all capital letters, most letters assume a square-ish shape, which impedes instant recognition of word shapes.

This may be why the City of Toronto is gradually replacing its all-capital-letter street signs with signs in upper and lower case. It can be hard to distinguish YONGE from FRONT or KINGSTON from EGLINTON in all caps.

Too long for comfort

We are all used to reading reports in 10- or 12-point type on 8-inch-by-11-inch paper with one-inch margins. It may surprise you to learn that the line length in these reports may be too long for completely comfortable reading. Nearly 40% of Wheildon's readers found type set wider than about 60 characters difficult to read and another 22% avoided reading text set in long lines.

In a typical planning report, a line contains 80 or more characters (not including spaces) in 12-point type; 90 or more in 10-point type. Compare that to the columns in newspapers or in this Journal, or to the pages of a standard book. I have seen a

few planning reports with extra-wide margins and line lengths of about 5 inches. I think their originators may be on to something.

Size does matter

The most popular type size seems to be 11 point rather than the more common 12 point, but—and this is important—not set single-spaced. Only 77% of readers were comfortable with single-spaced 11-point type, whereas 98% of readers preferred to read 11-point type set with a little bit of extra space—but not too much—between the lines. For nearly every type size, from 8 points to 15 points, adding that little bit of extra space between the lines increased readability. (See the box for instructions on adding spacing.)

Your choice

Wheildon did many more tests—on such things as coloured type, headline shapes and positions, and the use of illustrations—that apply more to magazine layouts than to planning reports, but make fascinating reading. The book also notes that his findings do not apply to material intended to

be read on a computer screen, or to material for “non-fluent readers” (children or adult literacy students).

So there we have it. Research shows that readers understand and remember printed text better when it is set in 11-point serif type, upper and lower case, in lines averaging 60 characters each, with extra space between each line. All this can be done at the click of a mouse. Are you going to make that click?

Philippa Campsie's interest in type dates back to her days in the publishing industry an eon ago, when she worked with people who were specifically trained as typographers, with whom one could have civilized conversations about kerning, leading, and x-height. Her favourite typeface is Sabon. She now runs her own company, Hammersmith Communications, and is deputy editor of the Ontario Planning Journal. 416-686-6173 or pcampsie@istar.ca

Note: *The Journal uses 10pt type with 11pt leading. Is it too big or too small for you? How easy is it to read?*
—Editor

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