

# ONTARIO Planning JOURNAL

MARCH/APRIL 2006, VOL. 21, NO. 2

## Ontario needs to make energy plans

*Page 3*

*Halifax is preparing to lead the way*

*Page 7*

## ONTARIO PLANNING JOURNAL

Volume 21, Issue No. 2, 2006

ONTARIO PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS INSTITUTE  
The Ontario Affiliate of the  
Canadian Institute of Planners

INSTITUT DES PLANIFICATEURS  
PROFESSIONNELS  
DE L'ONTARIO  
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The *Journal* is published six times a year by the  
Ontario Professional Planners Institute.  
ISSN 0840-786X

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# Developing an Energy Plan for Ontario

## Lights On? Lights Off? Planners May Decide

*Damian Szybalski*

**L**isten. Someone is knocking on your door. The guest is a gas-fired power plant, a biomass facility, a wind power project, a hydroelectric plant, or another form of power generation.

*Are you ready? Will you answer? If you do not, the future looks bleak.*

Why? The Proposed Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe anticipates 3.7 million more people to settle in southern Ontario by 2031. The Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO), estimates that a minimum of 500MW of new power supply is urgently needed in downtown Toronto. Another 1000MW are needed in the western GTA. Growth outside the GTA is further aggravating the need for new generation and transmission upgrades. Ontario-wide, the IESO energy forecasts demand to grow (on average) by nearly 1 percent annually. To reduce transmission losses, among other reasons, new supply should be located near demand (that is, urban centres).

Given the need for new power supply and a projected supply shortfall, the need for careful planning must be balanced with the need for the timely installation of new generation required to meet demand and avoid blackouts.

Unlike the centralized model of the past, characterized by a few large power plants, far removed from consumers, today's power generation projects are creating a network of smaller, more dispersed power plants, located closer to the load. While this approach is creating efficiencies by reducing transmission losses and increasing system security, land use conflicts are becoming more severe as power plants locate in densely populated areas.

Across Ontario, based on IESO data, roughly 23,000MW of new generation and new generation capacity is being contemplated (see map on page 5). New generation refers to new facilities, while new generation capacity involves new generation being added to existing facilities. Of this 23,000MW, roughly 6,400MW are contemplated in the GTA-Hamilton area. About 2,700MW is new generation. The concentration of proposals within 50km of Toronto coincides with the area of generation deficiency identified by the IESO and the highest population densities.

### Where Do We Stand Today?

Municipalities are not prepared to deal with the surge in the number of power generation proposals. For example, a survey of nearly two dozen Canadian municipalities revealed an almost universal absence of official plan policies and zoning regulations regarding separation distance requirements between power plants and residential uses. As power plants enter densely populated areas, these basic policies will become increasingly important to ensuring land use compatibility.

In considering development approval, many municipalities rely on input and guidelines from provincial agencies such as the Ministries of Environment and Energy. Others, like the City of Vancouver, specify only setbacks from power lines, not power plants. Still others are silent on power plants (City of Winnipeg, Burlington, Milton, for example). With many five-year official plan reviews under way, these issues are being addressed.

With a large number of power plant proposals, the lack of explicit policies for power plants can catch municipalities off-guard, prompting them to react to individual projects rather than developing policies proactively. Faced with unexpected power plant proposals, and discrepancies between official plan policies and zoning as to where these uses are permitted, the City of

**The lack of explicit policies for power plants can catch municipalities off-guard, prompting them to react to individual projects rather than developing policies proactively**

Mississauga responded by proposing official plan and zoning amendments to strengthen municipal control over power plants.

Mississauga has recognized the need for power generation while taking a leadership role in developing comprehensive policies for power generation. Developed with public input and electricity industry consultation, these policies have the potential to become the "standard" for some future power plant proposals across the province, balancing the need for generation with careful planning. Highlights of the City's power

generation policies include:

- Reviewing the existing policy framework to determine the most appropriate locations for power plants. Power plants are permitted in industrial areas, with cogeneration allowed as an accessory use in institutional designations. Definitions of "power generating facility" and various forms of generation are added to the Official Plan and Zoning By-law.
- A list of "Expanded Development Conditions" applicable to all new large power plants. At the municipal level, this includes requirements for (i) a peer review of an applicant's technical reports; (ii) attention to urban design; and (iii) site plan approval. At the regional and provincial levels, recommendations

include establishing a Community Advisory Committee to advise on plant construction and operation, and requiring a Health Risk Assessment Report and an Emergency Response Plan.

### An Energy Plan for Ontario

Recognizing the need to manage growth, the province introduced the Proposed Growth Plan. I propose that the same urgency is needed to develop an Energy Plan for Ontario. The Energy Plan would build on the Growth Plan's policy direction which emphasizes energy conservation. As a province-wide, land use-based plan, the Energy Plan would increase municipal responsibility and complement the demand/supply-based initiatives of the Ontario Power Authority. Meaningful participation from all stakeholders (such as municipalities, IESO, OPA) in the development of this Plan is critical. The Energy Plan would have six key features:

#### 1. Policy Direction

Power generation is a novel land use. Despite recent growth in the number of proposals for privately owned power plants, municipalities lack the expertise to adequately evaluate the potential impact of power plants. Unlike public utilities, private proposals are subject to local planning approvals.

To remedy this situation, the Energy Plan would provide comprehensive policy guidance to municipalities on the approval of power plants, technical advice for assessing locational criteria, and financial mechanisms enabling municipalities to undertake any necessary studies.

#### 2. Power Planning

Efficient development requires that necessary infrastructure, including power generation, be in place to meet existing and future needs. As part of official plan reviews, municipalities, in partnership with local utilities, would be required to estimate current and future electricity needs arising from population and employment growth. Results would have to be incorporated into official plans and implemented through zoning. This would ensure that growth is managed and that it does not exceed available power supplies or overburden existing generation and transmission facilities.

As part of the development approval process, applicants would be required to submit and municipalities would have to review "electricity need assessment studies" to ensure that a sufficient power supply exists. Growth would be contingent on having adequate local power supply (much in the same way as development approvals are contingent on water and wastewater capacity).

Policies will also need to be developed to accommodate net metering, which permits anyone to sell renewable power to the grid using equipment rated to a maximum of 500kW. The Exhibition Place turbine is rated at 750kW, enough for about 250 homes. Net metering systems can take the form of wind turbines, solar panels or other renewable power systems.

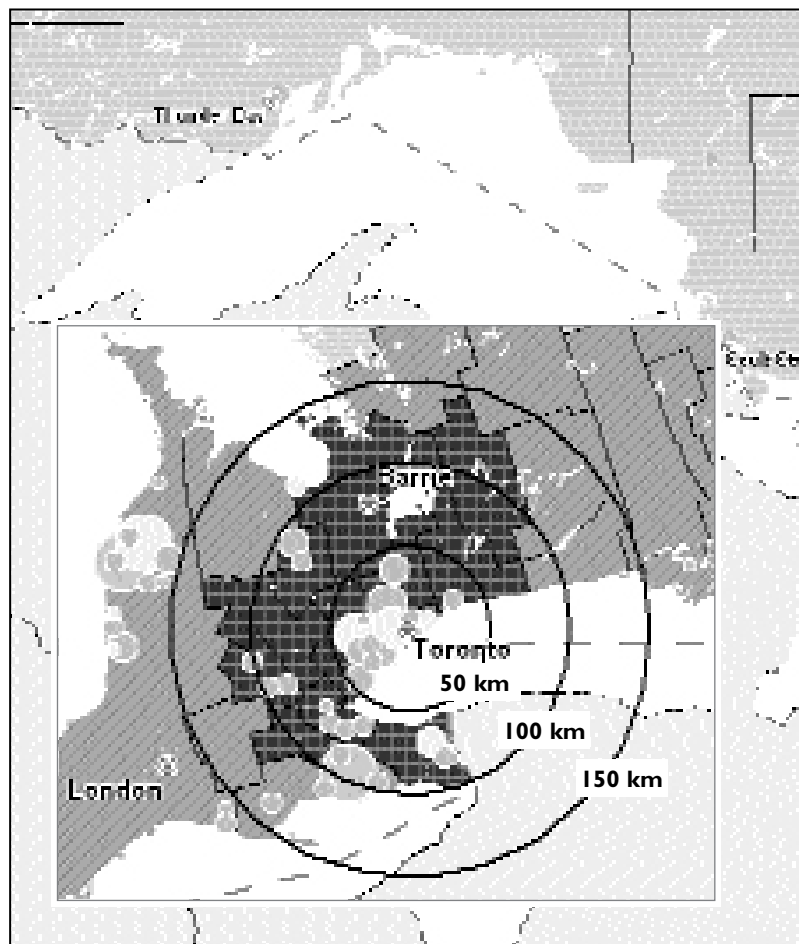
#### 3. Power Generation Zones

The Plan's key feature would be to identify "Power Generation Zones." Within these zones, power generation would be the main land use. Where conditions are suitable, renewable power generation technologies such as wind, solar and biomass would be given priority over traditional generation, including gas-fired plants. In identifying generation zones, consideration must be given to regional differences and the unique characteristics of different power technologies. Brownfields could be prime locations for Power Generation Zones, especially in built-up areas.

Power Generation Zones would ensure that land is available for power plants needed to meet future demand.

Power Generation Zones need not be limited to on-shore locations. As the population grows and competition for land near and within urban centres increases, Power Generation Zones could be established off-shore.

Off Toronto's shoreline, Toronto Hydro is in the early stages of considering a 60MW wind power project several kilometres into Lake Ontario. With a capacity to power 20,000 homes, the project is likely to consist of large turbines, potentially four times the size of the Exhibition Place turbine. While off-shore power development costs are higher than for on-shore projects, Toronto Hydro decided against installing a wind power project far outside



The impact of the demand for power stretches beyond the GTA (Locations are approximate/conceptual. Select data mapped.)

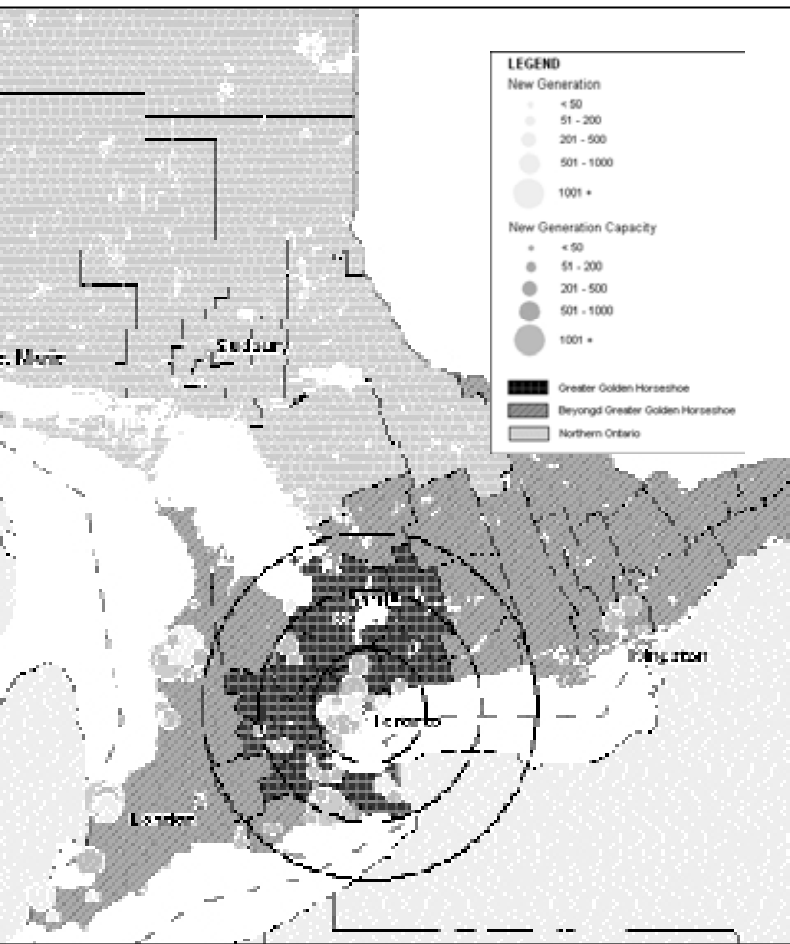
of Toronto's borders, partly because it preferred a more local power source. This fits the spirit of the Energy Plan.

Similar to the exact delineation of urban growth centres identified in the Growth Plan, Power Generation Zones would be defined by individual municipalities, in consultation with the province and subject to land use compatibility, transmission network capacity and proximity, fuel source access (for example, quality of wind resource for wind power) and proximity to the load. Unlike urban growth centres, Power Generation Zones would be smaller in area and more than one could be located in one municipality. Their location would need to be coordinated

regionally to ensure that no one area is either under- or over-served.

Once delineated, Power Generation Zones would be incorporated into local official plans and implemented through zoning. For renewable power generation, zoning should consider “wind and solar rights” to ensure that one project does not preclude another by blocking access to wind or sunlight. Zoning regulations could also include reverse setbacks, height restrictions and design guidelines.

Attractive building design can be promoted through existing site plan controls and additional municipal control over exterior design under Bill 51, the *Planning and Conservation Land Statute Law Amendment Act*, if it is passed.



Source: Katarina Kapinaj (Associate, urbanMetrics inc.) and Damian Szybalski, based on IESO, Status of Current Applications, September 15, 2005.

Urban design guidelines must recognize that power plants are not synonymous with visual blight. A 3.5MW gas-fired power plant located adjacent to a school in downtown Hamilton fits seamlessly into the urban fabric. In operation since 2003, the \$11 million project provides heat to 10 downtown buildings and sells electricity to the City. Recognizing the environmental benefits (such as reduced air pollution) and improved security of the power supply, public support for the plant has grown.

Power generation is also compatible with other land uses. In Calgary, several mid-sized (about 12MW) power generation facilities have been integrated into residential buildings. Small genera-

tion facilities (about 1MW) are widely permitted, including in low-density residential areas. In Iowa, 10 schools have installed a total of 12 wind turbines. The turbines vary from 50kW to 1.6MW and are located near the schools, in a rural setting. One Iowa school district meets 60 percent of its electricity needs from two wind turbines. Public support has been widespread for these projects.

In addition, design and development standards should be strengthened to make development approval conditional on the proponent ensuring that street alignment, building orientation, roof angle and lot size are such that they allow for easy retrofit to renewable power generation.

#### 4. Minimum Generation Requirements

The Energy Plan would specify minimum generation requirements for each Power Generation Zone. Minimum generation requirements would be a function of local electricity demand, and forecast population and employment growth identified through “Power Planning” (see #2 above). Generation requirements could be offset by municipal electricity conservation measures. Bill 21, the *Energy Conservation Responsibility Act*, provides a framework for reducing energy consumption by requiring public agencies to consider energy conservation and efficiency, and develop energy conservation plans. Under the Energy Plan, municipalities would be required to establish all necessary planning policies and ensure implementation of minimum generation requirements.

Minimum generation requirements would vary regionally. For example, a Power Generation Zone in Toronto might be required to accommodate a total of 1000MW of new generation, while those in Collingwood might have a requirement of 100MW. Local utilities, the OPA and the IESO should be consulted in determining minimum generation requirements.

#### 5. Limited Appeal Rights

An important feature of the Plan would be to limit OMB appeal rights related to power plant proposals, provided a project receives municipal approval under existing policies and meets applicable *Environmental Assessment Act* provisions. This approach has two benefits. First, by requiring both municipal and environmental assessment approval, it is more acceptable than the regulation proposed by Bill 51, which may remove municipal oversight over power plants. Second, it encourages municipalities to recognize the need for power generation and to proactively develop policies for power plants rather than being reactive to development proposals.

#### 6. Financial Backbone

The financial resources of most municipalities are strained. To successfully implement the Energy Plan, the Province would commit on-going funding to assist municipalities in power planning. This can include funding for research, mapping of local wind and solar resources, and hiring dedicated staff to monitor power consumption and evaluate development applications for conformity with the Energy Plan.

Senior levels of government should not be the sole bearers of financial support. Municipalities may be able to overlay community improvement project areas over Power Generation Zones. The *Planning Act* allows municipalities to define community improvement project areas for, among other things, “any other environmental, social or economic development reason.” The environmental impacts of coal-fired plants and the associated need to build cleaner generation sources may meet this criterion. Grants or loans may then be provided by the municipality, with the potential for

additional funds from the province. The Green Municipal Fund offered through the Federation of Canadian Municipalities is another potential funding source.

A land-use based Energy Plan is a novel idea. Further refinements are necessary. In discussing the merits of such a plan with some in the industry and senior municipal planners across the GTA, general interest in the Plan emerged. However, several concerns were raised. First, requiring municipalities to designate Power Generation Zones and set minimum generation requirements was cited as limiting local autonomy. Limiting appeal rights raised similar concerns. Second, it was noted that municipalities need to be heavily involved in the development of an Energy Plan, as they are most attuned with local conditions. The need for the Energy Plan to set conservation targets and support broader energy initiatives, such as municipal economic development strategies, was also mentioned. Given the high cost of transmission network studies, resource studies (for example, wind speed assessment) and other

studies, the feasibility of pre-determining suitable power plant locations was questioned. Doubt was also raised over the relevance of land use planning to power generation. Lastly, it was noted that an Energy Plan should not duplicate any existing regulations. The proposed Energy Plan addresses the above concerns. It is intended to be developed through an open and transparent process, with meaningful municipal participation. The Plan does not impose pre-determined minimum generation targets, but rather directs municipalities to establish them through the assessment of current and forecast local power demand. Conservation would be included as a mechanism allowing municipalities to reduce minimum generation requirements. Further, while the Plan requires defining Power Generation Zones, their exact delineation rests with municipalities. Through proactive planning, municipalities can ensure that power plants locate in the right places and land use conflicts are minimized. Rather than duplicating any existing regulations, the Plan would complement the Growth Plan, Bill 51 and other relevant policies. The need for land use compatibility anchors the role of land use planning in the Energy Plan. Concerns over limited appeal rights are addressed by requiring that power plants receive municipal approval and meet applicable *Environmental Assessment Act* provisions, prior to being exempt from OMB appeal. To aid its implementation, the Energy Plan proposes on-going funding.

Key benefits of the Energy Plan include: (i) providing policy direction and educating the public; (ii) improving dialogue between the Province and municipalities; (iii) creating a proactive planning environment; (iv) managing growth based on available generation resources; (v) streamlining the approvals process while respecting local planning autonomy; (vi) coordinating development across municipal boundaries; and (vii) decreasing uncertainty by informing developers, and current and future residents as to where power plants are permitted. In addition, the Plan would empower municipalities and create a less confrontational process by creating an up-front process that involves the municipality, the public, the province and the proponent prior to any power plant proposal.

### Policy Framework

Many of the pieces required to make an Energy Plan a reality are already in place. The Provincial Policy Statement requires that municipalities provide opportunities for renewable power genera-

tion. Development patterns are to maximize the use of renewable energy. The *Planning Act* identifies the “supply, efficient use and conservation of energy” as a provincial interest.

If passed, Bill 51 will have important implications for power plant approvals. First, the list of provincial interests will be expanded to include the consideration of sustainable development. Sustainable development should include consideration of existing and planned power generation infrastructure to support growth. Second, expanded site plan approval powers related to sustainable building design can potentially allow municipalities to require the use of small-scale wind turbines or solar panels. Third, subdivision approval criteria will be expanded to require regard for the degree to which a subdivision’s design optimizes the available supply, means of supplying, efficient use and conservation of energy.

Although the province may exempt power plants from *Planning Act* requirements, provided they are approved or exempt under the *Environmental Assessment Act*, this provision should be carefully reviewed as it limits local planning autonomy. An alternative approach would be to remove OMB appeal only when a project gains municipal approval under existing policies and meets applicable *Environmental Assessment Act* provisions. This approach would better balance the need for local oversight and the need for timely approval of new power plants as the Province struggles to meet growing electricity needs.

Subject to existing *Planning Act* policies, several power plant proposals have stagnated. Wind power proposals in Norfolk County and Prince Edward County have been appealed to the OMB. Despite power shortages, Toronto is not eager to see a power plant.

### Planners Hold the Switch

Ontario communities face a difficult predicament. On the one hand, additional power generation is desperately needed. On the other, few communities are eager to host a power plant. Planners find themselves in the midst of this dilemma. It is the planners that will have to craft and implement policies for power plants. Onerous requirements will prolong the planning approvals process, jeopardizing the ability to meet growing electricity demand. Whether the lights stay on or off will depend on the ability of planners to balance the need for careful planning with the urgent need for new power generation.

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*Opinions expressed are solely those of the author. This is Damian’s third major article for the Ontario Planning Journal.*

*I, along with many others, dedicate this article to Matthew Hanson who passed away very suddenly March 7, 2006. A Planner with Meridian Planning Consultants Inc. in Barrie, Matthew was a loyal friend, colleague, dedicated planner and a scholar, having earned a M.Sc. in Planning from the University of Toronto in 2004. The topic of energy was one of Matthew’s many interests. Matthew will be missed by many, as will his contribution to the planning profession.*

# Why Municipalities Should Build Indicators into their Community Energy Plans

Communities across the country are responding the NRCan's offer to help with energy plans. Halifax one of the first to respond

Ken Church

**C**ommunity Energy Planning (explained in the March / April 2004 issue of the Ontario Planning Journal) is a topic that will become increasingly important for planners in Ontario as energy costs rise and the impact of higher prices begins to be felt throughout the community. This article argues that municipalities should consider building indicators into the planning process as a way to keep plans flexible and responsive to changing conditions.

## Rising energy costs can destroy the economy of a community

Rising energy costs can easily destroy a community's economic livelihood. The increasing cost of fossil fuels permeates society, affecting not just gasoline and home heating, but also food production and retail activity. In the past year, many industries in Ontario have had to shut down because of rising energy costs.

From that perspective, it is unfortunate that the utilities typically see energy only as revenue stream. Many energy utilities currently ignore their responsibility to encourage responsible energy use and force municipalities into demand-side management in an attempt to maintain the economic stability of their communities. Money that is spent on energy—whether for heating, cooling, power or transportation—is money removed from the local economy, unavailable for investment in local shops,

restaurants or other community activities. It is in a municipality's best interest to acknowledge that energy use is possibly the

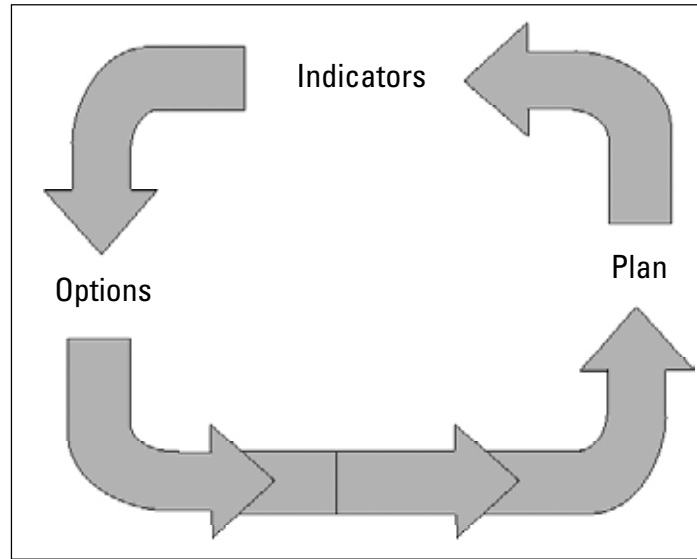
where options are considered and weighed in terms of their potential to achieve the required goal. The second step is to develop the details of the plan; and third, there is implementation and the monitoring of progress. The three functions are mutually supportive. Unless these steps are followed, the project fails— or so the theory goes.

In looking at energy projects, however, the historical evidence suggests that indicators are typically considered only as a cosmetic afterthought, usually to confirm the success of a project or justify the expense of developing the plan or making required investments. This approach is fatalistic: once the plan has begun, it must run its course and there is limited potential for corrective action. Too often, indicators are chosen for the wrong reasons and as a result are ineffective in directing change. Without an effective source of feedback, corrective action relies on the original planning assumptions, and the plan rapidly falls apart.

The process industries have recognized the power of feedback for many years. Their process instrumentation relies upon continuous recycling of data from the active manufacturing process.

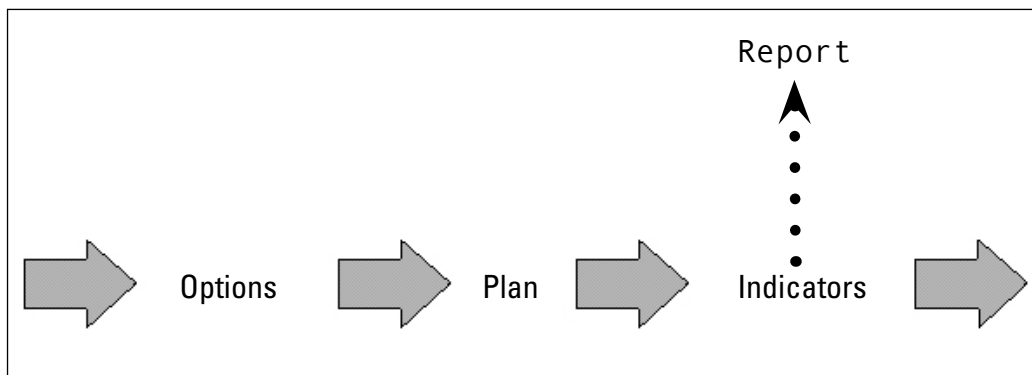
The indicators are inherent to the design of the plan, and as such have a positive impact on decision-making throughout the process.

Indicators can be similarly useful in the



The Planning Process

largest drain on the community's economic prospects. As a result, the need for functional indicators of energy in community planning is becoming increasingly critical.



Of-seen planning process

## Indicators can play a key role if used wisely

Once the basic preparation and analysis has been carried out, at least three separate tasks remain. First, there is the evaluation process

world of municipal planning, helping to shape the plan from the outset. Indicators serve multiple purposes. First, they are reactive. They tell you where you've been, how your plan has been accepted, and whether it is likely to achieve the desired goals. In terms of municipal energy consumption, the indicator might reflect energy consumed per resident or energy saved through energy efficiency programs.

The second role is predictive. The same indicators must be part of a decision-making process and give guidance to the plan's management (be it a council or a utility) on an ongoing basis. Is fine-tuning or remedial action necessary? Should the process be accelerated or slowed down?

We all recognize that the approval and implementation of a plan does not mean that the results will automatically be as predicted. This is especially true with Community Energy Plans, which are by their nature long-term and deal with human activities. The chances of achieving the predicted results without mid-course adjustment are almost zero. Indicators that are too vague or that rely on aggregated data are not very useful in that regard.

### New spreadsheet from NRCan is a valuable tool

As indicated in a previous article, Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) has developed a community energy planning guide aimed at assisting communities—particularly small to medium-sized municipalities with limited resources—to develop long-term energy plans. The content of this guide is now being discussed within a number of provincial and municipal organizations as a basis for more extensive planning. The guide emphasizes that indicators are instrumental to the successful implementation of a completed strategy. The indicators are chosen at the very beginning of the process, even before decisions are made on the appropriate programs and projects that will form the plan.

How might these indicators work? Consider the use of gross energy consumption per sector as an indicator for a community. These data normally form part of a simple inventory undertaken for a community as Step 1 for the Partners for Climate Protection program operated by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. These data are collected

from municipal utilities and would be presented for the residential, institutional, commercial, industrial and even transportation sectors. By themselves, the data simply inform the community how and where energy is being used. However, a simple spreadsheet model, currently under development within NRCan, combines this information with tombstone data defining energy users and current utility rates to estimate the financial outlay. This annual outlay can be extended to seven years, typically the go-no go timeframe for municipal project acceptance. The outlay for even a small community can be surprisingly large. Further to this, the spreadsheet simulates the potential financial benefits of energy efficiency measures, programs and projects upon the community's purse strings. These activities might include improved building standards, appliance upgrades and fuel switching through to renewable energy generation and district energy. The calculation would include not only the savings due to energy reduction, but also the investment in the community of implementing the projects themselves.

Armed with such a simulation tool, reactive indicators such as kilowatt-hours of energy consumption enable planners to assess which programs are appropriate for the community, and, more importantly, in which sector of the community those programs and plans will achieve the greatest long-term effect.

*Details of the Community Energy Planning guide, the spreadsheet model or any of the planning tools developed by Natural Resources Canada can be obtained from Ken Church at (613) 947-8952 or [kchurch@nrcan.gc.ca](mailto:kchurch@nrcan.gc.ca).*

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# Urban Density and Mental Health: The Jury Is Still Deliberating

Waterloo committed to tackling a tough issue

Philip Chan, Brent Hall and Robert Shipley

**W**ith more than 80 percent of Canadians currently living in cities, future population growth will have to be accommodated by higher-density urban forms. This prospect, however, runs up against the perception that high-densities are detrimental to mental health. Addressing this issue is vital. An urban environment conducive to mental well-being, particularly among disadvantaged groups, is a health determinant for the entire population. This article describes the mental health literature linking urban density and mental health, and concludes with efforts by the Region of Waterloo to address this issue.

## The Classic Chicago “Insanity Rate” Study and Subsequent Research

In 1939, the first large-scale urban epidemiology study of schizophrenia and psychosis was conducted in Chicago. This project revealed that cases of schizophrenia and alcoholic psychosis were highly concentrated in densely populated city core areas, and decreased with the distance from the city centre.

Researchers formulated two explanations to explain this pattern. The “breeder hypothesis” suggested that the stresses associated with densely populated urban environments were related to the incidence of mental disorders. The “social drift hypothesis” suggested that individuals with mental health problems gradually “sink” into lower socioeconomic status and “drift” toward urban centres to seek cheap accommodation and services unavailable in the suburbs.

The Chicago study inspired further research in U.S. cities, as well as in the U.K. Research generally supported the findings of the Chicago study, but the conclusions varied. For example, in the 1953 mid-Manhattan Study, at least two members of the research team initially agreed that the results supported the “breeder hypothesis.”

However, the research team later reported that New York City was “healthier than ever before in history” and warned against interpreting their results in a way that might imply a more prominent mental health issue existed in the city.

## Recent Studies on Urban Density

In 1998, a large population-based study in the Netherlands claimed that mental disorders are associated with population density

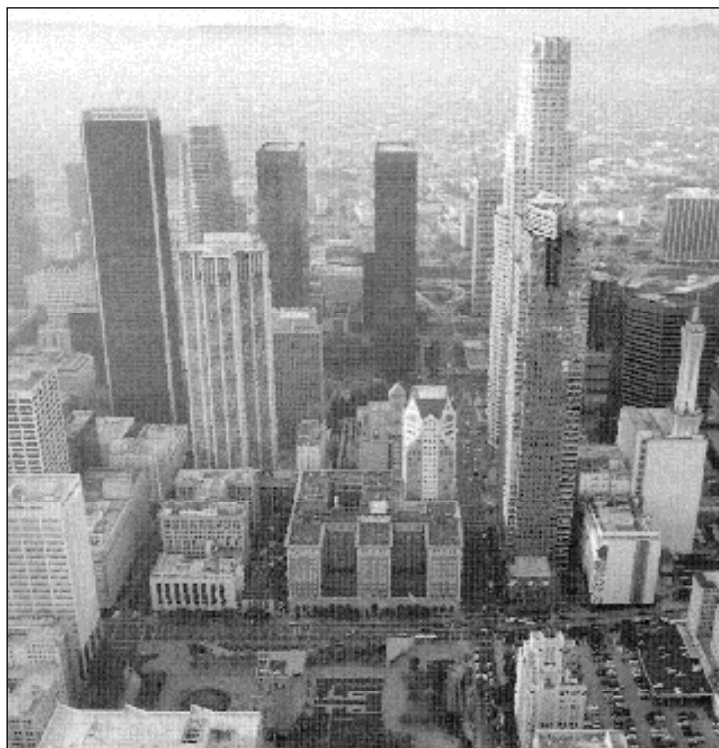
and the prevalence and severity of symptoms of psychoses. All research results consistently ruled out “social drift” as a factor.

There are few explanations for the apparent effects of urban density on mental health. The most common include the stress caused by noise, pollution, crime, high divorce rates and other negative factors. However, many researchers have noted that high-density urban environments do not necessarily imply higher pollution or divorce

rates, and that some high-density urban environments provide adequate social space, amenities, human resources, education and employment opportunities that positively contribute to mental health.

Infection, seemingly more prevalent in higher-density urban areas, has also been suggested as a causal factor in schizophrenia. However, results from large population-based studies investigating the incidence of birth of schizophrenic patients during years of epidemics have not produced conclusive results.

Many researchers note that urban environments are multi-dimensional and influences on mental illness are difficult to isolate. However, two areas of research—community mental health and genetic studies—may offer useful insights.



Built form, density, intensely urban...the impacts on mental health still unclear

at the location of birth. In 1999, a study based on data from 1.75 million children born of Danish women supported this finding. In 2001, another Danish study revealed that urban density had an apparent “drug-response” effect on vulnerable children under 15. In other words, repeated exposure to drugs during upbringing occurs more frequently in urbanized areas and may be responsible for an association between urbanization and the risk of schizophrenia. In 2002, a further study in the Netherlands made a connection between higher densities

The major focus of community mental health is deinstitutionalization and its impacts on former psychiatric patients in residential communities.

Deinstitutionalization in Canada was, in part, propelled by the publication of a book by a Montreal asylum ex-patient Jean-Charles Page called *Les Fous Crient au Secours*, which contained stories of insulin shock and electro-convulsive treatments in psychiatric institutions. This book fueled public anger and led to a series of scandals about excessive profit and cruel treatments

## Community Mental Health Research

of institutionalized patients. In the 1960s, Canada, together with England, France and Holland, began the deinstitutionalization of psychiatric patients.

The major challenge in discharging former psychiatric patients into the community is in providing adequate housing and follow-up services. Most former patients were placed in boarding houses that offered some medical and custodial services. Researchers found that this approach led to high recidivism rates, severe symptoms and permanent dependency.

The current and most successful approach to housing is called supported housing, which treats individuals with psychiatric disabilities humanely by encouraging social integration and independent living in the regular housing market. Residents of this form of housing in both the United States and Canada can maintain a broad social support network and hold on to jobs. People living in supported housing tend to enjoy life, integrate with the community and are less likely to be readmitted to hospital. The availability of accessible and affordable housing is now widely recognized as a major catalyst for promoting mental health in urban environments.



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Another important area of mental health research is the study of genetic influences on mental disorders. This body of research consists of extended family studies, adoption studies and twins studies. Using modern brain imaging technology, researchers have found that mental disorders are only moderately affected by genetic influences, and that mental problems can be modified and mitigated by social interventions.

#### What does this mean for planning?

Since the 1970s, researchers have consistently found that the environmental context of former psychiatric patients is an accurate predictor of recovery. More importantly, it is not so much the pleasantness of the environment (such as proximity to open space), but the human dimension that is important. Therapeutic residential environments were found to be in areas of mixed land use (commercial and residential), lower-income households, and neighbourhoods of mature residents, where the social attitude toward psychiatric survivors is more tolerant. The apparent effects of urban density on mental health should therefore be interpreted in light of the social dimensions of urban environments.

A further strand of research has found that children born of schizophrenic mothers adopted by parents with poor communication skills are at risk for serious mental disorders in adulthood. It is therefore possible that negative attitudes in the home and at school (possibly more complex in higher-density communities) toward children whose behaviours are affected by psychiatric disabilities may lead to the onset of more severe mental illness later in life.

Two concepts from community psychology—place attachment and responsibility theory—also offer perspectives on high-density urban environments. Place attachment refers to emotional bonding, developed over time, to a particular socio-physical environment. These bonds are important psychological resources that individuals draw upon to deal with critical life events. Responsibility theory refers to the opportunities offered by certain environmental settings that are perceived differently, depending on the number of individuals in the settings. The fewer individuals in a setting, such as a school or faith-based community, the higher the perceived sense of responsibility to participate and integrate into the large community, which is critical for psychological well-being.

Efforts to prevent and mitigate mental health issues in high-density urban communities should, therefore, be focused on:

- interdisciplinary collaboration to cultivate social environments that promote inclusiveness, respect for diversity, community integration and interventions with specific populations;
- engaging community stakeholders to determine the density with which they are most comfortable and which supports the provision of affordable housing, necessary services, amenities and community infrastructure;
- reviewing the visual and design qualities of proposed developments to place attachment and community participation.

The Region of Waterloo has used these principles in formulating and implementing its Regional Growth Management Strategy (RGMS). The Human Services Plan of the RGMS includes Planning, Housing and Community Services; Public Health; Social Services; Police Services; and the Community Safety and Crime Prevention Council. This collaboration has strengthened the coordination of urban development with concerted health promotion interventions such as anti-bullying programs, poverty prevention, and inclusiveness.

The Region has also collaborated with the School of Planning at the University of Waterloo in developing innovative technology to engage the community electronically in visioning and planning decision-support processes. The strategy of broad-based community consultation and involvement will be critical in shaping sustainable urban development over the next 30 years. Certainly, an important aspect of this collaboration is to produce environments associated with low mental and physical health risks.

*Philip Chan works with the Planning Information & Research division, PHCS, Regional Municipality of Waterloo. Dr. Brent Hall, MCIP, RPP, and Dr. Robert Shipley, MCIP, RPP, are professors in the School of Planning, University of Waterloo. The opinions expressed in this article are those of the authors. No official endorsement by the above organizations should be inferred.*

Interested in the connections between planning, urban environments, and health? Come to the 2006 OPPI Symposium, "The Shape of Things to Come: Improving Health Through Community Planning," September 28-29, at the Nottawasaga Inn, Alliston.

Niagara Sub-District

## Impact of Urban Sprawl a Focus of Upwind Downwind Air Quality Conference

*Alissa Mahood*

In late February, the City of Hamilton, the McMaster Institute of Environment and Health, and Clean Air Hamilton hosted the fourth biennial conference, Upwind Downwind: Cities, Air and Health, at the Hamilton Convention Centre. The conference focused on the health impacts of poor air quality and how land use and transportation decisions affect air quality. It served as an important networking and information forum for the exchange of research findings and innovative ideas to measure and improve air quality. The conference also highlighted the roles that industry, community groups, academia and government play in achieving air quality improvements.

Day 1 featured Air Quality, Public Health and Planning and Science for Decision Making. Sessions focused on the newly emerging partnership between public health and planning with respect to improving air quality in urban environments as well as illustrating the use of science in decision-making and development of new projects, policies and regulations.

Day 2 featured Airshed Agreements and Regulations and Partnerships and highlighted examples of airshed agreements in North America, in addition to Ontario's new air quality regulations as well as concrete examples of citizen groups, non-government organizations, industry, academia and local, provincial and federal governments partnering to improve air quality.

The line-up of speakers that made Upwind Downwind the air quality event of 2006 included Lawrence D. Frank, Jeff R. Brook and Dennis Corr. Dr. Frank's work on land use, travel behaviour, air quality and health has received considerable media attention for his studies on obesity and urban sprawl including *Time* magazine, CNN and ABC News. Dr.

Brook is widely recognized in Canada and throughout North America for his expertise and contributions in the air quality and health area. He is currently leading Environment Canada's effort in advanced air quality and exposure research related to the Border Air Quality Strategy. Dennis Corr is a consultant and former manager with the Ministry of the Environment who conducts research on the health effects of air pollutants and measurement methods for airborne particles. He led environmental response teams for major emergencies such as the Hagersville tire fire and the Plastimet fire, and initiated the Nuvehicle program, evaluating the advantages of hybrid vehicles in Hamilton.

For more information on the conference visit: [www.cleanair.hamilton.ca](http://www.cleanair.hamilton.ca).

love for the profession was evident in all of his work. He was an integral part of our team. Our staff and all of our clients and colleagues who had the pleasure and honour of working with him will remember his enthusiasm, humour and intelligence.

Bob Lehman hired Matt in 2004 and worked closely with him, knowing from the first interview that he was to be a promising young planner. He was interested in everything he did and every person he met—we will miss him greatly.

Dana Anderson, MCIP, RPP  
Meridian Planning Consultants Inc.,  
on behalf of everyone at Meridian.

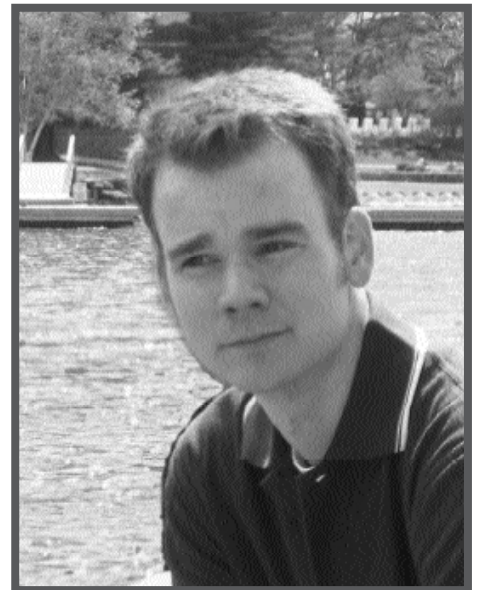
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### Obituary

## Matthew Hanson

It is with great sadness that we announce the sudden passing of Matthew Hanson on March 7, 2006, at the age of 26. Matt had a Bachelors Degree in Urban and Economic Geography (2002) from U of T and was a graduate of its M.Sc. program in Planning in 2004.

Matt worked as a teaching assistant at U or T and was a Heritage Planner with the Citizens for the Olde Town in Toronto before joining Meridian Planning Consultants in 2004. He was a provisional member of OPPI/CIP. Matt was an extremely gifted planner whose



Matthew Hanson

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President's Message

## Planning Act Reform— OPPI Supports Proposed Legislation With Caveats

Following an extensive series of face-to-face and teleconference meetings with more than 200 members, representatives of OPPI met with Minister Gerretsen to present the Institute's position on Bill 51 in late February. The submission focused on four main points:

- Access to proposed regulations;
- Creating a transparent and accessible planning process;
- Support for intensification and sustainable, well-designed communities;
- Reform of the OMB.

The following is a précis of the full submission, the full text of which can be found on the OPPI website.

The Institute congratulated the government for "attempting to strike a balance between community, development interests, and municipal objectives." OPPI said that Bill 51 "provides additional tools for community building and should help municipalities gain greater control over their own processes."

### 1. Access to proposed regulations

OPPI suggested that in the interests of getting the "changes right," the province should consider phasing in their reforms. Without the implementing regulations, OPPI noted, it is not possible to fully understand the import of the proposed changes.

### 2. A transparent and accessible process

Commenting on the need for a transparent and accessible planning process, OPPI stressed that "a complete application" needs to be clearly defined. A "one size fits all" approach is not appropriate because circumstances vary greatly from place to place and from one application to another. While consistency across the board is important, it is not feasible to pre-determine the level of reporting necessary for all applications.

The Institute also expressed concern that the proposed legislation may make the job of decision makers more difficult. "With the new emphasis on local decision making, it is crucial that the input of professional planners be given proper consideration by councils and other decision makers."

OPPI noted that proposed changes to the requirement to hold open houses may prove oner-

ous for small jurisdictions, and ignores the fact that larger municipalities routinely organize such sessions. Open houses are not needed for all applications, the Institute said.

More onerous requirements for reviewing official plans and zoning will put a strain on municipal resources that are already stretched to the limit, OPPI noted. "The need to balance . . . complete information with the need to make the process more accessible will require clear regulations and a rethinking of how public meetings and local decision making occurs."

Although members are interested in "pursuing performance zoning criteria through conditional zoning," some limits will be needed to these powers in order to avoid conflicts with conditions specified

in other legislation. These opportunities should not be "limited to energy and sustainable development projects."

Some effort will also have to be made to clarify which policies apply to which applications through the transition period, OPPI insisted. Failure to acknowledge the realities of the development application process will undermine efforts to achieve "complete applications."

Commenting on the complexities of dealing with freedom of information laws and the protection of rights,

the Institute suggested that the government provide additional clarification in this area.

### 3. Supporting intensification and well-designed communities

Noting that the proposed legislation effectively defines a particular land use category at the provincial level, OPPI argued that the term "area of employment" needs to be better defined as well as consistent with other legislation.

Bill 51's focus on pedestrian-oriented areas needs to be coordinated with other legislation, such as the *Ontarians with Disabilities Act*, the Building Code and the Fire Code.

Acknowledging the importance of community and urban design, the Institute called for a clear distinction between architectural control and design. There is an important distinction between design principles and taste. Not all municipalities have the resources to adequately address these matters and the government should make an effort to disseminate information on best practices in this regard.



Greg Daly, MCIP, RPP

#### 4. Reforms of the OMB

The Institute is already on record in support of the role and function of the OMB and reaffirmed this position. Notwithstanding the goal to reflect local interests in the decision-making process, OPPI questioned whether local appeal bodies will have the desired effect. The likelihood is that these bodies will only place an "additional burden on municipal resources." There are also uncertainties about how these bodies are intended to function.

OPPI also expressed concerns about defining the OMB exclusively as an appeal body. The notion of limiting evidence to that

available at the time of council review may prove counterproductive by excluding relevant new information and unwittingly making it more difficult for members of the public to challenge decisions taken by council.

The Institute cautioned that the wording of the proposed legislation potentially undermines one of the current strengths of the OMB—the pre-hearing. OPPI reiterated its previous points regarding the importance of appointing qualified members to the Board and providing members with sufficient security of tenure to allow them to focus on their work.

## Central District Restructuring—What's it all About?

In September 2005, OPPI Council approved a proposed restructuring of Central District. Over the summer of 2006, members will vote on the by-law changes to implement the restructuring plan, and the results will be announced at OPPI's Annual General Meeting at the Nottawasaga Inn in Alliston on September 28, 2006.

This article explains Council's decision. Over the coming months, more information will be available through the e-newsletter

and on the OPPI website. And Central District's two representatives are available to answer questions members may have. But first, here's the thinking behind why Central District needs to be restructured.

#### Central District facts:

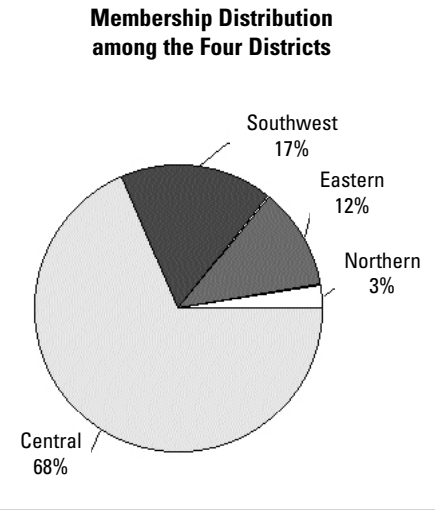
##### many members, few representatives

Central District stretches from Fort Erie in the south to Muskoka in the north, and from Caledon in the west to Peterborough and Oshawa in the east.

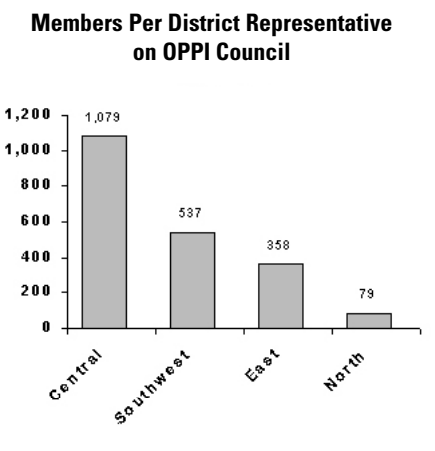
- It is OPPI's largest District as it is home to 68% of OPPI's members.
- Its structure has not changed since the formation of OPPI in 1986.
- It is now 70 percent larger than OPPI itself was in 1986.

Table I shows how the membership is currently distributed across the District, identified by sub-district.

OPPI has three other Districts: Southwest, Eastern, and Northern. The pie chart shows how membership is distributed among the four districts:



Southwest, Eastern, and Northern Districts each have one representative. Central District has two representatives. If you look at the number of members per representative in the four districts, the breakdown is:



Central District members are therefore underrepresented relative to members in the other Districts. These facts prompted the Council decision to restructure.

#### A changing work environment

Since 1986, when OPPI was formed, growth in Central District has been substantial. The Central Ontario economy has grown rapidly, along with the overall number of members in the profession, and the range of work planners do. At the same time, amalgamation changed the municipal context, while globalization changed the economic context. More change is coming with new provincial requirements for growth management in the GTA and the Greater Golden Horseshoe, which includes cities and counties in the area surrounding the GTA. The structure of Central District needs to

**Table 1**  
Membership, distributed across the District, by sub-district

Municipality	Members	% of Members
<b>GTA Sub-district</b>		
Toronto	941	43.8
York	334	15.5
Peel	212	9.9
Halton	141	6.6
Durham	136	6.3
<b>Hamilton-Niagara Sub-district</b>		
Hamilton	96	4.5
Niagara	88	4.1
<b>Lakelands Sub-district</b>		
Simcoe	108	5.0
Muskoka	35	1.6
Dufferin	12	0.6
<b>Peterborough and Area Sub-district</b>		
Haliburton	2	0.1
Kawartha Lakes	9	0.4
Peterborough	24	1.1
Northumberland	10	0.5



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reflect members' current and future working lives.

**How was the restructuring plan completed?**

The restructuring plan began with the following principles:

- Districts must encompass communities of shared professional interests.
- Districts must support and reflect affinities based on geography, interaction patterns, working relationships, and agency service areas.
- Districts must strive for comparative equity among Districts in member representation on OPPI Council.

Using these principles, Council identified three restructuring options. These options were presented to the District's members throughout spring 2005 and presented to the Central District Board of Management (the governing body of Central District). The review resulted in a fourth option being identified. This fourth option is the one adopted by the Board of Management and endorsed by OPPI Council. The four new Districts will be:

- Toronto (941 members)
- York/Peel/Durham (682 members)
- Peterborough/Lakelands (201 members)
- Hamilton/Halton/Niagara (325 members)

There would be one District representative for each District. This change would add two new representatives to Council. Although expenses would increase slightly as a result, OPPI does not expect that an increase in member's dues will be needed to fund this change.

**A Commitment to districts and member service**

With the new Districts, Council representatives can better reflect the diversity in the area, the work planners do, the relationships among planners, and the communities in which they work. Central District's representatives believe that restructuring the District will better serve members. OPPI Council agrees.

OPPI's Districts provide direct services to members. The District structure should represent the best opportunities for networking, professional development, professional collaboration, and furthering the profession. Central District, as currently structured, is too large to achieve these goals.

*(Cont. on page 17)*

# Response to N. Brereton's Letter Re: Retired MCIP RPP Members

Ronald M. Keeble

I wish to respond to Nigel Brereton's letter that appeared in the most recent issue of the Ontario Planning Journal. First, let me thank Mr. Brereton for bringing this matter to the attention of the membership and for the gentle reminder that I could have done a much better job of communicating the issue to all Retired Members at the time of membership renewal. I apologize for not providing sufficient information in conjunction with your membership renewal package. It was never our intent to show disrespect for our Retired Members and the significant contributions that they have made to the practice of planning in Canada and to the development of our profession.



Ron Keeble, MCIP, RPP

I do wish to explain to the membership behind the reasoning behind the change in renewal procedures for Retired Members and to ask for your co-operation in making this necessary transition.

As some of you may already be aware, OPPI has received a number of enquiries and complaints from Full Members about a number of individuals who were still working in the field of planning despite being Retired Members. They saw this practice as being unprofessional and certainly not equitable for those who are paying full membership fees. Over the past years the number of individuals who had engaged in this behaviour had been small and the matter had been addressed by a quiet conversation among professional colleagues.

However, as more members have taken early retirement and applied for Retired Member status, the issue has now become more significant. In fact, this has proven to be the experience across the country. At the November 2004 National Membership Committee meeting, the CIP Affiliate Registrars and Directors of Membership Services discussed the matter and identified the need for clear criteria for eligibility for Retired Member status as

central to addressing this issue. A review of approaches from across the country led to the establishment of common criteria for eligibility that OPPI has applied to this year's membership renewal process. Only in the jurisdiction of Quebec is the matter addressed differently and is a function of the provincial government regulation of the planning profession there.

The decision to proceed in this manner was made by OPPI Council only after a careful consideration of the need for such an approach and the creation of a procedure that could be easily incorporated into the annual membership renewal process. As all members apply for membership renewal on an annual basis, in part on the assumption that their status may change from year to year, Council decided to incorporate the criteria into the fee schedule for renewal. For example, each year a number of Full Members apply for Retired Member status. For this reason we did not believe that a by-law amendment was necessary at this time. In fact, only in the PIBC affiliate have these eligibility criteria for Retired Member status been incorporated into their by-law. In the future, and after the completion of the Membership Review project now under way nationally, OPPI Council may choose to bring these criteria forward as an element of a much larger revision of the General By-law and its supporting Schedules.

For those of you who are Retired Members and who are no longer working in the field of planning, the process of our now completed 2006 membership renewal was similar to past years. After consideration of the eligibility criteria provided and determination that your status did not change, you identified yourself as a Retired Member by signing in the appropriate space and forwarded the correct fee of \$138.16 or \$195.66 if you wished the Errors and Omissions Insurance coverage. However, if you continued to earn income from the practice of planning you identified yourself as a Full Member and paid the appropriate fee of \$474.16 including insurance.

The 2006 membership renewal process also provided Full members under the age of 55 and no longer working in the field

of planning, with the opportunity to apply for Non-Practising Member status. Full members who apply for this status do so knowing that they relinquish the designation (title) Registered Professional Planner (RPP). The fee for the Non-Practising Member status is the same as that for Retired Member.

Membership renewals due annually on January 2 including renewal applications for Retired Member and Non-Practising Member Status, which require approval by the Provincial Membership Committee.

The change in the fee schedule and implementation of the renewal application process was necessary to clarify for members how one becomes eligible for, and maintains, Retired Member status from year to year. It should resolve the occurrence of misunderstanding or misuse of the Retired Member status and address the issues of inequity and preservation of the integrity of the professional organization being voiced by members. Further it establishes common criteria across the majority of CIP affiliates.

It is unfortunate that this step was necessary. Clearly our preference would have been to not have to proceed in this fashion. However, I trust that you now have a better understanding of the need for this action. I respectfully ask for your assistance in making this transition.

*Ronald M. Keeble, MCIP, RPP, is Registrar and Director, Membership Services.*

*For further information regarding retired or non-practising member status, contact Ron Keeble, Registrar c/o Denis Duquet Membership Coordinator at [admin@ontarioplanners.on.ca](mailto:admin@ontarioplanners.on.ca).*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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Editorial

# What the OPPI submission on Bill 51 *couldn't* say

Glenn Miller

**A**ny submission on proposed legislation made by an organization that represents as broad a constituency as OPPI must necessarily steer clear of controversial views that potentially conflict with the interests of members. Such submissions rightly focus on the big picture—how will proposed legislation affect the profession as a whole? Here is what OPPI's submission on Bill 51 *couldn't* say:

Amending Section 2 of the *Planning Act* to identify "development that is sustainable" as a matter of provincial interest is on the face of it a simple declaration, but one that has huge positive ramifications for community development. For too long, the term "sustainable" has been tossed around with impunity. In combination with other legislation, the government is effectively challenging planners to work harder to ensure that the concept has meaning on the ground where it counts. More importantly, this message is being sent to all

planners—not just those who work for municipalities.

Stating up front that sustainable development is now to be a matter of provincial interest is also an invitation to the development community to put individual projects into a larger context.

Just as American president John Kennedy challenged individuals to "Ask not what your country can do for you; ask what you can do for your country," developers are implicitly being asked to think about how an individual project contributes to the sustainability of the community at large. And their planning consultants are well placed to provide influential advice in that regard.

Municipal decision makers are also caught in this net. If the addition of three words to the *Planning Act* increases the pressure on local politicians to heed policies in their official

plans, this is a good thing. Too many councillors vote for intensification and similar policies to be included in official plans, but then

The proposed legislation provides planners with an opportunity to transform the way subdivisions are designed and laid out by making energy conservation a priority

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turn their backs when applications come through the system. If there is even a hint that supporting an intensification project could damage their approval ratings with voters, the easy solution is to oppose it. The decision of the government to declare a provincial interest in “development that is designed to be sustainable” provides proponents with a legitimate rationale for demanding that municipal politicians pay attention to approved policies supporting the notion of sustainable development.

Further, by making “sustainable design” a defined term, the government is also showing that it is in step with changes spreading through the industry like wildfire. Building sustainability rating systems such as LEED and Green Globes are quickly moving to expand these concepts to the wider community, and there is every indication that these ideas will enjoy rapid acceptance in the marketplace. The Canada Green Building Council, for example, is accelerating its work on LEED Neighbourhood in response to practitioner demand.

The proposed legislation provides planners with an opportunity to transform the way subdivisions are designed and laid out by making energy conservation a priority. This includes providing for essential services such as public transit, promoting conservation through the preservation of vegetation and landscape designs that deal efficiently with run-off, and ensuring that new neighbourhoods are well integrated into the urban fabric by providing pedestrian walkways, bicycle paths and other linkages. These are just some of the ways that planners can contribute.

Another new tool proposed by Bill 51 is conditional zoning (zoning with conditions), which would allow municipalities to promote environmental sustainability by detailing conditions that promote energy efficiency and the redevelopment of brownfields. This theme is picked up with proposed amendments to Section 28, which would allow costs associated with environmental remediation, co-generation, district energy and other items designed to encourage energy efficient development to be included in Community Improvement Plans.

The astonishing breadth and depth of the current provincial agenda is unprecedented. Although the Building Code is not on everyone’s daily reading list, proposed changes to that act in the area of energy efficiency extend the potential impact of changes to the *Planning Act* described above. Proposed changes to the

*Conservation Land Act* outlined in Bill 51 also give new powers concerning conservation easements to conservation authorities, which in turn relate to recent moves regarding safe drinking water and watershed protection. And later this year, the Ministry of Natural Resources will likely be coming forward with new policies that could change the way we regard natural spaces in this province.

For planners used to specializing in one or two well-defined areas of practice, things are going to change in a major way.

## Paul Chronis Hands Over To Peter Nikolakakos

Paul Chronis took on the role of contributing editor for the OMB in the summer of 1998, on the occasion of the 75th issue of this magazine.

More than 40 issues later, Paul is “retiring,” passing on this responsibility to Peter Nikolakakos, a planner with Wood Bull Ltd in Toronto.

Responsibility is an appropriate word, because summarizing complex decisions by the OMB requires the ability to pick out salient facts that accurately capture the depth and breadth of each decision. On behalf of Ontario Planning Journal readers, I would like to thank Paul for his fine contribution and also congratulate him because he has been appointed to the editorial board of Canada Law Book’s e-reports on the OMB.

Peter is a graduate of the Ryerson School of Urban and Regional Planning. He worked as a consultant with several firms before joining Wood Bull. Peter intends to write summaries himself, but will also reach out to colleagues working as planners in other law firms.



Paul Chronis, MCIP, RPP



Peter Nikolakakos

## Manett’s Pictures Worth 1,000 Words and More



Photo: Michael S. Manett Photography 2006

Mike Manett is an experienced planning consultant who has been contributing his photographs to the Ontario Planning Journal for nearly 20 years (since the fall of 1987 to be precise). Many of his pictures have been aerials (similar to the one depicted below). More than a few have graced the cover.

To encourage other planners with an interest in photography, Mike has agreed to contribute an occasional column for the magazine designed around pictures taken by members of OPPI. He will share his insights and advice on how to make the most of your creative potential.

Watch for contact details in the next issue.

*Glenn Miller, FCIP, RPP, is editor of the Ontario Planning Journal and Director of Education and Research with the Toronto-based Canadian Urban Institute. He can be reached at editor@ontarioplanning.com.*

### Central Restructuring

(Cont. from page 14)

OPPI Council has taken the first step in adopting the restructuring plan. Now it’s your turn:

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# Zoning Issues to Go— With a Side Order of Complexity

Gordon Harris

**T**he new city council elected in Vancouver last November will undoubtedly soon be asked to revisit the previous council's decision to block a rezoning application by Wal-Mart that would have resulted in the world's greenest version of this store. The previous city council defeated a proposal to see an old industrial site on the city's southern edge rezoned to permit a Wal-Mart. Opposition was not so much directed at the use as it was at the user (See Vol. 20 No. 3 & 4).

That decision represents something of a trend. Municipalities across North America are rejecting Wal-Mart—but accepting other big box stores—because Wal-Mart is seen as a negative force, bent on destroying communities. From the perspective of these naysayers, Wal-Mart is a pariah. Never mind that planners and local politicians are supposed to be looking at land use; increasingly they are choosing to decide where the public can and cannot shop. And by doing so, they send their citizens off on wasteful car trips to other cities and towns where the stores demanded by shoppers are permitted.

The latest sign that planners and politicians may be allowing their personal biases to cloud their judgment regarding the determination and regulation of land use is a U.S.-based movement dedicated to saving us

from the perils of fast food. The movement has its genesis in a lengthy article published last fall, "The Use of Zoning to Restrict Fast Food Outlets: A Potential Strategy to Combat Obesity" and a shorter companion article, "The City Planners' Guide to the Obesity Epidemic: Zoning and Fast Food" (available at [www.publichealthlaw.net](http://www.publichealthlaw.net)). Both articles work hard to build the case that we should rely on the land use regulator's most basic tool—zoning—to save us from the temptations of fast food.

We all know about the perils of fast food. There is no question that the sedentary lifestyles and poor eating habits of North Americans are contributing to rising health-care costs. And the link between fast food and obesity—especially among children—cannot and should not be ignored. But as with their over-zealous response to Wal-Mart, the planners and politicians are at it again, deciding that they must save us from ourselves through the zealous and inappropriate application of land use regulations.

So what is fast food? And what is it exactly that these newly deputized health police would wish to save us from? Burgers? Fries? Soft drinks? Frozen dairy treats? These might be included on a planner's list of offending fast foods. But what if the fast food operator serves salads and other healthy

choices? Might a municipality ban McDonald's but allow Wendy's because Wendy's has a bigger salad bar? Or might the ubiquitous Starbucks be run out of town should anyone take a look at the caloric content and nutritional make-up of a Caramel Macchiato? Is my local sushi shop at risk because tempura and ice cream are also on the menu? And where does Tim Horton's, Canada's largest fast food retailer, stand? Those soup and sandwich combo's look pretty healthy, but what if I add a crueller? Will I need my local planner's number on speed dial so I can check in before ordering?

Zoning serves an important purpose in shaping our communities and governing the location and pattern of human activities we all pursue. It can regulate where fast food outlets can be located, the overall size and even the number of outlets in a particular area, and, along with other municipal regulatory controls like sign bylaws, zoning can ensure that historic or other character commercial areas are not overwhelmed by golden arches or orange and white checkerboard tiles. But is it right to use zoning to ban the use itself?

Land use planning and the regulation and control of the use of urban land is a big job. Juggling the often conflicting needs of adjoining activities, and interpreting community concerns about the mix of uses and the scale of things is important work. Public education, greater self-discipline and changing societal norms will continue to shape how and where we shop and eat. People want choice. And they don't want to have to leave town to buy a Big Mac™. Just like people in Vancouver don't want to have to drive to Burnaby or New Westminster to visit the world's most popular store.

Planners and their political masters need to remember that it is their job to determine what use can be made of a particular piece of land. It is the job of citizens to decide whether or not we will support a particular business that fits within the approved use. That's market forces at work. Our community values are broad-based, and, in Canada at least, open to diversity. Planners should not presume to second-guess where or why people shop and eat where they do.

*Gordon Harris, MCIP, is the principal of Harris Consulting, a consultancy based in Vancouver. Gordon is a frequent contributor to the Ontario Planning Journal.*

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Photo: Brent Gilmour

People love to pick on Wal-Mart

# Positive Civic Engagement: Can Ontario Learn From Other Places?

Paul Bedford

**A**s all planners know, citizen participation is an essential component of planning for our communities throughout Ontario. No matter how big or how small the community, people want to be in the loop. Despite the best of intentions by municipalities to foster productive civic engagement, the current state of affairs cries out for a better model.

Do today's community associations help to foster and build communities or do they actually impede the process? Why do existing communities usually vow to fight any new condo development to be located on the local main street, yet end up moving into the same building once it is built? Why can't planners have more success in getting our ideas implemented and tap the enormous energy of our citizens for creative purposes? Perhaps we are going about civic engagement in the wrong way. It is essential to try and answer these questions if planners want to be perceived as community builders and problem solvers.

## The Concept and Reality of Community

Communities are normally associated with the concept of sharing, consensus building, a willingness to compromise and a concern for the whole. The greater good is a familiar reference point for most Canadians, yet it seems this admirable value is put to the test with increasing tensions between individual and group rights. The use of "we" instead of "I" makes a difference in the successful resolution of conflicts. For communities to succeed, people need greater opportunities to come together to discuss, develop and implement common visions for their neighbourhoods and cities.

The reality today is that many organized communities are only involved with city hall in a highly charged environment and from a very narrow perspective. They are often cynical, angry and feel isolated from their governments. Unequal levels of civic engagement also exist in different parts of our cities that lead to frustrations and inequities of service. Change is the bread and butter of cities whether they are coping with

unprecedented growth or significant decline. However, people see change happening at their expense and they react accordingly.

Unfortunately, our prevailing system of planning, notification, consultation and conflict resolution is mostly reactive. It is important to better understand the dynamics of change and the forces working against it. Meaningful civic engagement has to be built on dialogue, exchange, different ideas and a full appreciation that with each choice also come consequences. This is a serious gap as many community groups today do not think about the consequences of their actions or the choices they make.

## A Meaningful Voice

What is valuable to people is the meaning of community and how they value it. People need to be treated as citizens, not consumers. City Hall is not Wal-Mart!

The "quality" of citizen participation is often more important than the "quantity." People naturally want to feel that their opinions are at least being heard, even if the outcome doesn't reflect their perspective. The present model in Ontario gives people the opportunity to attend public meetings in the community or at city hall on specific

planning applications, official plans, zoning by-laws and a host of other planning-related matters; however, these meetings often generate more negativity than positive input. This is perhaps more true in Toronto, where people feel their local government is now more remote since amalgamation. My observation is that Toronto is both too big and too small. The present governance and civic engagement model is too big to effectively engage citizens on local issues, yet it is too small to significantly address such major regional issues as transportation, infrastructure and waste management. Residents and planning staff often feel they are caught in a system that is unresponsive to the true priorities. Our current civic engagement model is also extremely difficult for planning staff who are suffering from burnout, constant budget reductions and increasing bureaucratic isolation. There simply has to be a better way.

## Deepening the Trust Relationship

Many other cities around the world face the same challenges. Cities like Seattle and Portland, Oregon, have experimented with devolving decision making to the neighbourhood level; however, most cities adhere to an advisory role for communities. The range of



New York more than a state of mind for neighbourhood committee participants

options typically include informing, consulting, and variations of shared decision making, depending on the nature of the issues. A feeling of empowerment is not the norm in most cities.

During the past year I have had the opportunity to see different positive civic engagement strategies in action in Vancouver, New York and Tokyo that perhaps can help us with our planning challenges in our communities. The models in operation all deepen the trust relationship with people. This seems to be the key to achieving positive results. While each of these models has been developed in response to a particular need, there may be lessons for us. This is especially true for Toronto, given the current deliberations over the report of the Governing Toronto Advisory Panel

“The City We Want. The Government We Need,” and the pending adoption of a new *City of Toronto Act*.

### Community Visions

Vancouver has focused its energy on the development of Community Visions for each of 23 distinct geographic communities throughout the city. The emphasis of the program is to find ways to involve people and to have communities with a wide range of interests to develop local visions that translate the goals and big-picture directions of the city-wide Vancouver City Plan. It uses a variety of positive ways for people to be involved, including workshops, city circles (groups of 10-15 citizens from all walks of life), idea books, “check books” for ideas warranting further study and choices work-

books. The ground rules are that each Community Vision must include all City Plan themes and reflect how the community will best embrace both city-wide and regional perspectives. The exercise balances the rights of the community with its responsibility as part of the city and the region. The process seeks common ground by providing a local framework in which site-specific development projects are then evaluated.


Another interesting feature of Vancouver's civic engagement strategy is the focus placed on ongoing contact with communities and the multicultural population. The civic staff are organized into Neighbourhood Integrated Service Teams with community web pages created for all 23 local areas of the city. Other ongoing initiatives include development of a corporate “Public Process Guide” for staff, creating better civic awareness of how the city functions through a civics curriculum for all Grade 11 students, a “How Your City Works” guide and a “Newcomers’ Guide to the City of Vancouver” translated into five languages. The “Newcomers’ Guide” costs have been covered through partnerships with major private-sector financial and media corporations who also have a particular desire to achieve multicultural outreach.

### Community Advisory Boards

New York has adopted a more formal approach with the establishment of 59 Community Districts and Advisory Boards that have been in place since 1975 as part of the City Charter. Each Community District encompasses identifiable geographic areas from 35,000 to 250,000 in population. Board membership can include up to 50 people who live and work in the area and who represent all segments of the community. Representatives are selected by both local politicians and community groups and serve for a two-year period. City staff from all departments work directly with Community Advisory Boards with a District Manager assigned.

The City Charter mandates that each Community Advisory Board consider the district needs and give advice to elected officials on land use planning, service delivery and the city budget process. Regular monthly meetings are held in public buildings within the district. Given that New York does not have the equivalent of an official plan, a heavy focus of activity is on site-specific development projects and area planning studies that involve amendments to zoning. The most notable feature of the Community Advisory Board system is that developers usually start their discussions first with the

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district Community Advisory Board and district city staff. A proactive approach is taken whereby the developer and the community both set out their respective desires, needs and opportunities. Even though there are many conflicts, it is also common to see new development emerge from the process with community support simply because of the positive nature of the civic engagement process. Toronto architects who have worked under this system have found it to be very satisfactory.

### Community Givers Not Community Takers

Tokyo represents a totally different situation but is perhaps the most revealing. Two-tier government is thriving, with the Tokyo Metropolitan Government responsible for the big-picture needs of 12.5 million people while 39 municipalities represent the lower tier. Within central Tokyo, 23 inner-city wards of about 400,000 people each are led by a local mayor and elected representatives. Each of these wards also has an elaborate system of Neighbourhood Associations and Committees, which tend to function as supportive planning instruments. Tokyo has a strong and cohesive network of communities that historically assumed responsibility for taking care of neighbourhoods, as this role was not under the purview of the state. As such, these associations have asserted their voice and power, especially since the 1980s, to define and protect elements of the public realm within their neighbourhoods. The clear emphasis is on community building, taking care of your neighbours and sharing positive strategies with other community associations where people continually learn from each other. The success of this model seems to rest in the cultural perspective of being "community givers" rather than "community takers" and seeing the public realm as an opportunity, not a problem.

### Lessons

To be a Canadian is to get along well with your neighbours. While Ontario's planners have experimented with many different methods to foster better civic engagement, there is always room for improvement. It is worth reflecting on some basic lessons from our own experience and that of other cities.

The first is a need to break down the city into bite-sized pieces that represent natural geographic communities which people can relate to and understand. This is critical to overcoming a sense of isolation from local government. Different options exist for recognizing local input through formal or informal frameworks, but the key is that an appropriate vehicle exists to embrace a full range of opinions within each community.

Second, sustained public involvement in planning is critical to build trust with the community. Consultation based only on a project-by-project basis has the opposite effect. This is essential given that our cities are constantly evolving. Planning is a long-term activity that also requires a long-term commitment to meaningful engagement.

Third, cities with a formal or informal civic engagement framework that bring resident, business and other interests together to translate city-wide planning goals into

their community tend to achieve most citizen buy-in. It is also very important to recognize that organized community groups do not hold a monopoly on citizen participation. If civic engagement is to remain positive, these groups should be viewed as equals with the input of all other individuals and not be given special status. For planners to be more effective, we need to tap the immense reserve of energy, hopes, needs, values and opportunities. Citizens need to feel that their voice really matters and that they have a stake in the co-ownership of their city. My experience tells me that if you propose a good idea, most people will help to make it happen. Positive civic engagement is a good idea!

*Paul Bedford, FCIP, RPP, is the Ontario Planning Journal's contributing editor for Planning Futures. He is the former chief planner for the City of Toronto and currently acts as an urban mentor, providing advice on planning issues. Paul is a frequent speaker across North America. He also teaches at the University of Toronto and serves on the National Capital Commission Planning Advisory Committee.*





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# Observations on Employment Sprawl and Sustainable Transit

Mary Neumann



Employment sprawl is the name of the game beyond Toronto's borders

In this article I want to make a couple of observations about the challenges of getting people out of their cars and onto rapid transit. My points are not new, but do not seem well understood in terms of what is needed to create transit-oriented smart growth. First, employment density and the size of the employment district are crucial to efficient rapid transit, and possibly more important than housing density. Second, zoning used to be designed to ensure employment occurred in downtowns throughout Ontario. But as far as I can tell, today there is nowhere in the GTA that uses zoning to ensure employment density is con-

centrated in “nodes,” centres and downtowns.

Professor Eric Miller (University of Toronto, Centre for Transportation Studies) has noted that providing transit in the GTA is difficult not just because housing densities are low, but also because employment is scattered in low-density locations. Toronto’s Financial District has about 2,200 jobs per gross hectare, Yonge/Eglinton and North York centres have employment of between 400-600 jobs per gross hectare, whereas employment areas in the surrounding municipalities have densities varying from 30 to 80 jobs per hectare. (Growing Together: Prospects for Renewal in the Toronto Region, GHK Canada and Associates, May 2002).

Professor Miller, who has written many reports on transportation in the GTA, observes that when people can get from their low-density suburban houses to the rapid transit station by car—either park and ride or kiss and ride, local bus, foot and bike—this works if their bus or train ride brings them to their job or close to it. But no one who has any choice will take public transit if they have to make another connection that is still the equivalent of a car-ride away. Unfortunately, in the areas surrounding Toronto this is the reality. Frequent, reliable transit connections just aren’t available.

At the work end of the trip in suburban areas, where jobs are found in business parks and huge employment districts, commuters are faced with a long walk or a long wait for a local bus that will take a circuitous route and may still leave them far from their place of employment.

Relatively easy access to the workplace from a rapid transit stop is a major factor in why 53 percent of trips for work into downtown Toronto are by transit. This percentage is fairly uniform for trips starting inside and outside Toronto, compared to under 5 percent average for transit for example for trips to the Pearson Airport employment area and even less for trips originating outside Toronto (Travel Demand and Urban Form, Issue Paper No 9, Eric Miller and Richard Soberman, Commissioned by the Neptis Foundation). GO really only operates in one direction—as a commuter service for those going to Toronto, because there is a dense concentration of jobs at the end. The problem is not a shortage of jobs in the communities where GO trips originate—they just aren’t near the stations. And even if the stations were located in the middle of the employment districts, the density of jobs is so low that it would still be difficult to serve them by transit. This is a difficult chicken-and-egg issue because if there isn’t good transit, then huge areas have to be given over to parking, but if this form of development takes place, then the densities will be too low for effective transit.

But let’s go back 35 years and look at the types of zoning districts that would be found in an older urban municipality, and which can still be seen in the structure of the zoning by-law for the former City of Toronto. There would be a commercial zone in the downtown, which allowed all types of retail and office use. This commercial zone was usually the only place that offices were allowed and it generally also allowed residential uses as a result of the historic pattern of apartments over stores. There would also be a warehousing and service commercial/light industrial zone that did not permit residential uses and usually only permitted office as an accessory use to a permitted use, often with a floor area maximum of office of 20-30 percent of the area of the permitted use. Retail and other uses such as entertainment and restaurants were usually restricted in some way. This zone was considered acceptable adjacent to residential and commercial zoning. Lastly there would be industrial zones, usually graded in about three types which allowed

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more and more noxious industries and that were required to be further and further from residential areas. The only offices and retail permitted were accessory uses to the industries. So, to state the obvious, because high-intensity employment uses, and in particular offices, could locate only in the downtown, that is where such development occurred, and transit service was feasible.

It is my observation that the municipalities that had this type of zoning and community organization did not want to change it. I would suggest that change came due to competition from adjacent rural or suburban municipalities that wanted the office and retail assessment and had little or no stake in the preservation of downtowns, or, at that time, in the creation of "centres." There were many other forces for change, including the role of downtown retail vs auto-oriented shopping malls. The pressure to abandon the traditional zoning model came from competing municipalities and ultimately proved too strong to resist.

The dilemma today is that the loosening of the rules has created problems for municipalities both in their downtowns and in planning for "nodes" or "centres." Because everything is permitted everywhere (except noxious uses), there is no opportunity for a "planned structure" to influence the market and create employment densities that support transit. Without appropriate zoning and a rethink of employment districts, we will not see transit-oriented smart growth. No municipality on its own can afford to limit locations for office and retail, because development would just locate elsewhere in the region (in locations where the "costs" are perceived to be lower). If transit-oriented smart growth is to be achieved the province would need to make major changes to policies on zoning and employment districts. But none of the current provincial legislative initiatives for smart growth address these issues.

*Mary Neumann, MCIP, RPP, is a planning consultant based in Toronto. Her most recent major project was managing for Toronto Community Housing Corporation the planning and sustainability aspects of the Regent Park redevelopment initiative. She can be reached at mneumann@rogers.com.*

*David Kriger, MCIP, RPP, is Vice President of iTrans, and the contributing editor for Transportation. He can be reached at dkriger@itransconsulting.com.*

## Ontario Municipal Board

# When Is Farm Not a Farm?

DeFlippis V. Lincoln (township)

Paul Chronis

**A**n owner of land applied to the Committee of Adjustment to sever and create a one acre lot for farm retirement purposes from an existing 59.6 acre parcel. The property was designated "Good General Agricultural Area" in the Regional Official Plan and "Agricultural" in the local Official Plan. The property was zoned agricultural and was limited to use for agricultural uses, commercial greenhouses, one single detached dwelling and uses, buildings and accessory structures. The applications were refused by the Committee and subsequently appealed to the OMB.


On appeal, the Board heard evidence that the farm was worked by the applicant's family from 1966 to 1996 but has been inactive ever since.

The Board examined extensively the Provincial Policy Statement provisions regarding the creation of farm retirement lots as well as the Region's current official plan policies for a "farm-related industrial lot." The Board found that the applicant failed to meet the requirements of a retirement farm and could not qualify

for the creation of a farm retirement lot since it appeared from the evidence that the property ceased to be farmed for some time. The Board determined that the burden of the proof is vested with the appellant to show that he is a full-time farmer and that the retirement criteria of the official plan are satisfied. Having concluded that the applicant is not a bona fide farmer, the severance appeals were refused pursuant to the provisions of the Planning Act.. In coming to this conclusion, the Board referenced the Provincial Policy Statement definition of "farm retirement lot" which means:

"one lot from a farm operation for a fulltime farmer of retirement age who is retiring from active working life, was farming on January 1, 1994 or an earlier date set out in an existing official plan, and has owned and operated the farm operation for a substantial number of years."

Source: Ontario Municipal Board Decision  
OMB Case No.: PL050551  
OMB File No.: C050185  
OMB Member: J. E. Sniezek



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# UW Students Poised to Redevelop Downtown Kitchener

Drew Adams

The stakes are high and the excitement in the air electric at the University of Waterloo's School of Planning. This semester, students enrolled in a senior level site planning and design course will be putting their skills to the ultimate test as they get started on their semester-long project.

What the students have quickly discovered is that this is no ordinary assignment and that much more than their credit will be at stake when they reveal their work sometime in April, including the School's reputation. This will be in part because their presentations will afford students the opportunity to have their work critiqued by a panel of planning and design professionals. More importantly, however, these presentations will be the final pitch made by the students to their clients and the last chance for them to sell their design.

The students will be working with the clients to propose ideas for the redevelopment of a site at the very core of downtown Kitchener. This site, opposite Kitchener City Hall, has been in the hands of the clients for many years now, however, they only recently made the decision to redevelop it and approached the School of Planning and its students with the task.

The task: to create a vivid focal point for downtown Kitchener that stands tribute to the contributions made by the clients' family in the community as well as to the ever-increasing multi-ethnic character of Kitchener-Waterloo. The students have also been challenged to cost out the project and prepare a detailed and realistic plan for the

implementation of their design, a task that many of them have not faced before. "I'm a firm believer in immersing students in problem-based studio projects that are rooted in the challenges and opportunities of design practice. By working with a real client

who has a specific vision for the development of the site, as well as very real budget constraints, the students will be well prepared for their entry into professional practice," says Assistant Professor John Lewis.

The students wasted no time in getting started and kicked off the project during a Saturday morning design char-

rette where both sections of the class as well as the clients met together for the first time. As the teams got to work fleshing out their concepts, the room became "alive and full of energy" as one of the two clients present exclaimed. "You could tell right away that



Waterloo students listen to comments from the professionals



This is the second phase of the student project

they [the clients] were impressed with the whole experience and that the ideas the students were bouncing around far exceeded their expectations," one student remarked.

The students have continued making great strides since the charrette and have made a number of trips to the site to take in all it has to offer and begin their in-depth site analysis. Driven by the prospect that the winning design could potentially be constructed, the students will continue to push themselves until their April deadline.

This project couldn't come at a better time, since many of the students have already begun looking into grad school and starting careers and are searching for something to set them apart from their colleagues and classmates. While this task will be challenging and require a lot of hard work, it is clear, as one student commented, that for students, "an opportunity like this, where our visions on paper have a chance at becoming reality comes around once in a lifetime."

Drew Adams is a student at the University of Waterloo.

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## Civics

# Barriers to Employment: The Experience of Internationally Trained Planning Professionals Immigrating to Ontario

Ronald M. Keeble

**T**he practice of planners immigrating to Canada to work in their professional field is a long-standing one.

The movement of British and American trained planners in particular has had a profound impact on both the development of planning in our nation and the advancement of the profession. Indeed, as noted by David Sherwood in his history of CIP, at the point of the 1952 revival of the Town Planning Institute of Canada, the vast majority of professional members were still foreign trained.

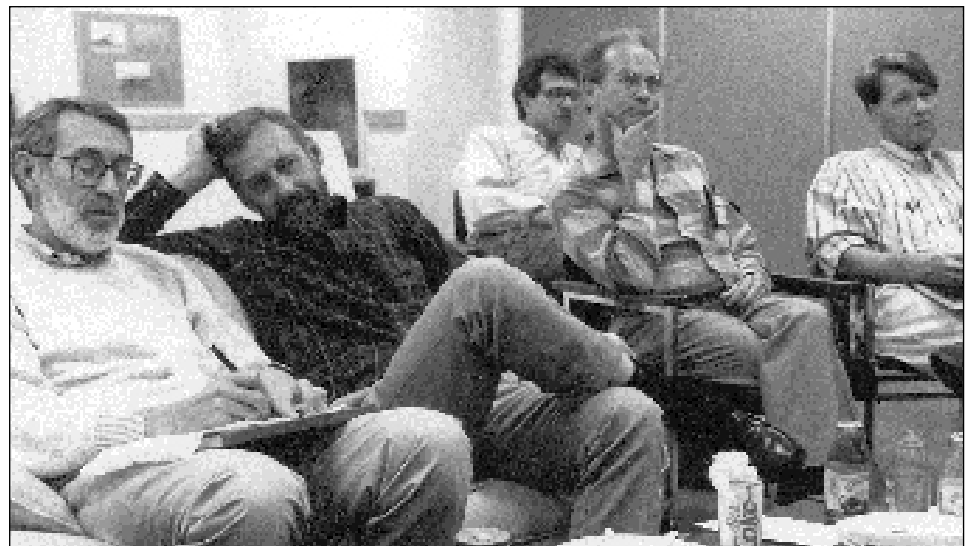
Canada continues to attract significant numbers of internationally trained planners and other professionals. Changes to the *Immigration and Refugee Protection Act* in 2003 have made it easier for skilled individuals to qualify to legally immigrate (see the CIC website for details). In Ontario over the last decade, most immigrant planners have come from South Asia, the Middle East and Europe.

One hundred and six individuals, who have been educated abroad and have plan-

ning experience gained outside of Canada, have enquired about membership in OPPI since 2000.

But many of these planners have experienced considerable difficulty in acquiring full-time employment in their professional field of expertise. Of this group, only 64 have formally applied to become members of the Institute. Others have cited the costs of having their credentials assessed and high membership fees as reasons why they have not pursued membership. This mirrors the recent experiences of other internationally trained professionals.

Organizations such as the Policy Roundtable Mobilizing Professions and Trades (PROMPT) have helped raise awareness of the challenges and barriers to employment facing foreign educated individuals (see "In the Public Interest: Immigrant Access to Regulated Professions in Today's Ontario," published by the Policy Roundtable Mobilizing Professions and Trades in 2004). The integration of internationally trained professionals into the Canadian workforce is



Barriers are well known but hard to overcome

now a significant issue for both provincial and federal governments. In Ontario, for example, the government has announced a series of policy initiatives and programs to assist internationally trained individuals in acquiring employment in their professional fields (see the recently published "Opening Doors—An Investment in Prosperity: Welcoming Internationally Trained Individuals into Ontario's Workforce," available on the Ministry of Education and Training website). These issues were also debated during the recent federal election campaign.

What are the specific barriers to employment experienced by planners arriving from abroad? Are they essentially the same as those faced by individuals seeking entry to other professions, or are there specific supports that the professional planning institutes in Canada can and should provide?

In order to better understand the experiences of internationally trained planners immigrating to Ontario, OPPI, the Region of Peel and the Ryerson School of Planning staged the first of a series of workshops in November 2003. The 22 participants were individuals educated abroad who had immigrated to Canada, settled in Ontario, and


who had enquired about membership in OPPI and CIP (38 others couldn't participate for a variety of scheduling difficulties). Two smaller sessions were held by OPPI in 2004 and 2005 (a total of 19 participants). Everyone was actively seeking employment in the planning field and had applied for at least one planning position in the previous two months. Most, however, had applied for multiple positions. At the time of their attendance at the workshop, just six out of 41 had gained employment in planning.

The Membership Services Committee of OPPI wanted to find out if the criteria, standards and policies of the CIP/OPPI membership process were contributing factors in the systematic exclusion of internationally trained planners from planning employment in the province. The committee also wished to identify specific steps that the Institute could take to facilitate the job search success of this group of experienced professionals. The principal concern was to ensure that the registration process that leads to the Registered Professional Planner designation in Ontario is clear, transparent, accountable and equitable. At the same time, the committee also wanted to make sure that the underlying rationale for the regulation of

professions—to protect the public interest—was being well served by the membership policies of the national and provincial planning institutes.

In the opinion of the workshop participants, the following issues represented significant barriers to their acquiring employment in their professional field in Ontario:

1. Costs of credential assessment;
2. Difficulties in accreditation of work experience gained abroad;
3. Cost and access to educational upgrading once resident in Ontario;
4. Lack of access to resources or professional development courses on Canadian planning administration;
5. Eligibility requirements for employment positions;
6. Lack of internships and placement opportunities;
7. Language skills (not just English but professional planning terminology);
8. Perceived inequities in the Membership Process and Standards of the planning Institutes;
9. Lack of supports provided by the planning Institutes for internationally trained planners.




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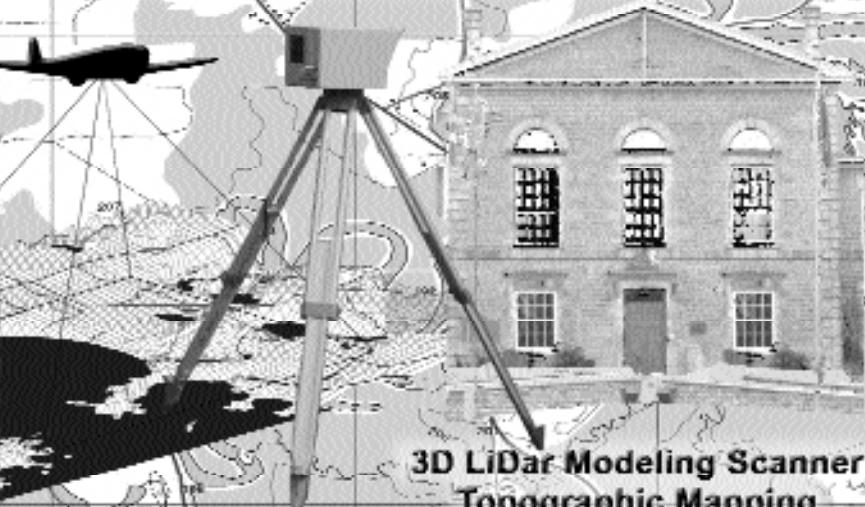
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Eligibility requirements for employment in particular were identified as significant barriers to employment. In some cases, internationally trained professionals were not selected for interviews because human resource departments screened out their resumes for positions advertised as open only to Canadian citizens, to candidates with Canadian planning experience, and to current members of CIP/OPPI. For those who did get interviews, "lack of Canadian planning experience" and "being over-qualified for the position" were the most common explanations for why no offers of employment were made.

With respect to attaining membership in the planning Institutes in Canada, workshop participants requested that the professional organizations address the following issues.

- Eligibility and membership requirements should be made transparent and available on the public side of the CIP and OPPI websites.
- CIP should create a standard approach to academic and professional credential assessment for internationally trained candidates for membership and should also make this information available on its website for potential review by individuals considering immigration to Canada.

- CIP and all of the planning affiliates should seek to ensure consistency in membership requirements from province to province and should address the inequity of treatment of internationally trained candidates resulting from the reciprocal agreements with the Royal Town Planning Institute and the American Institute of Certified Planners.
- Finally, OPPI should engage in a program of communication with major employers of planners in the province to alert them to this pool of highly qualified planning professionals available for employment, and urge them to create short-term opportunities for these planners to acquire Canadian planning experience.

OPPI Council has brought these recommendations to the attention of the National Membership Committee of CIP. They have been forwarded to the Review of National Membership Standards and Criteria currently in progress under the direction of an external consultant.

Ronald M. Keeble, MCIP, RPP, is Professor of Urban and Regional Planning at Ryerson University and Registrar and Director of Membership Services, Ontario Professional Planners Institute. He can be reached at [rmkeeb@rogers.com](mailto:rmkeeb@rogers.com).

## Sustainability

# Sustainable Transportation Systems: Kingston's New Transportation Master Plan

Shirley Bailey

Transportation consumes about 28 percent of all end-use energy in Canada, and personal vehicles account for about 90 percent of all traffic. Current transportation trends in most Canadian communities have led to a wide range of negative impacts, including traffic congestion, air and water pollution, greenhouse gas emissions, consumption of non-renewable energy resources, high infrastructure costs, and health problems ranging from asthma to obesity. Transportation planners need to take action to reduce these impacts.

The City of Kingston recently assessed its transportation needs to develop the Kingston Transportation Master Plan (KTMP)—a long-term strategy to manage

all forms of travel through to 2026. It was a large task to develop the plan, as it involves all modes of transportation—pedestrians, cyclists, cars, trucks, buses, trains, ferries and planes.

Altering current lifestyle choices in transportation is difficult. The City knew that the cooperation of all stakeholders would be necessary. The public was consulted through websites, e-mails, telephone calls, newsletters and public meetings. The city also used visioning exercises, focus groups and special interest groups as part of the consultation process. Early on, Kingston residents made it clear that they were interested in talking about sustainable transportation, but the real question was whether they would follow



Kingston encourages bike use with racks on some buses

through by actually using alternative modes of travel.

A household travel survey was conducted of 2,649 households across the region and all their trips over a 24-hour period. This information was analyzed and projected to over the life of the plan, including movement in specific areas. This effort led to the following set of principles that form the basis of the strategic direction approved by Council:

- reducing single-occupant vehicle trips;
- promoting alternative modes of transit, such as walking and cycling;
- making the best use of available right-of-ways;
- allocating roadway space for non-auto modes;
- maintaining existing roads with strategic expansion of the roadway network.

Recommendations include transportation demand management (TDM) to reduce competition for road capacity as well as transportation system management to improve safety, improve service, and reduce

the impacts of transportation on quality of life. Traffic calming, better traffic light timing, and optimizing the performance of the road network are all part of the plan. And since each trip starts and finishes with a walk of some sort, the plan is largely about making the community more pedestrian-oriented. Finally, the strategy includes direction on long-term decisions to meet the needs of the road system cost-effectively, and plan for all methods of travel, while balancing parking and transit improvement with needed road reconstruction.

Promoting an affordable and efficient sustainable transportation system while supporting a growing economy requires coordination among all levels of governments, and input from the private sector.

One of the recommendations is for the City to hire a TDM coordinator to work on getting more traffic travelling off-peak, encouraging more non-auto trips, and reducing single-occupancy vehicle trips. If a municipality can defer construction of a road link or the widening of a roadway through TDM, that saves money. This does

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not mean the city will not build or widen roads, since all travel largely relies on roads, but it will select which changes have priority, and when they are built.

The KTMP was approved in principle by Council in July 2004 and the real work of implementation has begun. The City continues to require sidewalks in new developments to encourage walking. One priority is the K&P Trail, a former railway right-of-way, which runs from downtown Kingston north through the rural part of the city. The City hopes to open about 15 km of the rural portion in 2006. Demand continues for improvements to the Lake Ontario Waterfront Pathway. The successful Rack 'n' Roll program (bicycle racks on buses) has also been expanded.

Complementing these initiatives, a five-year review by Kingston Transit led to recommendations to improve local transit. These recommendations include providing more buses, coordinating routes, increasing service to the Queen's University/St. Lawrence College area, adding transit priority lights, and creating a bus-only lane at a central mall serving a new transit terminal. Work is being conducted on more Park 'n'

Rides at Highway 401 and shuttles for special events. Better service is needed along the main thoroughfares to connect the downtown with the suburbs, serve the 25,000 postsecondary students who travel to Kingston from the GTA, and provide better intermodal connections for CN, the bus stations and the airport. Routing is important, as is efficient timing, effective communications between transit operators and commuters, and affordable pricing.

The KTMP Road Infrastructure Plan is estimated at \$135.68 million. Over 20 years, the city will need to spend \$32 million a year. At present, the City spends just over \$12 million a year. These figures include a



Transit lane entering mall

backlog of work, ongoing maintenance, new widening and links and the policy direction for emphasizing alternative modes of travel. Work continues on

Centennial Drive, the John Counter Boulevard widening and the Wellington Street extension. The plan supports the Third Crossing of the Great Cataraqui River, an important city-controlled bridge. Paying

for all this work is a challenge—taxes, reserve funds, debentures, development charges, and possibly some grants will be needed.

The KTMP will serve as a guide for current and future growth on sustainable transportation principles. Healthier natural and built environments and reduced car dependency are just some of the ways in which residents can directly feel the advantages of investment in local transit. The City has hired a "One Tonne Challenge" coordinator to show the environmental benefits of the council-approved plan. By including key stakeholders in the process, and recognizing the critical relationship between transportation, land use and community well-being, the City of Kingston has engaged key principles and lessons that can be shared with others.

More information on the KMTP is on the City's website: <http://www.cityofkingston.ca/residents/development/ktmp/>

*Shirley Bailey, MCIP, RPP, is Senior Planner with City of Kingston, working on the Kingston Transportation Master Plan, Natural Heritage Study, and assisting other departments with transportation related initiatives such as the Transit Operational Review.*

*Carla Guerrero is a Senior Research Consultant with the Community Development and Research Division, CMHC. Carla is the Ontario Planning Journal's contributing editor for Sustainability, and is on the OPPI Professional Development Committee.*



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# Creating a Vibrant City Center—Urban Design and Regeneration Principles

Dave Aston

Author: Cy Paumier

Pages: 206 pp

Publisher: Urban Land Institute, 2004

Cy Paumier, an urban design consultant for the Downtown Business Improvement District in Washington, D.C., shares urban design principles and plans, in *Creating a Vibrant City Center: Urban Design and Regeneration Principles*. Through his working knowledge on projects and various cities, Paumier suggests there are two key characteristics that in creating vibrant city centres:

I. A diverse market that generates pedestrian activity and a lively social environ-

ment that sustains a mix of uses.

II. A high quality place that creates confidence, commitment, and investment in the community over the long-term.


The book identifies and discusses seven basic planning and urban design principles for a successful urban regeneration:

1. Promoting diversity of use
2. Encouraging compactness
3. Fostering intensity of development
4. Ensuring a balance of activities
5. Providing for accessibility
6. Creating functional linkages
7. Building a positive identity.

From the planning and design perspective, he suggests the process for creating a vibrant city centre begins with a comprehensive vision. The visioning process includes an analysis of assets and opportunities in the city and community consultation, such as facilitating stakeholder meetings, public workshop sessions and steering committee meetings. Realization of the vision requires enthusiastic support and participation throughout the community. The author suggests that each city centre is unique and a broad brush approach to creating or revitalizing city centres will not work.

The book addresses challenges in designing new major city centre development such as incorporating high-rise development into an existing context and the importance of maintaining a degree of compatibility. Paumier offers the following ideas for locating and developing new larger-scale developments in the city centre:

- Break buildings into smaller units that complement the existing urban fabric.
- Create a strong horizontal element that



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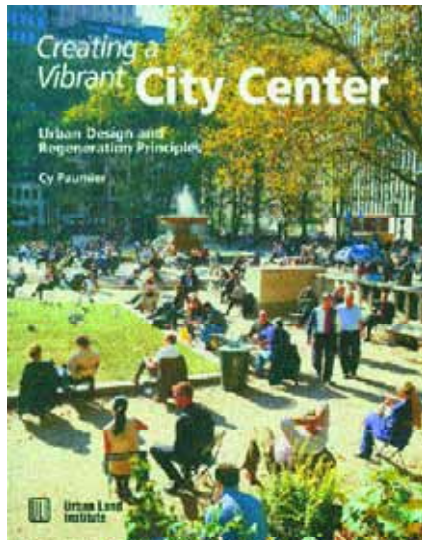
defines the height of a facade as perceived at street-level and at the height of existing buildings.

- Provide transitions in height and scale.
- Use materials and forms that provide a scale of reference and articulation.
- Retain a sense of human scale at street-level.
- Locate within easy walking distance to retail concentrations.

Paumier argues that it is not necessary to control all of the design details of new or redeveloping buildings. Instead, he suggests that decisions be made on setbacks, heights, overall facade organization, materials and storefront design.

The preservation of historic structures in the city centre is recognized as an opportunity to maintain a distinctive identity and

sense of history and scale. Paumier proposes that preservation and renovation of all existing structures in the city centre may not always be appropriate. Focused conservation efforts that survey and then identify architecturally significant historic structures can provide an objective means to determine the preferred solution. This is the case as, "encouraging both new development and preservation can create investment opportunities, bolstering the city center's economic role in the region."



Paumier uses numerous high-quality site photographs and illustrations to depict the principles established throughout the book. The final chapter of the book, entitled Plan Implementation, provides 17 case studies from the United States and Europe, including Portland, Oregon, Washington,

D.C., Liverpool, England, Karlsruhe, Germany. Case studies include implementation plans, design renderings, and completed design photographs. Paumier's research finds that city centre success stories contain common elements with regard to visioning, plan development, and final implementation.

It would be difficult to argue with his opinion that substantial change can be brought about through collaborative efforts among government agencies, private citizens and the private sector or business community. The book concludes that a "successful city center is not beyond the reach of any city, regardless of its size, location or history," but it "does not just happen."

David Aston, MCIP, RPP, is contributing editor for *In Print*. He is also a planner with MHBC Planning Limited in Kitchener. Readers interested in doing book reviews should contact David at [daston@mhbclplan.com](mailto:daston@mhbclplan.com).



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