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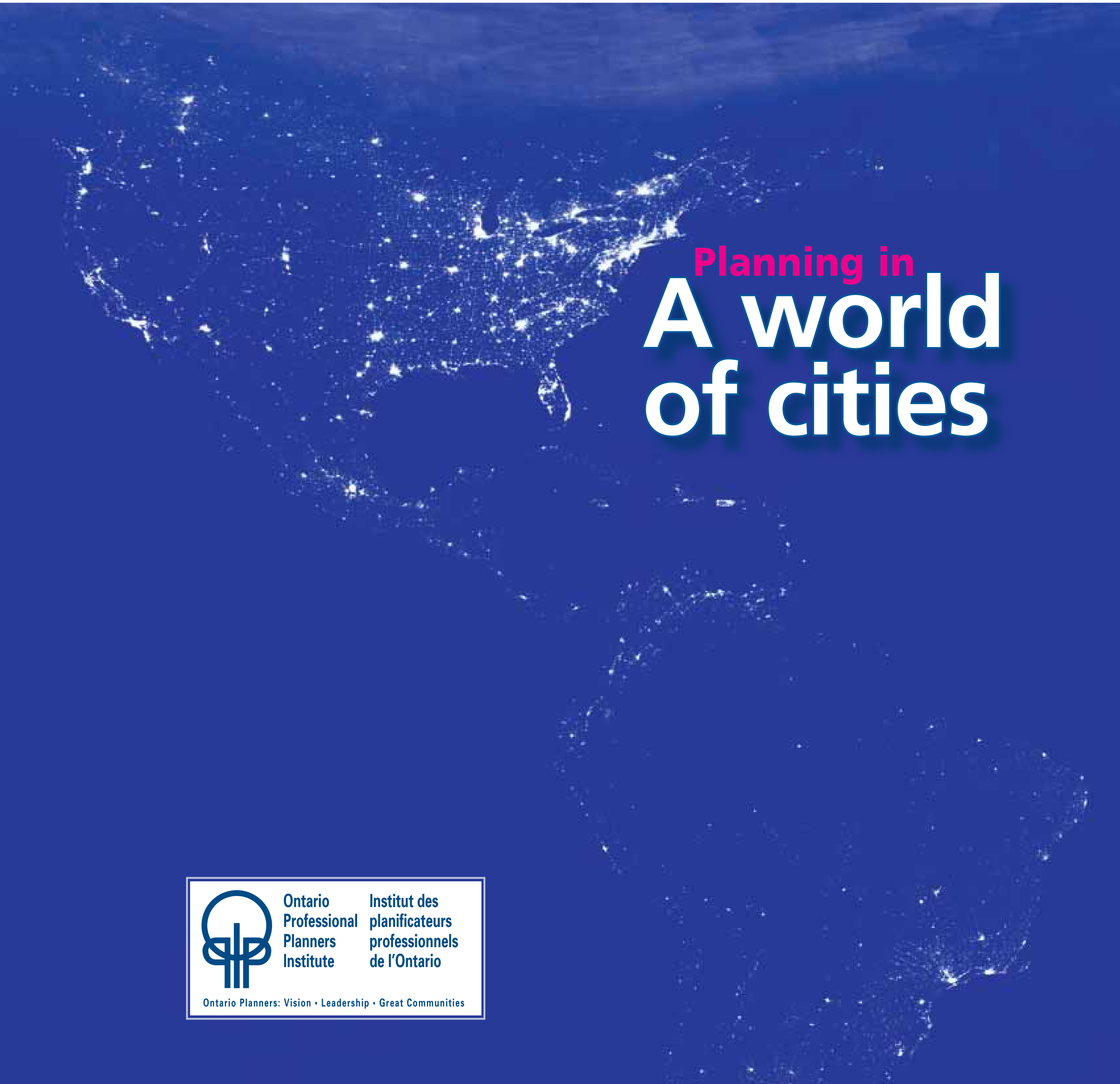

Planning in A world of cities

Ontario Professional Planners Institute

Institut des planificateurs professionnels de l'Ontario

Ontario Planners: Vision • Leadership • Great Communities

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201 - 234 Eglinton Ave. East,
Toronto, Ontario, M4P 1K5
(416) 483-1873 or 1-800-668-1448
Fax: (416) 483-7830
E-mail: info@ontarioplanners.on.ca
Web: www.ontarioplanners.on.ca

President
Mary Lou Tanner, MCIP, RPP
marylou.tanner@niagararegion.ca
905-685-4225 x3384

President Elect
Paul Stagl, MCIP, RPP
pstagl@sympatico.ca
416-784-2952

Directors
Policy Development
Drew Semple, MCIP, RPP
dsemple4@cogeco.ca, 905-984-3207

Recognition
Diana Rusnov, MCIP, RPP
diana.rusnov@mississauga.ca, 905-615-3200 x5534

Membership Services
Charles Lanktree, MCIP, RPP
charles.lanktree@ottawa.ca, 613-580-2424 x13859

Membership Outreach
Pam Whyte, MCIP, RPP
pamela_whyte@yahoo.com, 613-738-4160 x220

Professional Practice & Development
Marilyn Radman, MCIP, RPP
marilyn.radman@niagararegion.ca
905-685-4225 x3485

District Representatives
Eastern, Rory Baksh, MCIP, RPP
rbaksh@dillon.ca, 613-745-2213 x3049

Toronto, David Oikawa, MCIP, RPP
doikawa@toronto.ca, 416-392-7188

Northern, Donald McConnell, MCIP, RPP
d.mcconnell@cityssm.on.ca, 705-759-5375

Southwest, Ted Halwa, MCIP, RPP
thalwa@communityplanners.com
519-963-1028 x255

Oak Ridges, Bob Short, MCIP, RPP
shortb@whitby.ca, 905-430-4309

Lakeland, Robert Armstrong, MCIP, RPP, CPT
rarmstrong@meaford.ca, 519-538-1060 x1121

Western Lake Ontario, Bill Janssen, MCIP, RPP
bill.janssen@hamilton.ca, 905-546-2424 x1261

Student Delegate, Christine Furtado
cfurtado@yorku.ca, 416-886-3338

Executive Director
Mary Ann Rangam, x223

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Membership Coordinator
Denis Duquet, x222

Administrative Coordinator
Maria Go, x225

Ontario Planning Journal
Editor, Lynn Morrow, MCIP, RPP
editor@ontarioplanners.on.ca

Art Director, Brian Smith

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Talking the Talk and Walking the Walk
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Members update

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Dark Clouds & Silver Linings

Bull market for planning

By Richard Worzel

PHOTO: OPPI; PHOTOGRAPHY: WWW.TECKLESPHOTO.COM

This article has been condensed from the original presentation.

There are real challenges ahead, but also real opportunities. Planners are in the business of foreseeing both, so now is the time to seize the moment, and help your organizations benefit from changes yet to come. This should be a bull market for the planning profession—but one that you're going to have to sell to achieve.

First let's take a look at the challenges or risks ahead, and then let's hone in on the opportunities or silver linings for the planning profession.

Economic risks

The economic risks are mostly on the downside—the probability of the economy being weaker is greater than the probability of the economy being stronger over the next year or more. Plan accordingly.

Canada has, so far, led a pretty charmed life—but there are real risks ahead. First, housing markets in the major urban centres look like they may be overextended. Mark Carney, Governor of the Bank of Canada, has commented on this, and the bank has also warned the chartered banks to maintain stringent lending criteria. If there's a break in our housing market, that wouldn't be good for our economy.

If the U.S. slips back into recession, that will hurt—America is still our biggest customer. As the American and European economies slow, overall global demand will slow with it, and that will harm our export markets. You can already see this in the decline in the price of oil from over $112 a barrel to $80 a barrel.

Parliamentary Budget Officer Kevin Page is saying that Canadian governments are going to find that their budgetary results turn out significantly worse than they are currently expecting. And there's the persistent, and very real, risk of a renewed financial crisis, either in Europe, or in America again.

Demographics—who we are, who we will be

For the past 20 years or so we've lived in a period of relative demographic peace because most of the key generations have stayed within a single phase of their lifecycle. This is about to change, as three of the key demographic cohorts are about to undergo major demographic transitions, which will shatter the calm of the last 20 years, and create an unsettled, even tumultuous environment for just about everyone—and opportunities for those prepared to capitalize on them.

Mature Canadians (those born 1938 or before, currently over 70 years old), whom Statistics Canada calls the "oldest elderly," are now moving into a stage where many of them can no longer manage their lives and affairs without assistance. There will be a rapidly growing need for infrastructure and facilities to accommodate this group.

Next, let's talk about the baby boomers (born 1947 to 1967, currently between 44 and 64). In 10 years' time, they'll be between 54 and 74, which means the leading edge boomers are now entering the transition to retirement. This is going to change patterns of commuting, work and leisure throughout Ontario. It may also lead to people moving in, and out, of the urban centres in Ontario as they change their patterns of living in retirement. Some who live in the urban centres may sell their family homes and use the money to retire to less expensive, smaller centres that have a quieter lifestyle. Others, who crave the arts and entertainment options that the urban centres offer, may move in the opposite direction, or sell their homes and buy or rent condominiums.

Finally, there are the children of the baby boomers, called the "echo boomers" or "echoes," born roughly between 1977 and 1997 (currently between 14 and 34). In 10 years' time, they will range between finishing their formal schooling and entering their mid-40s. To the extent they can find work, they will be in their household formation stages, and starting to have kids. However, there won't be enough children in most areas to support more schools and childcare facilities. Moreover, the nature of work is changing, and that will change the kinds of commercial and industrial facilities that are needed for businesses.

Then, beyond these three age cohorts, there are two other, non-age-related groups that will be important, starting with immigrants. Particularly in the major urban centres, immigrants are already a big factor in Canada, and they are growing far more rapidly than the natural increase of Canadians born here. They are mostly of working age, and add to the workforce, as well as create valuable niche markets.

COVER IMAGE: NOAA; IMAGE AND DATA PROCESSING BY NOAA'S NATIONAL GEOPHYSICAL DATA CENTER. DMSP DATA COLLECTED BY THE US AIR FORCE WEATHER AGENCY.

Finally, there's a group that is vitally important, but that goes virtually unnoticed—women. They are starting more businesses than men, and the businesses started by women tend to survive longer than new enterprises started by men. And, within the corporate world, women are making significant inroads. Accordingly, you should make sure you're aware of how the balance of power is shifting towards women, and plan accordingly. I would argue that, perhaps within a generation, women will be more influential and powerful than men. All you have to do is look at what's happening in colleges and universities, where women now represent almost 60 per cent of all students—and in some disciplines, like veterinary science, the vast majority, approaching 90 per cent of students—to see where we are headed in the future.

> Three of the key demographic cohorts are about to undergo major demographic transitions, which will shatter the calm of the last 20 years, and create an unsettled, even tumultuous environment for just about everyone—and opportunities for those prepared to capitalize on them.

One more thing to note: retiring boomers will take their skills and knowledge with them, and there won't be as many echoes coming into the market. This will be mitigated somewhat by boomers delaying their retirements for financial reasons. But still, from a planning point of view, there's a lot of critical information, such as that concerning municipal infrastructure, that is sitting in the filing cabinets and the memories of aging boomers, that often gets lost when they retire. As well, finding enough young workers with the skills you need is going to be a problem, especially as organizations don't seem to be willing to invest in training. This is all going to lead to difficulties unless you engage in systematic transition planning.

Government finances

Because of the aging of the population, governments are going to be under severe financial pressure, especially from health care. The amount we spend on health care per person, per year, remains reasonably steady until about age 55, at which point it starts rising almost exponentially. So we have the biggest generation in history entering the high rent district of health care, and it is going to place enormous strains on government finances.

As well new technologies are increasing both the effectiveness of health care, and its cost. We have studiously avoided answering the question: Would we rather have a less expensive, less effective health care system, or a more expensive, more effective health care system? The tooth fairy isn't going to bring us a more effective, less expensive system. That's not one of the options.

And, of course, diet and exercise are big issues. We are facing an epidemic of Type II diabetes, largely because of the unhealthy diet that so many of us eat. This includes children, for whom Type II has, in the past, been unusual. The same is true with exercise. I hate to start with this phrase, but "When I was a kid…" I wolfed down chips and candy, but was skinny as a rake because I was a perpetual motion machine, playing mostly outside almost every day, like most of my friends.

These days, electronic companions combine with poor diet to compound these two problems. The result may be that today's kids could actually have a shorter life expectancy than we do. And, of course, that will compound the cost problems we're facing with health care.

Where planning comes into this, of course, is by creating an environment that encourages activity rather than discouraging it. Where there are sidewalks, and communities built to human-scale, so that it's easy to walk to school, or to get a litre of milk instead of having to drive, it's an active encouragement to exercise. Where there are parks for activities and play, plus libraries and other desirable centres, also within easy walking distance, that helps, too. Where different age groups mingle, creating communities where people feel comfortable, and there are a range of peoples who can support and assist each other, it encourages the development of healthy neighbourhoods. Communities designed this way will tend to be comprised of healthier people in happier, more liveable situations.

Climate change

I don't think I need to persuade many planners that climate change is happening, and that humanity, at the least, is a significant contributing factor. Which is good, because I'm not going to try: people who don't believe mostly have chosen not to believe. But there are several significant planning issues around climate change.

Climate change will mean that we have to build things differently. Also, there will be a rising need to deal with climate change by being more efficient in our use of resources, as with LEED and LEED ND. There's a lot of education needed on what constitutes sustainability. For instance, the image of building a "green" building on a greenfield site, is an oxymoron that most people don't understand.

But I should also warn you that none of this will come without well-organized opposition. LEED is seen as too expensive by some, even though done right it's actually less expensive over the long-run. Some developers may have no stake in the long-run costs of operating a building, for example, and a big stake in keeping the initial price down.

The best way of managing these issues is using a "no tears" approach: operating efficiently not only reduces emissions and resource consumption, it also increases the bottom line.

Technology: the predictable Wild Card

We've come from huge, vacuum-tube powered behemoths like ENIAC in 1946, that cost millions of dollars to build by hand, to today's smartphones, which cost, at most a few hundred dollars, and can be used by anyone. Yet, today's smartphone has more computing capacity than the supercomputers used by NORAD in the 1980s for missile defence.

You're all probably familiar with Moore's Law, which states that computers will double in speed, and halve in price every 18 months. But Moore's Law turns out to be too conservative: not only is the rate of change accelerating, but the rate of acceleration is increasing as well. By 2021, in ten years' time, computers will likely be 1,000 times more powerful and cost effective than they are today. This would mean that a $1,000 computer would have roughly as much raw computing power as a human brain. (That doesn't mean such a computer will be smart; that's a different issue.) And some forecasters are saying that by 2036, a $1,000 computer will have more raw computing power than the collected brains of the entire human race.

But one thing we will see a lot sooner than that: the rise of everyday robots and computer intelligences. Robots have been a fantasy for centuries, in one way or another, and a popular theme for science fiction and screenwriters since the beginning of the 20th century. But within the next 10 years, real robots will start showing up in our daily lives in commercial and industrial applications.

Technological advance has a lot of implications in a lot of different ways. It means that the way we do business will continue to mutate. For instance, telepresence will continue to improve the value for telecommuting, which will reduce the need to flee to the suburbs to keep office costs down. This has the potential to reduce sprawl—but only if it's harnessed and guided. Social media will continue to explode. We don't know where social media will go, because it happens, it's not created. It is, and will continue to revolutionize how municipalities can and do serve their constituents, and can lead to both better results, and lower costs if properly applied.

And smarter technology will enable people to find connections and shared interests (and conflicts) more easily.

> It's going to be crucial to your future, and that of your organizations, that you make the cost-benefit case for what you do iron-clad and compelling. Don't expect your management to understand the benefits of planning unless you spell it out.

Computer intelligences will be able to troll the Internet for people who have pieces of a puzzle that you need or want—sometimes before you even know what you're looking for. This will take time to develop, but I believe it will. And the iPhone 4S, through its Siri speech comprehension software, is the precursor to technology moving from being passive tools to becoming active companions and assistants.

Silver linings

Most of these challenges can be sobering at best, or downright scary at worst, so let's focus in on the potential silver linings. First, scarce resources cry out for thoughtful, clever planning.

One of the first reactions by organizations when faced with lean times is to cut back on thoughtful actions, whether it's marketing or planning, substituting frenetic cost-cutting and selling. But the cost of planning should more than pay for itself. It's going to be crucial to your future, and that of your organizations, that you make the cost-benefit case for what you do iron-clad and compelling. Don't expect your management to understand the benefits of planning unless you spell it out.

Next, technology is a two-edged sword. Not only does it threaten jobs and increase health care costs, but it also allows us to do things we could never even think of doing before. We can be more effective, and if we use that to multiply the value of our labour rather than just displace it, we can be big winners.

In the planning field, I would encourage you to look for opportunities to embrace emerging technologies to increase your effectiveness as well as your efficiencies, and would suggest you look more deeply at things like Apple's Siri, IBM's Watson, and the software field of Genetic Programming to learn about new tools that could become powerful force-multipliers. Where would architecture or manufacturing be today without CAD and CAM, for example? And, of course, Canada is a world leader in the use of GIS—and how many of you can imagine doing your jobs without GIS today? The tools emerging are going to be stunning in almost every field of endeavour, so watch closely, test carefully, and as successful new tools prove themselves, dive in, don't wait to be dragged. This doesn't mean every technology is going to be a winner, or that you won't have to work hard to turn it into a practical tool from an interesting concept, but don't overlook the potential because the field is going to continue to amaze you.

Life expectancy is going to continue to increase on average, despite our self-induced health care problems. This means longer careers, which can be a problem if young professionals find themselves frustrated by elders who don't move on. But each generation has different characteristics and different skill-sets, and organizations that can find a way of getting these groups to work together will wind up as big winners.

PHOTO: OPPI; PHOTOGRAPHY: WWW.TECKLESPHOTO.COM

Staying engaged

Finally, I want to point out two principles that are iron laws of the future. The first is the principle of serendipity, where you dig for carrots and wind up finding gold. For example, Dr. John Gorrie of Apalachicola, Florida, invented refrigeration while looking for a cure for malaria in 1851. The second principle is this: Someone always benefits from change. The times ahead are going to be difficult and trying, but many things that seemed fixed and unchangeable, like government funding or priorities, will be much more fluid, and can be subject to new ideas. Those who prepare for the future, and have the best plan to deal with it, will carry the day.

Richard Worzel is a bestselling author, leading forecaster and futurist and can be reached at futurist@futuresearch.com or visit his website at www.futuresearch.com. Richard was a key note speaker at OPPI's October 2011 conference, Celebrating 25 years and counting.

Cities: Economic Drivers

Overcoming the challenges

By Mario Lefebvre

Mario Lefebvre

This article has been condensed from the original presentation.

Our competitive edge depends on our cities, which are under pressure to attract the skilled individuals and firms Canada needs for success. However, Canada's cities are struggling to provide services, programs and infrastructure and they need to diversify their sources of revenues. The time has come to redress the fiscal imbalance of Canada's municipalities.

First challenge—attracting people

If a city is unable to attract people, it will be faced with weak population growth down the road, which does not bode well for its economic potential. According to the 2006 Census, two-thirds of Canada's population growth between 2001 and 2006 was attributable to net immigration. By 2030, Statistics Canada predicts net immigration will account for all of Canada's population growth.

The "people go where the jobs are" paradigm is slowly changing and it is likely to keep on changing. Given the aging of the population and the impact that this will have on the labour force, more and more businesses will choose to locate in cities with a relatively big pool of skilled labour, allowing them to grow over the short, medium and long term. As a result, a city that struggles to attract people will also struggle to attract businesses—yet another blow to the future prosperity of that city.

Immigrants will be a critical part of Canada's future and they will continue to flock to our urban centres. Building a strong, competitive and caring Canadian society will require the contributions of immigrants with all kinds of skills and education backgrounds. We have to continue to learn about what makes cities attractive to people to find the right policies and guidelines to create cities that will be viewed as destination of choice for immigrants.

Second challenge—the fiscal imbalance

There has been much debate in Canada on the "fiscal imbalance." The term usually refers to the situation in which the federal government is running surpluses while provincial governments struggle to balance their budgets. In fact, it is our cities that are suffering from a fiscal imbalance, as demonstrated by numerous Conference Board reports.

Current status

Federal and provincial governments have off-loaded programs and services to municipalities over the past 15 years. While the infrastructure issue is being addressed, we don't know to what extent.

Expected revenue growth for Canada's cities is timid at best, limiting their ability to meet their rapidly increasing spending requirements. This has nothing to do with the current property assessment and taxation system. The system works, it just can't support the level of responsibilities our cities are facing.

Over the past few years, the federal government and several provincial governments have stepped in to provide new support for cities. Federal initiatives include a complete GST exemption and a portion of the gasoline tax. Money is not targeted, however, to the municipalities that need it most. Regional hubs might need a little more than their per capita share.

Economic picture

Commodities have been in high demand and will remain so for years to come. In contrast, the manufacturing sector has been struggling for almost a decade and is still looking for its footing. In such a context, it is not surprising that economic growth has been stronger in Western Canada and will continue to be for a few more years.

Conclusion

If Canada's municipalities are to play a leading role in the national prosperity agenda, they need the fiscal capacity to provide the services, programs and infrastructure that will attract talent and investment. To this end the conference board's advice is threefold:

- Provide municipalities with the funding for programs and services that have been off-loaded by federal and provincial governments.
- Give municipalities access to sales tax revenues since these revenues grow with the economy.
- Make better use of the tools available to municipalities.

It is imperative that the fiscal imbalance of Canada's municipalities be redressed.

Mario Lefebvre is director, Centre for Municipal Studies at the Conference Board of Canada. A key note speaker at OPPI's 2011 conference, Celebrating 25 years and counting, Mario can be contacted at lefebvre@conferenceboard.ca.

Conference sound bites

Planning in the 21st Century

An era of cities

Presented by Greg Lindsay

Greg Lindsay

PHOTO: CHANG KYUN KIM

New Songdo City in South Korea

This article has been condensed from the original presentation and supplemented with additional commentary by Greg Lindsay.

Ontario is part of a global network of change. We must learn to build better, smarter, greener places if we are to survive. Having studied first-hand massive new settlements rising across the globe, Greg Lindsay describes the lessons we can learn from them, and how we can use this knowledge to rebuild our cities at home. The following offers highlights from his presentation.

Lindsay began by asking, "Why don't we build cities the way we used to?" His cryptic rejoinder, "Because there is no time," reflects the pace of population growth and the speed of urbanization.

"In 2011, the world is 50 per cent urbanized and cities are home to 3.5-billion people—80 per cent in America and Europe, 40 per cent in China and 29 per cent in India. In 2050 the world will be 80 per cent urbanized and cities will be home to 6.4-billion people."

Lindsay summarized the implications quoting the Lincoln Institute of Land Policy: "At the present rates the world's population is expected to double in 43 years while urban land cover will double in only 19 years."

Referencing the importance of urban planning, Lindsay spoke about our interconnected future, the challenges it poses to our environment and the opportunities for those prepared to plan for them.

He profiled cities in Asia where the challenge of building new cities is particularly pressing. "China is already building the equivalent of a Rome every few weeks to absorb another 400 million peasants streaming from the countryside in search of work."

Chongqing, which Lindsay characterized as the Chicago of the East, is home to 32-million people. It has an urban core of 6-million people and is adding 300,000 people annually. At 17 per cent, it has the fastest growing GDP of any city in China.

Langfang "has hired the architects of international firm HOK and Australia's Woods Bagot to retrofit it as an 'eco-smart city' using a technique known as 'biomimicry. … The plan would create canals running throughout the city and a skyline mimicking the triple canopy of an old-growth forest, using hardwood veneers on buildings and fresh plantings of trees and ginseng below….Highways will be replaced by streetcars connected to the city's dominant feature—a station on the new Beijing-Shanghai high-speed rail line threatening to subsume it into the capital's anonymous suburbs."

Lindsay spoke about the new, new urbanism that is Songdo, South Korea.

"The world is bracing for an influx of billions of new urbanites in the coming decades, and tech companies are rushing to build new green cities to house them." So starts Greg Lindsay's narrative about Songdo, which he characterizes as the most ambitious instant city since Brasília 50 years ago.

Intended to be the template for dozens to follow, Songdo has been hailed since its conception as the experimental prototype community of tomorrow, says Lindsay.

"A green city, it was LEED-certified from the get-go, designed to emit a third of the greenhouse gases of a typical metropolis its size (about 300,000 people during the day). It's an 'international business district' and an 'aerotropolis'—a Western-oriented city more focused on the airport and China beyond than on Seoul. And it's supposed to be a 'smart city,' studded with chips talking to one another," chronicles Lindsay.

"Originally commissioned by Korea's government to lure multinationals from Singapore and Hong Kong, Songdo is less of a Korean city than a Western one floating just offshore from Seoul," Lindsay explains.

Migration–immigration

Canada: 280,636 immigrants in 2010
Ontario: 118,116 (42 per cent of total)
Toronto CMA: 92,181 (78 per cent of Ontario)
City of Toronto: 50,968 (55.3 per cent of CMA)
Peel Region: 25,493
York Region: 11,611

"Songdo's architects at New York's Kohn Pedersen Fox chose to cherry-pick the signatures of beloved cities and recycle them as building blocks. In practice, this means its streets and Central Park are modeled on Manhattan's, its canal inspired by Venice, and its gardens borrowed from Savannah's.

"This model has proved wildly popular with middle-class Koreans, who bought the first 1,600 apartments in a wild weekend scramble in May, 2005. Roughly a third of Songdo's 65,000 envisioned residents now live there; the rest are expected to move in by 2017."

Shifting gears to North America, Lindsay compared the migration from the rural countryside to urban centres that is challenging countries in Asia, to the immigration that is driving growth in many North American cities.

Referencing *Globe & Mail* journalist and author Doug Saunders and his book Arrival City, Lindsay stressed the need to pay attention to urban spaces that are the focal points for immigrants. To illustrate his point, Lindsay spoke of arrival cities such as Thorncliffe Park in Toronto and Cicero, Illinois in the U.S. saying that it was important to "extract real lifestyles and use them to change policy."

Quoting University of Toronto professor David Hulchanski's report, "The Three Cities within Toronto: Income Polarization Among Toronto's Neighbourhoods 1970-2005," Lindsay spoke to the poverty of people living in Thorncliffe Park. However, he agreed with Saunders that on a number of levels it is a successful community, offering its residents a supportive environment while they transition to middle-class city life.

Bringing it home to the U.S., Lindsay spoke about an exhibition coming to the Museum of Modern Art in early 2012, "Foreclosed: Rehousing the American dream." Using Cicero, Illinois as the canvass, a multi-disciplinary team, including Lindsay, is putting together the exhibit to stimulate rethinking of the design of suburban America. It will tackle some major issues about arrival cities in the U.S.—suitability, functionality and affordability—and strive to hone in on a more viable settlement pattern than the historic single-family home and requisite automobile.

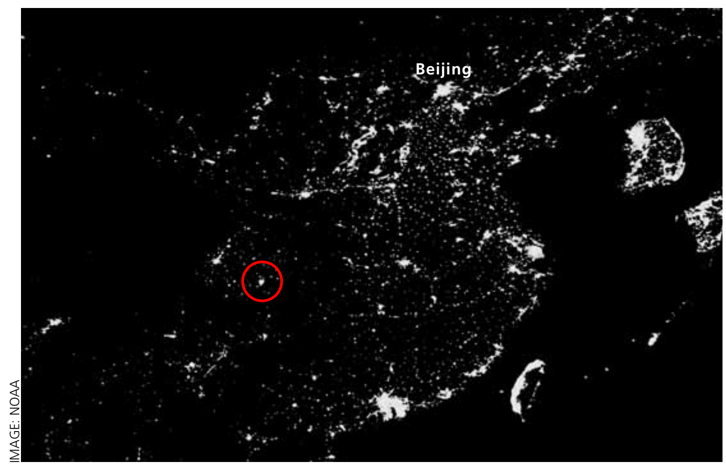
Greg Lindsay writes frequently about the intersection of transportation, urbanization and globalization. Lindsay can be reached through his website at greglindsay.org, or on Facebook at Greg.Lindsay and on Twitter @Greg_Lindsay. He was a key note speaker at OPPI's October 2011 conference, Celebrating 25 years and counting.

A wholly urban species

"What will be remembered about the 21st century, more than anything else except perhaps the effects of a changing climate, is the great, and final, shift of human populations out of rural, agricultural life and into cities. We will end this century as a wholly urban species. This movement engages an unprecedented number of people—two or three billion humans, perhaps a third of the world's population—and will affect almost everyone in tangible ways. It will be the last human movement of this size and scope; in fact, the changes it makes to family life, from large agrarian families to small urban ones, will put an end to the major theme of human history, continuous population growth . . . .

This great immigration of humans is manifesting itself in the creation of a special kind of urban place. These transitional spaces—arrival cities—are the places where the next great economic and cultural boom will be born, or where the next great explosion of violence will occur. The difference depends on our ability to notice and our willingness to engage."

~ Doug Saunders in the Preface to Arrival City



Chongqing amid a sea of cities

President's message

Getting down to business

By Mary Lou Tanner

Mary Lou Tanner

It is going to be a busy two years. Professional standards are being implemented through the Planning for the Future initiative. OPPI's Continuous Professional Learning Program is being enhanced. Our communication tools are being honed. The track to a self regulated profession is being laid. All this as we continue to lead professional planning practice on healthy communities.

It is an ambitious agenda too. We must move forward to continue to be the voice of the planning profession, continue to maintain and indeed strengthen our credibility as planning professionals, and be a strong voice for healthy communities across Ontario. All of these initiatives are important to a stronger OPPI, a stronger profession and to ensuring a firm foundation for future generations of planners. It is a very exciting time to be a professional planner and a member of OPPI Council.

Our 2011 conference was an exciting time to renew and look ahead. It was a wonderful experience and I was thrilled to see close to 100 students, our profession's future, participating. My thanks to the university planning programs and our student representatives for ensuring a strong turnout and access to our conference.

Renewal and looking to the future will be a constant theme in these next two years also. The tremendous support received on renewed standards for certification of new planners was a wonderful collective step forward for the profession. The transition to the Professional Standards Board is a key initiative for OPPI Council in the coming months. Together we must ensure the transition is seamless.

In the coming months, we will see innovation in the ways we communicate and our ability to engage. We will talk about the services OPPI provides—how and where we interact, what we want to learn and discuss, and how we advance the planning profession in Ontario. As was true of my predecessors, I am always available to speak with members and am committed to being at district events over the coming two years.

On October 14th I became OPPI's 14th President at our Annual General Meeting. At that time, I closed my remarks with the following quote from Nelson Mandela: "A leader is but a trusted servant." For your trust and the opportunity to serve, my words are both simple and heartfelt: thank you.

Mary Lou Tanner, MCIP, RPP, is associate director, regional policy planning with Niagara Region's Integrated Community Planning Department. She is the newly elected President of OPPI.

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2011-2012 OPPI Council
(Missing is Bill Janssen, WLOD Representative)

Mid-rise Urbanism

Developing the Avenues

By Gary Wright and Calvin Brook

IMAGE: BROOK MCILROY INC/PACE ARCHITECTS

Toronto's mid-rise Avenues strategy is good news for city building. Seventy-five per cent of the 324 kilometres fronting Toronto's Avenues is designated for growth. At a minimum 50 per cent of Toronto's anticipated growth in the next 30 years can be realized through mid-rise development on the Avenues. The densities achieved through mid-rise urbanism create healthy markets for both a thriving retail sector and transit.

This is also good news for the neighbourhoods that rely on these main streets as cultural hubs. Mid-rise urbanism is an ideal form of development offering the benefits of intensification in a form that does not compromise the quality of life which is the hallmark of Toronto's neighbourhoods.

The City of Toronto is developing at an unprecedented rate—as evidenced by the incredible number of cranes that crowd the skyline over downtown. From June 2006 to the end of 2010, over 100,000 residential units were submitted to the city for approval. While the majority of this development is in the form of tall, point-tower condominiums in the downtown and centres—areas designated for growth in the official plan and well serviced by transit—there is another story emerging about Toronto's growth, one that does not get nearly as much air time.

PHOTO: OPPI; PHOTOGRAPHY: WWW.TECKLESPHOTO.COM

Then president Sue Cumming presents OPPI 2011 Planning Excellence award to Toronto chief planner Gary Wright

Almost 30,000 residential units have been proposed for Toronto's Avenues, many have been built as mid-rise buildings that line our commercial thoroughfares. The Avenues, also designated for growth in the plan, are corridors along major streets spread across the entire city. They are adjacent to neighbourhoods and close to transit, and it is here the anticipated growth can occur incrementally in a manner which will both reinforce adjacent residential neighbourhoods and provide improved transportation corridors to link the various parts of the city together.

The origin of the Avenues dates back to 2002, and the city's first official plan since amalgamation. Recognizing that growth needs to occur in different forms and in different parts of the city, the Avenues were appropriately identified for mid-rise development. The official plan forecast that Avenue studies would be undertaken on an annual basis to set the stage for growth through updated zoning standards and creation of urban design guidelines. The dilemma has been how to accelerate this work given there are approximately 162 kilometres of Avenues

Part of the solution was to look at the lessons learned from the various studies and explore the dynamics and obstacles associated with developing mid-rise buildings. The Avenues & Mid-Rise Buildings Study was therefore initiated to address the need for a comprehensive approach to catalyze mid-rise development—a built form that complements the surrounding neighbourhoods and adds to the vibrancy of Toronto's Avenues.

In July 2010, Toronto city council adopted the recommendations of the Avenues & Mid-Rise Buildings Study for a two-year trial period. The study guides future growth on the Avenues through a set of 36 performance standards that provide the foundation for new as-of-right zoning and urban design guidelines for the Avenues. Once updated zoning is put in place, developers who comply with the height, massing and related mid-rise design guidelines will enjoy streamlined planning approvals in contrast to what can be a lengthy zoning amendment process.

The Avenues & Mid-Rise Building Study translates the city's policies for its Avenues into a real vision of vibrant, tree-lined streets, wide sun-lit sidewalks, framed by well designed mid-rise buildings that support active public spaces, transit and street-related retail. At the core of the performance standards are six key metrics and qualitative criteria that define Toronto's unique form of mid-rise urbanism:

IMAGE: BROOK MCILROY INC/PACE ARCHITECTS

Key metrics and qualitative criteria define Toronto's unique form of mid-rise urbanism

- Mid-rise buildings are no taller than the Avenue right-of-way;
- Building massing generally incorporates step-backs to allow five hours of sunlight on the Avenue sidewalks as measured at the equinox;
- Buildings gradually descend and are set-back as they approach adjacent low-rise residential properties, creating an appropriate transition from neighbourhoods to the Avenues;
- Sidewalks must achieve a minimum width and be designed to sustain healthy tree growth and support their role as both public and commercial spaces;
- Mid-rise buildings are mixed-use with shops at street level and residential or office uses on upper floors;
- Mid-rise buildings on the Avenues embody both design excellence and green building innovation.

Toronto will not continue to evolve through low-density neighbourhoods and while there is clearly an important role for tall buildings as part of the city's growth, appropriate locations are limited. Mid-rise urbanism offers a third way to grow in Toronto's oddly stratified pattern of development, characterized in recent years by a surge in both tall and super tall condominiums on one hand and on the other by stick-built low-rise housing.

Gary Wright, MCIP, RPP, is the City of Toronto's Chief Planner. Calvin Brook, MCIP, RPP, is a principal of Brook McIlroy and led the consultant team for the Toronto Avenues & Mid-Rise Buildings Study.

The Case of the Big Bay Point Resort

In praise of peer review

By Jamie Bennett

Planning peer review! These three words can make even the most experienced developer shudder, suggesting added cost, complexity and delay in an already difficult approvals process. However, there are instances where planning peer review is welcomed and can lead to outstanding results for all participants in the process. This is particularly true in the case of large or non-traditional land development projects, where municipal staff is already challenged in managing demanding workloads, or may not have had experience with the type of development or the kinds of information that would be required to support it.

The Big Bay Point Resort in the Town of Innisfil is a good example of peer review promoting positive results. I led a peer review team consisting largely of staff from MMM Group in relation to this major resort proposal on Lake Simcoe, on behalf of the town. A developer acquired some 239 hectares of land in the town, including an existing marina, forest and farmland. The site has a modest frontage on Lake Simcoe and is adjacent to a residential area that historically featured primarily cottages, but has evolved to include many permanent residences. The lands are outside of the designated settlement areas of Innisfil and distant from the existing municipal service area.

The developer retained the services of renowned new urbanist designer Andres Duany, who led a two day design charrette with a cross-section of town and agency staff and residents. As a result applications were made for amendments to the county and town official plans, zoning by-law and draft plan of subdivision to permit development of 4,200 homes in two distinct clusters focussed on a marina and golf course, as well as a hotel and a plethora of other supporting commercial and recreational uses and facilities.

This proposal was the largest development application in the history of the Town of Innisfil, and garnered much attention within the town and beyond. It was unique in Simcoe County and perhaps even in Ontario in its character and scale. The decision as to whether or not to approve the proposed Big Bay Point Resort was a difficult one for council, given both the positive attributes of the project and the potential risks. On the one hand, the proposal promised significant potential benefits in terms of job creation, tourism development, increased municipal assessment and improved community amenities. The applicant estimated the project would generate approximately 3,500 person years of employment directly in the construction industry and 3,200 person years of employment in supporting industries. As

IMAGE: DUANY PLATER-ZYBERK & COMPANY AND URBAN DESIGN ASSOCIATES

The Big Bay Point Resort in the Town of Innisfil is a good example of peer review promoting positive results

well, 850 permanent jobs were projected to be generated on an ongoing basis, contributing to a net annual surplus to the town of between $1-million and $4-million. On the other hand, there were potential risks and impacts associated with a project of this size and nature. Key concerns included the planning basis for the creation of what resembled a new settlement area, impacts on water quality in Lake Simcoe, land use compatibility and the prospect of committing a large portion of scarce sewage treatment capacity to a project that, given its novelty, might never proceed. Furthermore, public opinion was polarized on the merits of the project. While many town residents supported the proposal for its potential economic benefits, many others, and particularly residents in the Big Bay Point area who would be most directly affected by the proposal, opposed the applications on the basis of perceived negative impacts on quality of life and the environment.

Faced with this massive proposal and an application package that included 17 technical supporting studies, draft official plan and zoning by-law amendments, draft Resort Code and Resort Management Plan, town staff turned to consultants for support in the form of peer review. This involved analysis of the technical studies and advice to council regarding project issues and disposition of the applications.

The peer review process was a wild ride at times. The first of multiple public meetings was so well attended that many residents could not be admitted to the hall, and featured a long line-up of people to speak in support of the project. A subsequent public meeting featured a police presence. There were lawsuits launched by the developer against area residents, a ratepayer group and the town's consulting solicitor, and counter lawsuits. There were allegations that the developer was applying Strategic Lawsuits Against Public Participation (SLAPP) techniques to quell dissenting views, and the non-governmental organization Environmental Defence weighed in on this issue. There were three council resolutions over three years that provided increasing levels of support to the project, culminating in the adoption of a detailed set of implementing planning documents. There were appeals of the applications to the OMB by the developer (county OPA) and the province (zoning). There were settlement discussions coordinated by the Office of the Provincial Facilitator among the developer, town, county, province and resident associations. There were eleventh hour inputs on issues of Aboriginal rights, including archaeological resources and traditional hunting and fishing. Ultimately the project was approved by the Ontario Municipal Board, in a form supported by the town, five years after the applications were submitted.

Can we call a five year, adversarial process a success? Yes! The most obvious win is the project itself. The approved resort is significantly modified, improved and downsized. It features up-to-1,600 resort residential units (with restrictions on duration of occupancy), a minimum of 400 hotel rooms, a marina with a maximum of 1,000 slips, theatre, spa, golf course, commercial mainstreet, community centre, an 85 hectare environmental protection area, boardwalks along the marina basin, an innovative approach to stormwater management and extensive environmental enhancements. The town will get a high quality resort with a greater proportion of commercial assessment, a vacationing population that will spend money in the town without placing major burdens on town services, recreational and cultural amenities for area residents, the opportunity to service hundreds of existing residences on private services and comfort that the water quality of Lake Simcoe will be protected.

Furthermore, the revised planning documents provide the town with effective controls for ensuring the positive elements of the project are realized and the potential risks are mitigated. Restrictions on residential occupancy ensure that all units are recreation-oriented and non-permanent. A sunset clause on planning approvals and servicing allocation ensures the essential resort elements are put in place within a specified timeline or land use permissions and unused reservation of water and waste water capacity are forfeited. Phasing policies require the delivery of key resort amenities and satisfactory results from monitoring of environmental and other factors prior to the approval of subsequent phases. Provisions are in place for mitigation in the event of unsatisfactory monitoring results and architectural control guidelines and a control architect are mandated.

Additionally, there are many other benefits that showcase the real success of the proactive peer review approach applied to this project. Council members felt they were getting the best possible information to make an informed decision, and that this information was being effectively conveyed to the general public. The public had confidence, for the most part, that the project was being evaluated thoroughly and fairly. Town staff members were relieved of many of the pressures associated with an adversarial process, and could devote their time and energies to strategic issues and other pressing matters. The developer appreciated dealing in facts with seasoned professionals with relevant technical and planning experience, who could commit to specific review timelines. The peer review team provided continuity over an extended period that featured four different CAO's and a changing of the planning guard at the town. The project is now proceeding to construction, which suggests the very tight planning controls are manageable.

In retrospect, the success of the Big Bay Point Resort peer review process can be attributed to a number of factors. These included a thorough review of technical issues and assessment of planning merits in consideration of the "big picture" in the town and region and the clear articulation of the issues and potential choices, to inform the public and council and so that these matters could be understood and addressed by the applicant. Also important was an open, consultative approach with the developer, which led to significant rethinking of the nature and scale of the project—key to the success of the process, and could only have been achieved with a bold and creative developer like Geranium—and preparation of implementing documents that effectively compel the developer to build in accordance with the master plan and to achieve purported benefits. A cautious, staged approach to granting approvals, built credibility and trust in the process, while leaving the door open for a full approval subject to meeting council-endorsed tests. Further, ongoing communication with council and other key parties was expertly managed by Quinto Annibale of Loopstra Nixon.

Given the detailed nature of the phasing policies and conditions of draft plan approval, we continue to provide peer review services to the town through implementation of the project. This comprises review of technical studies and engineering design, input to development agreements and inspections of pre-development site works.

Jamie Bennett, MCIP, RPP, is senior planning manager and associate partner with MMM Group Limited. He can be reached at bennettj@mmm.ca. Information on the Big Bay Point Resort project can be found on the Town of Innisfil website at www.town.innisfil.on.ca/bigbaypoint/.

Technology and Planning

Engagement in a digital world

By Brent Bullough

My two-and-half-year old daughter loves to play with my iPhone, and she knows how to use it. Sure, she learns from her more tech savvy 7-year old sister, but the reality is that today's new technologies are second nature to our youth and will increasingly become familiar to the rest of our population.

At the past OPPI conference in Ottawa, I hosted an intensive training workshop on technology and planning. The room was full and the participants were eager to discuss the topic. We began by looking at how communication has changed through history, defined some basic terms used in technology, and explored examples of how technology has been used to engage communities. We ended the presentation with a quick overview of open data and open governments and the potential these movements have in fostering relationships among interested citizens, government leaders and planners.

During the session, participants were asked to use Twitter to post comments and questions about the content of the session and a live "tweet stream" was projected in the room allowing all participants to see the comments. This technique adds a twist to the usual question and answer period.

At the root of my presentation was the proposition that the way we get our information and communicate with each other is changing. We all intuitively know that technology has made access to and sharing of information easier, but how many of us have considered how this may affect the way we practice as planners?

For almost as long as planning has been recognized as a profession, we have collected information in the same way. People got their information from the radio, TV, newspaper, and, more recently, the internet. What we did with that information was generally of little significance beyond our own interpretation and how we shared or discussed it with our friends. Until recently, even information we received from the internet was consumed and processed in this way. True, bulletin boards and blogs permitted a wider audience to appreciate our insights and interpretations, and this did have an influence on how we consumed and interpreted information. However, it was not until recently that, according to American writer and teacher Clay Shirky, "media has become social." We have now embraced the idea that innovation can happen anywhere and can be transferred anywhere, instantly.

Communication has changed over time

Technology is changing how we provide planning information

PHOTOS: OPPI; PHOTOGRAPHY: WWW.TECKLESPHOTO.COM

Electronic communications have been prevalent for decades, as has mobile technology. However, it was not until we could receive multiple forms of communication in a fully shareable electronic format and have access to devices that permitted us to share communications along with our interpretations through interconnected networks that things really changed. Social media has made this possible. Combine this with the more recent phenomena of open data and open governments, and you have the conditions for a revolution in communication.

How does this affect what we do as planners? The way we share planning information with the public, whether it be a notice for a public consultation event or an article covering one of our higher profile projects, has not changed much since planning regulations came into being. Then why, especially now when things are changing so profoundly, do we rely solely on traditional methods of communicating with the public?

The Pew Research Center's Internet and American Life Project (pewinternet.org) is doing fascinating research into how we get our information. From its "How People Learn about Their Local Community" report (2011), we learn that adults in all age ranges use the internet to get local information, though this increases significantly when only looking at those between 18 and 39 years of age. We further learn that 47 per cent of American adults get at least some of their local news on mobile devices, whether they be smartphones or tablets. We are becoming increasingly dependant on our electronic, connected devices to get our information.

The way we read the newspaper is changing as well. Though the Pew study did not differentiate between reading a hard copy newspaper and an on-line version, it is clear that many of us do read the paper on line. When reading on line, we tend to go directly to the big articles (as identified by the editors) and spend less time flipping through the pages. With this practice, we are less likely to flip by the announcements page letting folks know about our upcoming open house or zoning by-law amendment.

The Pew report categorizes 41 per cent of adults as "local news participants," who "contribute their own information via social media and other sources, add to online conversations, and directly contribute articles about the community."

Don't we wish that all our citizens were this fully engaged in our communities? These active users are influencing how people interpret the information presented by the media and the information we release to the public about our projects. They are important. They should not be feared. They should be embraced.

If people are getting their information, interpreting and sharing it differently than in the past, do we not have to change how we provide planning-related information?

Participants at the workshop were left with this question, among others, and asked to identify the key issues they believed we face as planning practitioners in light of the information presented. By the end of the session there appeared to be two key barriers to wider acceptance of social media as legitimate engagement tools: the perceived risks associated with allowing social media to become an accepted form of participation, and the resources required to manage these social media sites. On the plus side, these and other issues can be dealt with through proper project planning, the development of a communications and engagement strategy, and the adoption of a sound social media policy.

As with any new technology or change to the status quo, there are always questions and fears. This is reasonable. However, to ignore the trends and assume that social media will go away is not reasonable. Social media, whether it be Facebook, Twitter or the next big, yet undiscovered medium, will play an increasingly greater role in public debate. We'd be foolish not to find a way to be a part of the conversation and make it work for us as planners.

Can we even imagine how connected we will be in the coming years? There is no need to speculate. We can confidently say that by bringing technology and the right minds together, planning and engagement through the use of technology will become increasingly intuitive. If an iPhone makes sense to my two-and-a-half-year-old daughter, surely the next generation of smartphones and tablets will make even more sense to the very young and very old alike.

Perhaps we'll have the opportunity to delve into questions of open data and governments, the growing and fascinating topic of government transparency and citizen engagement in Markham at the 2012 OPPI symposium. Meanwhile, I'll continue to let my daughters teach me how to be more tech savvy.

Brent Bullough, MCIP, RPP, is an environmental planner and public consultation specialist with Dillon Consulting Limited in Toronto and can be reached at bbullough@dillon.ca or followed on Twitter @brentbullough.

PHOTO: OPPI; PHOTOGRAPHY: WWW.TECKLESPHOTO.COM

Through the use of technology planning will become increasingly intuitive

Parkland Dedication

Revisiting the formula

By John Ghent

Parks and open spaces contribute immensely to the quality of life of urban dwellers. It is of key importance that adequate parkland be provided as our urban places continue to evolve. However, there is a fundamental unfairness in the way parkland contributions for high-density residential housing are currently calculated, if the maximum rate is taken. Furthermore, the financial impact can substantially affect the economic viability of a development project.

High-density residential housing will become an increasingly important cornerstone shaping the urban areas of Ontario. This form of development has long been a prominent component of the Toronto core, but not so much in the Toronto hinterland and in other municipalities across Ontario. Factors influencing this trend include provincially mandated policy direction to intensify urban areas, protect the green belt, preserve agricultural lands, sustain public transit, provide for affordable housing and make efficient use of existing and planned infrastructure. The goal is to make better use of existing urban areas.

The way in which the ratio formula for taking parkland (1 ha per 300 dwelling units) is applied is a major issue for high density projects and will undoubtedly become a substantive issue if parkland is calculated at the maximum rate. At the extreme end of the scale, cash-in-lieu of parkland can be equal to or greater than the value of the land. For landowners, the financial impact to proposed projects is significant. For municipalities, this has long been a major source of funds for park development.

Importance of parkland

The provision of adequate parkland is of fundamental importance to the way towns and cities function. People need places to gather, to recreate, and to enjoy communal activities. At the core of our being, we are relational creatures and parks provide space to satisfy that need. They provide space for sporting activities, provide a sense of place and are an organizational element. Simply put—parks enhance our quality of life.

The basic underlying purpose of the parkland provisions established in the *Planning Act* is to provide municipalities with the means to ensure that adequate parkland and facilities are available to existing and future residents. This assists in achieving the goal of creating healthy, vibrant and complete communities.

For low-density residential developments, allocating 5 per cent of the land area has been the general standard upon which the provision of parkland is based. The introduction of the alternative ratio formula recognizes that in the case of high-density development, 5 per cent of the land area is not sufficient for the population that would be generated. On a given hectare of land, low-density development might generate 60 to 75 people. With high density housing, the same area of land might generate 130 to 500 people, or more—a much greater load placed on park spaces.

There is a need to relate the number of people generated by a given development to the amount of parkland provided. *The Planning Act* has used the number of dwelling units as the mechanism to determine the amount of parkland a development should include.

Comparative Analysis

The following examples provide a benchmark of how much parkland is mandated for three low-density development scenarios and three high-density development scenarios.

In this example (Table 1), the total amount of parkland

Table 1: Parkland generated from low-density development

	Scenario 1	*Scenario 2*	*Scenario 3*
Area of land	1 ha	1 ha	1 ha
Density	15 units/ha	22 units/ha	29 units/ha
Units generated	15 detached dwellings	22 detached dwellings	29 units (detached or semi-detached)
Population generated at 3.2 persons per unit*	48 residents	70 residents	92 residents
Parkland @ 5%	500 m²	500 m²	500 m²
Parkland per person	10.4 m²/person	7.1 m²/person	5.4 m² /person

*Note: The persons per unit in Tables 1 and 2 were taken from the Development Charge Background Study prepared for the Town of Oakville by Hemson Consulting Ltd, June 2009, Appendix A, Table 2. This data was derived by Hemson from Statistics Canada census information.

Table 2: Parkland generated from high-density development			
	Scenario 1	*Scenario 2*	*Scenario 3*
Area of land	1 ha	1 ha	1 ha
Density	75 u/ha	150 u/ha	300 u/ha
Units generated	75 apt. units	150 apt. units	300 apt. units
Population generated at 1.7 persons per unit*	127 residents	255 residents	510 residents
Parkland generated at 1 ha per 300 dwelling units	2,500 m²	5,000 m²	10,000 m²
Parkland per person	19.6 m²	19.6 m²	19.6 m²

remains constant for typical low-density projects but the amount of parkland per person varies—from 10.4 m² to 5.4 m² of parkland per person. As the density increases the amount of parkland mandated per person decreases. The result is that the amount of parkland mandated for low-density housing is not proportional to the number of people living in the units.

In Table 2, although the number of units increases, and the total amount of parkland correspondingly increases, the amount of parkland per person remains constant at 19.6 m². The parkland from high-density housing relates directly to the number of people living in the units.

In comparing the parkland for high-density development to low-density development, there are some key insights.

- Calculating parkland for high-density development should not be the same as the percentage of land area used for low-density development.
- The number of people in various housing forms changes and therefore the need for parkland will change as the type of unit changes.

Parkland dedications

In dealing with development applications, the *Planning Act (Sections 42 (1) to (6) and 51.1 (1) to (5))* provides for two methods of taking parkland or cash-in-lieu of parkland when development projects are located on lands where the municipality does not require additional park space.

For residential land uses, parkland may be taken at the maximum rate of 5 per cent of the area of the land. When the official plan includes appropriate policy statements, the alternative method is to take parkland at the maximum rate of 1 ha. per 300 dwelling units. There is no provision in the *Planning Act* or in any provincial policy documents indicating which method is to be applied, the analysis that should be undertaken, or criteria that should be met when using the alternative method.

Generally, municipalities apply the 5 per cent rate when dealing with low-density residential projects and the alternative for high-density land uses, either at the maximum rate or at some reduced standard. For medium density development, both methods of calculating parkland have been used.

- High-density housing generates significantly fewer residents per unit than low-density development.
- Applying parkland contributions on the basis of the number of people actually using the park space is a more equitable basis for requiring parkland dedications.
- High-density development generates a disproportionately high amount of parkland on a per person basis than what is generated from low-density development.

For medium-density development the same general principles apply. If parkland dedication is based on a percentage rate, the amount of land taken is a constant and therefore the parkland per person deceases as the person count increases across the medium-density range (from 5.3 m² of parkland per person at 35 units/ha to 4.1 m² per person at 45 units/ha). If parkland is dedicated under the ratio method, the amount of parkland increases as density increases, but the amount of parkland per person remains a constant (12.3 m² per resident). (In these scenarios 2.7 persons per unit is used.)

The concern is that when the parkland contributions are applied to the ratio-based formula at the maximum rate, it could be a strong disincentive to proceed with the development because of the negative financial impact. As a result other projects may be delayed, the viability of public transit may be compromised, the intensity of land use may be reduced, growth targets not achieved, opportunities for affordable housing reduced, and infrastructure may be underutilized and more expensive. While relatively negligible in relation to one project, when applied over time across a municipality or a number of municipalities, the cumulative impact could compromise intensification policy objectives.

Flawed methodology for high-density developments

There are two components to the parkland issue. The first is how the land area for park space is calculated. The second is how cash-in-lieu of parkland is calculated.

The flaw in the methodology for calculating the land area for parkland contribution is that not all unit types generate the same number of people nor the same park usage.

The reasonable and equitable application of parkland contributions for high-density housing should be based on the principle that people, not units, use parkland and the number of people in various unit types changes, therefore the demand for parkland will change based on the unit type. Parkland contribution should be based on the number of people generated from the development.

A second principle is that the amount of parkland contribution for all residential housing forms should be taken in a reasonable, fair and equitable manner across the municipality.

Based on the scenarios above, an appropriate adjustment to high-density residential development would be a ratio-based parkland contribution ranging from 1 ha for every 550 to 700 dwelling units. This would result in parkland contributions from high-density housing ranging from 10.6 m^2 of parkland per person to 8.4 m^2 per person. The result would be reasonably equivalent to the parkland generated from typical low-density development, which generally ranges from about 10 m^2 to 5 m^2 of parkland per person.

The *Planning Act* indicates that cash-in-lieu of parkland is calculated based on the value of the land involved in the application. Cash-in-lieu of parkland from high-density development would be based on high-density land values, presumably on the basis that park space may be needed in the immediate vicinity of the proposed development.

The problem with this approach is that high-density residential land usually has a higher value than other land uses including land designated/zoned for low-density residential uses. While it is sometimes the case that parkland is purchased in the immediate area, it is frequently the case that the cash-in-lieu funds go into a general parkland account and may not be used to acquire land, or may be used to acquire lands of lower value. Hence it would be reasonable to introduce an upper limit to the amount of cash-in-lieu of parkland that could be taken by the municipality.

Some municipalities have taken steps to address this problem by either establishing a pre-determined cash-in-lieu value per unit (e.g., $5,500 to $6,700 per unit), or providing a cap on the amount that will be taken (e.g., 10 to 25 per cent of the value of the land). Taking a predetermined cash-in-lieu amount per unit also allows the municipality to encourage certain forms of housing. For instance, affordable and special purpose housing could be exempted from the parkland contribution.

Conclusion

A parkland standard that would be more equitable would range between 1 ha for every 550 to 700 dwelling units. Taking parkland within this range would result in providing parkland at 10.7 m^2 to 8.4 m^2 per person—very similar to the rate at which parkland is taken for low-density development.

With respect to calculating cash-in-lieu of parkland, an upper limit of $5,000 to $8,000 per unit to a maximum of 25 per cent of the land would be reasonable. The range allows for variables that could influence parkland contribution such as land values, the value of parkland facilities to be constructed, and any minor adjustments to actual persons per unit statistics that reflect local characteristics.

Until this matter is addressed, there will be continued concern among landowners involved in high-density projects. Four options for resolution are presented here.

To fully resolve this matter, an amendment to the *Planning Act* would be required. However, this is not likely to be undertaken in the short term.

A second option could include an amendment to the *Provincial Policy Statement,* which is currently under review. It could provide policy direction that places controls on the ratio formula for parkland.

A third option may be for municipalities to proactively take steps to reform the way parkland is dedicated. There are several municipalities that have embarked on this course and others may consider introducing similar policy initiatives.

A fourth option may be for landowners involved in high-density residential developments to apply to the municipality to amend its official plan parkland contribution policies relating to the 1 ha of parkland per 300 dwelling units. Such an amendment should also incorporate a policy that implements the provisions of *Section 42 (6.2)* of the *Planning Act,* allowing for the reduction in the amount of cash-in-lieu of parkland equivalent to the value of achieving sustainability criteria that are set out in the official plan.

Reforms in the way parkland is provided will achieve the underlying purpose of the parkland provisions established in the *Planning Act*—to provide municipalities with the means to ensure adequate parkland is available to existing and future residents. This in turn will assist municipalities in achieving healthy, vibrant and complete communities.

John Ghent, MCIP, RPP, is senior associate with Weston Consulting Group Inc.

LAKELAND DISTRICT

Open Invitation

OPPI ski day

By Robert Armstrong

The Lakeland planners are currently organizing the 2nd Annual OPPI Ski Day, together with the Toronto District planners. The event will take place on February 16, 2012 at the private Osler Bluff Ski Club near Blue Mountain Resorts. Last year proved to be an exceptional day with awesome conditions and rave reviews from those who attended. We are looking forward to another great year with even more skiers. More information will be posted on the Events Section of the OPPI website once we firm up the details.

The Central Lakelands Program Committee also held another successful Festivus event at Georgian Downs, south of Barrie. At the November 22 event Brandi Clement was recognized for receiving the OPPI Membership Service Award. Funds from Festivus are earmarked for a student scholarship. The committee is currently working out the details. Look for information in the new year.


Robert Armstrong

The OPPI Lakelands executive committee and three program groups (Peterborough, Central and Western areas) are seeking ideas for informative and engaging events in the coming year. These may include professional development opportunities, district-specific planning matters and additional social events. Please e-mail me with your ideas.

On a personal note, I appreciate the opportunity to represent the district for a second two-year term. The Lakelands District is a very unique district with many challenges. These include a membership that is spread out over a large geographic area and region-specific planning issues. I am confident we can address these challenges together, as we have a large number of committed professionals who are willing to volunteer their time to furthering the profession. I am also excited that partnerships are being formed within the district, particularly with various Health Units that help to deliver on our vision of "planning healthy communities through vision and leadership."

Robert Armstrong, MCIP, RPP, is the planning and building services director with the Municipality of Meaford. Robert is the Lakeland District representative on OPPI council.

EASTERN DISTRICT

2011 OPPI Conference

Resounding success

By Rory Baksh

Looking back on the latter part of 2011, Eastern District was proud to host the OPPI Conference in October and celebrate OPPI 25th anniversary year.

The conference was attended by hundreds of members and students from across Ontario who took part in three fabulous days of learning, networking and reconnecting with colleagues. Praise was received on many aspects of the conference and the lessons we learned will help make future conference even better. We would once again like to recognize the conference chairs and subcommittee chairs: Dennis Jacobs, Ann Tremblay, Stephen Willis, Nancy Meloshe, Nadia De Santi, Bliss Edwards, Lisa Dalla Rossa, Chris Wicke and Don Herweyer.


Rory Baksh

We would also like to thank all the members that participated in the Kingston Area Planners Social and Ottawa Winter Social, which helped bring the year to a festive close.

Looking forward to 2012, Eastern District will again be holding its Annual Rural Workshop, numerous social events, a World Town Planning Day celebration, and as always, looking volunteers.

Rory Baksh, MCIP, RPP, is an associate at Dillon Consulting and the Eastern District representative on OPPI Council. He may be reached at rbaksh@dillon.ca.

PEOPLE

Douglas W. Stewart, MCIP, RPP, has recently joined the Urban Development practice at Stantec Consulting in Kitchener as a senior planner. Douglas brings over 35 years of public and private professional policy and development experience to the Stantec team. Contact Douglas at douglas.stewart@stantec.com.

MHBC Planning has been recognized by the Canadian Association of Certified Planning Technicians as the 2011 Private Sector Employer of the Year. This award recognizes employers who show support for CACPT through certification, membership, professional development, volunteerism, and/or promotion of planning technicians within their organization.

Quick Wins Initiatives

Community building catalysts

By Britt O'Hagan

After completing my undergrad and spending the last two years working for both the Town of Collingwood and a private landscape architecture firm, I have come to know the frustration that is the municipal budget. I don't deny that roads and underground services are a very important component of a town's fabric, but all too often the areas in a town citizens experience most personally, the streetscapes and public spaces, become an afterthought of development.

Recently the catch phrase 'Quick Wins' has been popping up in my research, and I believe this might just be the trick to making progress on some of those urban and landscape design projects that seem to take forever to get off the ground.

In short, the term Quick Win describes a project or initiative that can be completed with little funding and on a short timeline; sometimes in the wake of a larger, more substantial regeneration project to alleviate the public's impatience. Some such projects include tree planting, improving street and storefront signage, planting flowerbeds and incorporating public art.

To me, small beautification projects like these are what make the public realm an enjoyable place. Not only are Quick Wins a great alternative for budget-tight municipalities, they can be an enormous catalyst for community building. These types of landscape and urban improvement projects are relatively simple and many can be completed with the help of volunteers, local businesses and schools. There is an amazing opportunity for community members to come together and make the neighbourhood their own by incorporating local art and murals, pitching in with landscaping and façade improvements and donating materials and services.

While it is easy to say this approach will work, finding the resources to organize, schedule and monitor these projects becomes a barrier to their success. What most municipalities are lacking is a framework to deal with volunteer and low-budget projects to ensure these Quick Wins do not get pushed through the same approval process as larger-scale development projects.

Whether a policy framework is developed through the parks, community services, or other municipal department, the willingness and eagerness of citizens to contribute and better their community is a valuable resource that municipalities should be cashing in on. Be it local skateboarders designing and helping improve their own skate park, or local artists painting murals on blank alley walls, all of these small, creative projects help animate the community. They promote a sense of belonging and ownership over one's neighbourhood, and can be achieved in a short timeframe using little to none of the municipal budget.

So while a multimillion-dollar project may be pending five to 10 years down the line, it is time for municipalities to start thinking about what can be done now with available resources, and begin building stronger and more beautiful communities today.

Britt O'Hagan is a provisional member of OPPI and a MSc.Pl. student at the University of Toronto specializing in urban design. She can be contacted at britt.ohagan@gmail.com.

Enroute

Public places in Peru

By Lana Phillips

While many planning jobs keep us relegated to office space we all know that the 'fruits of our labour' shape the world beyond the front door and our neighbourhoods, our cities, our province and our country. It is in looking beyond the front door, out into the world, that we have the opportunity to consider other ways of planning thus expanding our cubicle walls. As a planner travelling the world each day is filled with millions of opportunities to see firsthand how humans create and use space. Over the coming editions I will be sharing observations from my travels through a planner's lens.

Public spaces in many 21st Century North America cities

PHOTO: LANA PHILLIPS

Landscapped public square in Cuzco demonstrates local pride

are a community element that planners are challenged to create. This is despite our knowledge of the value of public spaces for creating the people side of community. Certainly we do have showcase examples, but more often than not what is intended to be a public space rarely materializes—something is missing. Public spaces simply become labelled blocks on a map.

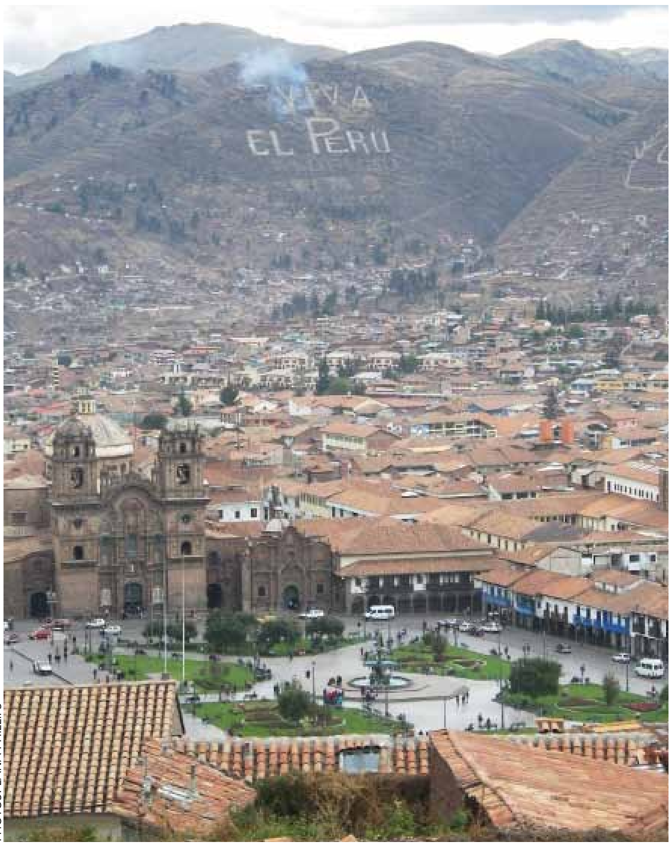
Peru surprised me with the quantity and quality of its public spaces, particularly public squares. Every municipality (no matter its size) has a main public square and often smaller squares scattered throughout the community. It is evident that the main square is an important part of the social and economic fabric of the community. Throngs of people sit, talk, sell, buy and play there. Important buildings line its edges and the on-going maintenance of its lawns, flowerbeds, fountains and statues is evidence of the pride they elicit.

We can understand why Peru succeeds in creating and using public squares if we consider how the context of these spaces varies from those in Canada. Contributing factors include the pattern of historical settlement of Peru and influences such as the Spanish conquest in the 1500s—much like Spain, Catholic cathedrals and churches proliferate around the main squares. Also, people in Peru predominately reside in homes much smaller than that of the average Canadian and Peru has a more temperate climate than Canada.

The main square in Cuzco is an excellent example. It is fabulously developed and full of local residents and tourists alike. Bound by both Inca and Spanish influences, the architecture alone plays into the allure of the main square.

Addressing some of the contextual issues related to their success, public spaces are being successfully (re)developed in North America but we have much to learn from other cities and countries.

Lana Phillips MA, MCIP, RPP, is currently taking a pause from her professional career to travel for a year. You can follow her travels online at http://enroutetoanywhere.wordpress.com.



PHOTOS: LANA PHILLIPS

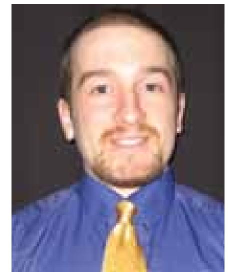
Churches front onto Plaza de Armas, Cuzco

Smaller homes and warmer climate contribute to the allure of public squares in Peru

Occupy

A wake-up call for planners

By Ben Puzanov, contributing editor



Ben Puzanov

As the global phenomenon known as the Occupy Movement enters its third month in North America, it becomes increasingly important for professional planners everywhere to take stock of their daily work and ensure that they are doing all they can to foster inclusive communities that promote social, economic and environmental responsibility. Of significant importance is the fact that one of the first Occupy demonstrations was initiated on Wall Street by the Canadian not-for-profit group Adbusters Foundation; yet again illustrating Canadians' social consciousness and desire to effect positive change.

While Occupy has taken on a life of its own, its beginnings are rooted in the socioeconomic inequalities that plague communities in all corners of the globe and the ever widening gap between the wealthy and those who struggle to survive. Despite the fact that some protestors have used Occupy as an excuse to disturb the peace, commit crimes and clash with police, most have been respectful and have used civil disobedience to bring attention to perceived corporate irresponsibility, greed and effects of globalization.

Most of the issues raised by the Occupy Movement have been around for many years. Some of these issues have even served as catalysts for revolutions and have oft been cited as justification for heinous acts against humanity. However, Occupy is different. Fuelled by social media, Occupy transcends geographical boundaries and has been taken up as the rallying cry of people of many walks of life in both developed and developing countries. As is the case with many social movements concerned with quality of life issues, Occupy has gained traction in a time of great economic uncertainty and instability. The global financial crisis of 2008 and the associated bailouts of various financial institutions have served as lightning rods for recent debate and are continuously cited as key reasons for the Occupy Movement.

As such, now is an opportune time to shine a light on our profession and see how we measure up in improving the lives of those within our communities. Whether one agrees with the Occupy Movement is irrelevant. What is important are the key principles that the movement was founded on—principles that transcend generations.

As professional planners, we must ask ourselves whether we are doing our part to uphold the public interest and improve the lives of those in our society. Have we been successful in striking a balance between the various groups and interests that live, work and play in our communities? Have we done all we can to ensure planning decisions are made with the best and most up-to-date information and resources that are available? Have we done enough to consider the implications of our actions today on the generations of tomorrow? If the answer to any of the above is anything other than a resounding "Yes," it is time to change the way we operate.

As professional planners, one of our roles is to ensure that decision-makers are able to make well-informed decisions regarding the future of our communities. Whether you are engaged in land development, environmental planning, social planning, heritage and cultural planning, or one of a plethora of other planning disciplines, it is our duty to help shape our society for the better. Whether or not you agree with the Occupy Movement, its foundation is without a doubt underpinned by planning principles: sustainability, social consciousness, community, fairness and the preservation and promotion of the public interest.

Whether or not Occupy is merely a fad or the beginning of a much broader social movement remains to be seen. What is certain is that our profession has much to do to improve the lives of those around us and Occupy should serve as a wake-up call.

Ben Puzanov, M.PL., MCIP, RPP, is a planner with the Municipality of Middlesex Centre. He may be reached at puzanov@middlesexcentre.on.ca.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR Members are encouraged to send letters about content in the *Ontario Planning Journal* to the editor (editor@ontarioplanners.on.ca). Please direct comments or questions about Institute activities to the OPPI president at the OPPI office or by email to executivedirector@ontarioplanners.on.ca.

Navigating Planning Networks

New tools of engagement

By Christine Furtado

In October 2011, OPPI's 25th Anniversary Conference in Ottawa welcomed a record number of student attendees. OPPI offered students the opportunity to travel to and from the conference by bus and attend an evening gala—an evening much appreciated by the students that participated. The networking session at the alternative media café, where students showcased their research using posters, video and electronic slide show displays, was most rewarding and exciting. Reflecting on the feedback of students, the conference was a great experience, and the use of new media to capture and share unique points of view was something I know students would like to see more often.

Christine Furtado

November 8th, 2011 marked World Town Planning Day, an event celebrated in over 30 countries around the world. Students were offered a full roster of events and volunteer opportunities where they engaged with other professions, high school students and each other. Ontario planning students took part in walking tours, attended sessions with key note speakers, participated in various design charrettes and offered lessons to high school and university students. These opportunities would not have been possible without dedicated volunteers, collaboration among groups and engagement with the broader public using social media tools.

These are, as they say, just the tip of the iceberg. A number of community events have already facilitated networking and learning opportunities this year, adding tremendous value to what students are learning in the classroom.

As we enter a new year, we must continue to ask ourselves, what new opportunities can we create for students, and how as students can we contribute to the public and to the profession? One way that shows promise is the use of new networking tools and collaborative approaches. The OPPI Student Liaison Committee with its representatives from each Ontario planning program has begun to explore the online and collaborative tools available in a pilot project for 2012. In continuing to promote initiatives (e.g., healthy communities and active transportation) across a diverse planning profession we must find a method for integrating knowledge and different fields into a common language. An exploration of current and future tools of engagement will expand and direct appropriate networks among students, researchers and professionals.

Whether entering a planning program after a full career or after graduating with a bachelors or college degree, every planning student has a unique perspective to offer. The diversity of research I have encountered among students is fundamental to shaping the future planning profession.

I wish you all the best in the new year and look forward to further integrating our community of planning students into the broader professional planning community as we move forward on our varied paths.

Christine Furtado is a second year graduate student in the M.E.S. Planning Program at York University. Her research focuses on the way political processes influence environmental management and public engagement in urban planning. Christine is the student delegate on OPPI Council.

ERRATUM Brampton's Mount Pleasant Village is 55 ha/136 acres and is planned for about 1,300 residential units. It is the main centre of the new, larger Mount Pleasant community of 845 ha/2,088 acres. OPJ regrets the error.

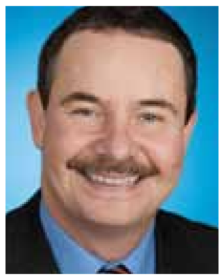
Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario

Interview with Executive Chair

ELTO made easier

By Eric K. Gillespie, contributing editor

You may have already noticed that as of this edition of the Journal this column has a new title. As most readers likely know, under the Adjudicative Tribunals Accountability, Governance and Appointments Act, 2009 the Ontario Municipal Board, Environmental Review Tribunal, Assessment Review Board, Conservation Review Board and Board of Negotiation now operate as a "cluster." Known as the Environment and Land Tribunals Ontario (ELTO) it functions under the guidance of an executive chair. Lynda Tanaka was appointed to this position in May of 2011. In a recent interview, Tanaka noted that planners in Ontario regularly appear before almost all of the boards and tribunals in the cluster, hence the updated name for this column. Future editions will strive to look at issues and reflect the interests of the broad range of OPPI members who work within the ELTO cluster.



Eric Gillespie

In person executive chair Tanaka initially makes it clear that a very important part of her mandate is to ensure the ELTO system consistently provides a fair and impartial process in a timely way. This approach is not new to her. She began practicing law in 1973 in administrative forums (and in particular the OMB) as well as civil litigation. She also became involved in law firm governance during her years at Toronto's WeirFoulds, while at the same time raising two children. In 1995, she first began to sit on the other side of the dais as a vice-chair of the Ontario Racing Commission. In 2005 she moved from practicing law to focus on her work as an adjudicator and regulator. In 2007 she was appointed to the Ontario Licence Appeal Tribunal and soon thereafter became its chair. In addition, Tanaka has trained and practiced extensively in mediation. Four main themes emerged from our recent discussion.

First, all of ELTO boards and tribunals continue to work towards implementing the many requirements under the *Adjudicative Tribunals Accountability, Governance and Appointments Act*. These include codes of conduct, ethics, complaint and other management processes. As Tanaka observed, in many cases, these are simply "best practices" that were already in place but are now being formalized. Moving forward on implementing the act has and will likely continue to occupy much of her time, while the ELTO associate chairs continue to direct many of the other aspects of each board or tribunal that they supervise.

Second, ELTO and most notably the OMB have been proceeding with some significant internal restructuring. Tanaka compares the structure of a board to that of a bird, with two wings: the adjudicators being one and the staff forming the other administrative wing. Both wings must be functioning properly. Beginning earlier last year, changes have been taking place in the administrative wing of the OMB. However, this has been accomplished with no disruption in service, and efficiencies and improvements are already being realized. Many planners who appear before the board may not have known that these changes were occurring, but hopefully are seeing results, for example the availability of more hearing dates within noticeably shorter timeframes.

Third, Tanaka is focused on continuing to attract high quality candidates to both the adjudicative and administrative sides of ELTO and the OMB. She notes that staffing plays a critical role in the way the board operates, including the importance of the board's own internal planners as case managers. There is also the issue of succession planning within the adjudicative wing as a number of vice-chair and member positions will be due for re-appointments in the coming year. Institutions such as the OMB depend on the knowledge and experience that individual members have accumulated. When they depart, either as adjudicators or as administrators, it is important for the long-term health of the organization that strong replacements be identified and encouraged to accept positions within or on the board.

Fourth, and possibly most importantly, executive chair Tanaka is clearly committed to all of ELTO "continuing on its path towards excellence." She also quotes from a long-time varsity athletics coach—"when you stop getting better … you cease to be good"—words worth remembering. It is quite evident that the executive chair brings this philosophy to her new role, along with a wealth of experience and energy for the tasks ahead.

Eric Gillespie is a lawyer practicing primarily in the environmental and land use planning area. Readers with suggestions for future articles or who wish to contribute their own comments are encouraged to contact him at any time. Eric can be reached at egillespie@gillespielaw.ca.

Advising previous clients

Dear Dilemma,

I was recently hired by one of the local municipalities in our county as manager of planning. Prior to this, for several years, I was a planning consultant acting for a variety of private clients in the county including many within my municipality.

Since joining the municipality, I have continued to advise my private clients outside of the municipality on planning matters. However, my work for those clients within my municipality has been taken over by another consultant.

I thought that this was a fair and balanced approach, but I have recently been warned by another RPP that my activities are perceived to be inappropriate and that a complaint to our Discipline Committee might be filed. What do I do? I feel I can be trusted to be fair to both groups (my clients and my municipality).

Your thoughts,

—Trying To Wear Two Hats "With Trust"

Dear Two Hats,

It appears you may be pushing the "trust me" envelope a little too far. While you believe you are acting with integrity, it seems that other professionals believe you have a conflict. I suggest it would be prudent of you to step back and consider the seriousness of your situation and any factors that may be contributing to it. Saying you are not acting as a consultant within your municipality may simply not be enough to dispel the perception of a conflict of interest, since you still will be seen as acting for both private sector clients and the public sector.

The core of this problem may be the common assumption that private sector planning consultants routinely advocate for an applicant's proposal rather than the public interest. Given your managerial position you may also be seen as having additional influence at the county level where planning decisions that affect your private clients may be made. Suspicion is to be expected and the last thing you want is to be painted with the lack of integrity and honesty brush.

Here are some points to consider that might be helpful to resolve your current situation and to avoid future problems:

Members have a primary responsibility to define and serve the public interest. Think back to your past work. Were there any cases where some planners or members of the public opposed your client's position and came to believe that you were putting your client's benefit ahead of the public interest?

Have you reviewed the Professional Code of Practice? You may understand the concerns of others better if you consider the policies under sections 2 and 3, "The Planner's Responsibility to Clients" and "Employers and The Planner's Responsibility to the Profession and Other Members," as well as the "Standard of Practice on Conflict of Interest." In particular, the Standard of Practice discusses situations when the perception of the planner's ability to exercise the required independent professional judgement is undermined.

Is your continued consulting work known to your employer (municipality)? Are the terms of this work written into your contract? Were there any "dos" and "don'ts" established on how you would practice? Have you discussed conflicts? How will you deal with former clients that are now applicants?

Equally do your existing clients know about your new job at the municipality? Are they aware of possible impacts, such as availability or other restrictions?

When attending meetings, do you make it clear at the onset, which "hat" you are wearing? Do you change hats during or at the end of meetings to discuss other business?

Did you get legal counsel? Potential conflict of interest situations are difficult ones to judge and settle. A conflict is not resolved simply by openly declaring it.

Have you considered meeting with the planner who identified the concern to explain your "two-hat" approach and outline your contractual arrangement at the start. Perhaps speak to other planning consultants.

What is your plan if one of your clients from outside your community decides that he or she now needs to also do business inside your community?

Finally, as time goes on review your position honestly and consider how this approach is working out.

Good luck in your new position and in resolving this issue.

Yours in the public interest,

—Dilemma

Through this regular feature—Dear Dilemma—the Professional Practice and Development Committee explores professional dilemmas with answers based on OPPI's Professional Code of Practice and Standards of Practice. In each feature a new professional quandary is explored—while letters to Dilemma are composed by the committee, the scenarios they describe are true to life. If you have any comments regarding the article or questions you would like answered in this manner in the future please send them to Info@ontarioplanners.on.ca.

Ontario Transit Managers Look Ahead

Issues facing the transit industry

By Norman Cheesman

Each autumn, the Ontario Public Transit Association (OPTA) holds a series of regional fall meetings around the province for senior transit managers. They meet to talk about what they are working on, the problems they are trying to solve, and to hear about the work that OPTA is doing on their behalf at Queen's Park. As I travel around to each meeting, despite the common agenda, I am always interested in the subtle differences in the 'character' of the people in each region, something which makes our province a great place to live. The other thing I've observed is that the transit industry, for the most part, is pleasantly freed from the kinds of tensions that come from businesses that have to compete with one another. Co-operation and information sharing is much more the norm.

When I joined OPTA in mid 2008, it was apparent that the transit industry had been benefiting from some very good years, something that was long overdue given the tough times of the late '90s. We had a government at Queen's Park that was committed to transit and proved it at budget time. The province committed dedicated gas tax funding for transit and capital funding to assist in the replacement of buses. Ridership numbers were up in most communities and new buses were on the road. Cities that had seen their bus fleets reach an average age of 18 years were now able to acquire newer, more accessible, more fuel efficient vehicles.

The discussions at our various regional meetings brought to light some common themes. Transit managers across the province are facing some very similar challenges in the months ahead, and they will need to work together, emulating best practices and learning from one another where they can.

More requirements; less funding

There has been a trend over the past few years for government to bring in new legislation or new regulations that have increased the cost of operations without providing new funding. This observation could be made of other sectors, but the unique nature of the transit industry has placed it at the forefront of policy initiatives that are hitting us all at the same time. Whether it is new accessibility regulations, new rules concerning violence in the workplace, distracted driving regulations calling for wireless radio systems, or the Ontario Human Rights Commission—mandated stop announcement systems—all good things in their own right, the list of things which transit must invest in to achieve compliance has increased along with the cost of doing so.

At the same time, gas tax funding is still in place but has essentially flat-lined and the bus replacement funding was cancelled in the March 2010 Budget. Combined with tighter budgets at the municipal level, transit systems are caught between growing need/demand for service, more stringent regulatory controls and less funding. At some point, in order to meet budgets, systems have already started to defer the purchase of new buses, and are delaying or cancelling altogether service expansion or reducing service on existing routes.

Looking for operational improvements

In the mid 1990s, "re-engineering" was a popular buzz word, particularly in the private sector. The lecture circuit featured so-called experts who advised senior managers on how to improve their operations while helping them to re-examine the business they were in. Looking inward can be good once in a while, and from what I can see, there is a lot of that going on at the moment in the transit industry.

As costs and new requirements increase, and as external funding has flat-lined or reduced, many transit systems have undertaken or are in the midst of operational reviews aimed at finding new efficiencies. Although these grand reviews are usually initiated by local municipal councils, they present a great opportunity to examine the business model and are providing transit managers with interesting and helpful, if not always welcome information. Recommendations include anything from re-organizing the way specialized services are delivered to reporting and supervisory practices on the shop floor. The underlying assumption is that the reviews must and will deliver ways for transit systems to "find revenue" from within in order to continue to meet growing demand for transit services.

Harnessing IT-enabled services

Transit managers are also spending more time assessing and utilizing new information and communications technologies. CAD/AVL systems can provide real-time information which can assist route planning, improve flexibility when responding to emergencies or out-of-service situations, and provide customers with up-to-the-minute data on when to expect the next bus. The internet and social media have also helped transit systems to become better at targeting and communicating with customers (at least with those customers who are so inclined or able to receive those communications!) and are helping to building greater brand awareness in specific communities. Other technologies, such as cameras on buses, are not only improving the customer experience by increasing the sense of security, but they have also resulted in a decline in driver assaults.

Finding new blood

Transit managers are usually less vocal about this, but a major issue coming at us (and one common to other sectors) is that many of today's senior managers will be leaving the workforce in the next four to five years. As the Mowat Centre recently reported, Canada is transitioning from a period of labour surpluses to one of labour shortages, and the transit industry has to quickly start identifying and developing new talent at the top of its organizations. But the front office is not the only place where these shortages will be felt. The back of the shop where vehicles are serviced and maintained will not only be looking for new managers in the years ahead, but increasingly will be looking for hard-to-find technical talent that combines both mechanical and electronics/IT capabilities.

This skills gap is becoming more evident and it is imperative that we bring new people into the industry with the requisite skills to service increasingly complex, technology-rich vehicles. As the head of one transit system said recently, "when one of our mechanics goes to fix a bus these days, he reaches first for a laptop before he goes for a wrench."

Conclusion

Whether you view transit as a "social" service, or whether you see it as a business, any organization must operate within certain parameters for it to remain sustainable. Today's transit managers face unprecedented challenges, but also opportunities, which will test their ability to continue serving the growing need for transit services in our communities. At the end of the day, trade-offs will have to be skilfully and diplomatically handled as the industry attempts to balance the many demands against available resources.

Norm Cheesman is the CEO of the Ontario Public Transit Association which represents over 120 organizations across the province including transit systems and suppliers. He is also a past president and founding director of the Public Affairs Association of Canada. Norm can be reached at cheesman@ontariopublictransit.ca.

OPPI Student Scholarships

Application deadline approaches

By Pam Whyte

Applications are due before March 1 for a number of OPPI student scholarships.

Given partly on the basis of academic excellence, these scholarships are also intended to recognize and reward service, commitment and contribution to the planning school and the wider community. For instance, the award available for graduate students is the Gerald Carrothers Graduate Student Scholarship. The scholarship was named in 1992 after Gerald Carrothers, in recognition for his exceptional contributions to CIP and OPPI, and in particular his role in the founding and growth of OPPI and his unmatched volunteer commitment to the institute.

The previously unnamed award available for undergraduate students was officially named the Ronald M. Keeble Undergraduate Student Scholarship on Thursday, October 13, 2011, at the OPPI conference gala awards dinner in Ottawa. Ron Keeble is a professor of urban and regional planning at Ryerson University. He is also a committed OPPI volunteer, serving for over a quarter century as an examiner, accreditation reviewer, editor, committee member, membership committee chair, council member and registrar (twice!). You may have attended one of Ron's "Ethics for Planners" workshops, given dozens of times over the past five years across the province. He co-chaired the national membership standards committee and the "Planning for the Future" initiative during the crucial period from 2004 to 2010.

Continuing a recent tradition of presenting a one-time scholarship named after the out-going president, the Susan Cumming 2012 Scholarship will be awarded in research focused on the planning and design of healthy communities in Ontario. Sue was instrumental in developing OPPI's report Healthy Communities, Sustainable Communities and subsequent Calls to Action. She is a strong advocate for advancing the critical role of the planning profession in achieving healthy, active and connected communities through policy and design.

Pam Whyte

Learn more about these scholarships at www.ontarioplanners.on.ca/content/Awards/scholarships.aspx, and see past winners at www.ontarioplanners.on.ca/content/Awards/studentscholarshipsandawards.aspx.

Pam Whyte, MCIP, RPP, is OPPI Director of Membership Outreach and a member of the student liaison committee. A senior planner for Delcan Corporation in its Ottawa office, she is also an expert in GIS and is a LEED accredited professional.

2012 Membership Renewal Notice

As a valued member we are working on your behalf to be the voice of the planning profession. OPPI strives to support you in your work to plan healthy communities, act as a centre of excellence for planning, and develop and maintain professional standards for the profession.

To renew, please visit the OPPI website, you will need your Member ID and password to log in. If you have lost or cannot remember this information, use the password reminder feature on the OPPI homepage.

Every member makes a difference! We can't do it without you.

Congratulations!

To the following Members who received their Registered Professional Planner (RPP) designation in 2011

Addorisio, Christina ..... TD
Afonso, Jason ..... ORD
Alchawa, Bridgette ..... ED
Alexander, Melissa ..... SD
Alkhalisi, Tara ..... WLOD
Allen, Rian ..... SD
Anderson, Audrey ..... ND
Aquilina, Daniel ..... WLOD
Armstrong, Sarah ..... ORD
Auduong, Michael ..... TD
Awuah, Kwame ..... ORD
Bailey, Graham ..... TD
Bain, Grant ..... ED
(Transferred from PIBC)
Barron, Paul ..... SD
Bedas, Nour ..... TD
Bennett, Matthew ..... TD
Birch, Carol ..... ORD
(Reinstated)
Bogaert, Nicholas ..... SD
Borbridge, Richard ..... TD
(Transferred from PIBC)
Broderick, Darlene ..... TD
Broughton, Katrina ..... ORD
Brown, Christopher ..... LD
Buckton, Elizabeth ..... LD
Burkart, Jacqueline ..... ORD
Cannon, Sarah ..... TD
Carou Dubarry, Barbara ..... TD
Carrara, Julie ..... ED
Carson, Leah ..... ED
Caruso, Carmen ..... ORD
Chadwick, Lori ..... SD
Cham, Hoang (Shelly) ..... ORD
Chapple, Alison ..... LD
Chemij, Mark ..... TD
Chin, Danielle ..... TD
Cholette, Christine ..... ED
Chorney, Deanna ..... TD
Christiani, Catherine ..... TD
Christie, Mark ..... TD
Cipriani, Anna Marie ..... SD
Coady, Bridget ..... SD
Connolly, John ..... LD
Cooper, David ..... TD
Cranston, Angus ..... TD
(Reinstated)
Curic, Tanja ..... SD
Current, Jennifer ..... LD
Day, Geoff ..... ORD
del Campo, Stephanie ..... TD
Demczak, Paul ..... WLOD
Dent, Laura ..... SD
Dewdney, Rebecca ..... TD
Didrikson, Amy ..... TD
Ditner, Colleen ..... TD
Earl, Lindsay ..... WLOD
Edwards, Lindsay ..... LD
Eno, Derek ..... Out of Prov.
Ethier, Daniel ..... ED
Fang, Christine ..... TD
Faryadi, Shahrzad ..... WLOD
Fayek, Safa ..... LD
(Transferred from API)
Ferguson, Glen ..... ND
Fitzpatrick, David ..... TD
(Transferred from PIBC)
Forrest, Tessa ..... TD
Foster, Jennifer ..... TD
Frith, Lindsay ..... WLOD
Furney, Carl ..... ED
Gauthier, Bobby ..... ORD
Ghomashchi, Vahid ... Out of Prov.
Gomez, Adriana ..... TD
Gravelle, Ashley ..... ND
Greenbaum, Mark ..... TD
Grenke, Karl ..... ED
(Transferred from API)
Gucciardi, Carmen ..... WLOD
Gummo, Andrea ..... ED
Hagerman, Kate ..... TD
Harrington, Allison ..... WLOD
Hashim, Johanna Wenona ..... TD
Hatoum, Katherine ..... ED
Hawkins, Justin ..... LD
Henderson, Cale ..... ND
Henriques, Anna ..... ORD
Hill, Graham ..... TD
Ho, Doris ..... TD
Hoff, Benjamin ..... TD
Horan, James ..... SD
Hoy, Amy ..... TD
Hui, Annika ..... TD
Hyde, Keri ..... TD
Iulianetti, Christina ..... ORD
Jacobs, Mark ..... TD
Jamal-Gill, Naheeda ..... ORD
Jarvis, Stephanie ..... SD
Jones, Maria ..... WLOD
Jones, Morgan ..... TD
Juknevicius, Romualdas ..... ORD
Keay, Diana ..... LD
Kelso, Ray ..... LD
Kilis, Jakub ..... ORD
Kim, Carolyn ..... TD
Kingsbury, Daniel ..... LD
Kloibhofer, Franz ..... WLOD
Knight, Mark ..... SD
Koops, Krystina ..... ORD
Kostyan, Rita ..... TD
Kuperman, David ..... TD
Lalonde, Hugo ..... ED
Lambert, Brooke ..... SD
Lametti, Craig ..... TD
Lauzon, Sasha ..... TD
(Transferred from PIBC)
Lo, Shawni ..... TD
MacIntyre, Joan ..... ORD
Mahmood, Nasir ..... TD
Mahood, Christopher ..... WLOD
Mak, Edward ..... ORD
Makki, Sabeen ..... ORD
Malkawi, Fuad ..... ORD
Mallory, Ryan ..... ED
Manley, Timothy ..... SD
Marek, Gregory ..... LD
Markowiak, Jeffrey ..... TD
Marohnic, Peter ..... ORD
(Transferred from PIBC)
Martin, Larry ..... ORD
(Transferred from APPI)
McArthur, Steven ..... ND
McCarthy, Michelle ..... TD
McConville, Mark ..... ORD
McCreight, Laurel ..... ED
McEachren, Jessica ..... SD
McFarlane, Jane ..... TD
McGinnis, Andrew ..... ED
McKay, Melissa ..... ORD
Mitchell, Katherine ..... TD
Mohr, Melissa ..... ND
Molgat Sereacki, Michel ..... TD
Molson, Adam ..... TD
Morrow, Erin ..... TD
Munro, Kyle ..... ORD
Murphy, June ..... ORD
Natolochny, Fred ..... SD
Nesbitt, John ..... SD
(Reinstated)
Newman, Katie ..... LD
Nix, April ..... SD
Oppedisano, Andrea ..... TD
Orlie, Tyson ..... TD
Palumbo, Andrew ..... TD
Papatolis, Chris ..... TD
Penner, Leigh Ann ..... ORD
Perkin, Dianne ..... TD
Peters, Kimberley ..... TD
Petrunia, Jason ..... TD
Pham, Melanie ..... WLOD
Plas, Kyle ..... WLOD
Porras, Ruth ..... ORD
Prentice, Robin ..... ORD
Raheem, Ferenaz ..... ORD
Rankin, Katharine ..... TD
(Reinstated)
Raymond, Brent ..... TD
Reed, Peter ..... TD
(Reinstated)
Reid, Matthew ..... TD
Rhodenizer, Kelly ..... ED
Rich, Leslie ..... LD
Richardson, Gregory ..... ED
Riley, Alanna ..... SD
Riley, David ..... TD
Roach, James ..... ND
Rogers, Nathan ..... Out of Prov.
Rokos, Martin ..... ORD
Romanowski, Geoff ..... ORD
Rossi, Melissa ..... ORD
Sacret, Andrew ..... ED
(Transferred from CIP Int'l)
Saleh, Zaid ..... ORD
Salisbury, Cameron ..... SD
Sandoval, Lucila ..... TD
Savoia, Ellen ..... WLOD
Scaramozzino, Tracey ..... ED
Schaefer, Damien ..... ED
Scorgie, Blair ..... TD
Seniuk, Natalie ..... WLOD
(Transferred from APPI)
Sidlar, Christopher ..... SD
Smith, Erin ..... TD
Somerville, Matthew ..... ORD
(Transferred from CIP Int'l)
Stein, Kirsten ..... ORD
Stevenson, David ..... TD
Stickney, Lyle ..... SD
Straatsma, Greg ..... ORD
Sulatycki, Lindsay ..... SD
Taggart, Michelle ..... ED
Tavassoli, Mehrnoush (Noushy) ... SD
Taylor, Lauren ..... ORD
Tharp, Jennifer ..... TD
Thorne, Jason ..... SD
Tracey, Renata Dominika ... WLOD
Tsang, Jason ..... TD
Tyers, Alana ..... ORD
Van Hinte, Timothy ..... SD
(Transferred from API)
Vasni, Miriam ..... LD
Vink, Cassandra ..... ORD
Wagler, Jason ..... TD
Wallace, William ..... WLOD
Waltos, Edward ..... TD
Ward, Candice ..... ORD
Wilmot, Nicole ..... SD
Withall, Tony ..... ORD
Wolfenberg, John ..... ND
(Transferred from APCPS)
Wong, Andrew ..... ORD
Wood, William ..... ED
Yearwood, Ashley ..... ORD
Young, Mark ..... ED
Young, Robert ..... ORD
Zajac, George ..... WLOD
Zhuang, Zhi Xi ..... TD

District Abbreviations

Eastern District . . . . ED
Lakeland District . . . . LD
Northern District . . . . ND
Oak Ridges District . . . . ORD
Southwest District . . . . SD
Toronto District . . . . TD
Western Lake Ontario District . . . WLOD

For More Information

Contact membership coordinator Denis Duquet with questions regarding membership:
416-483-1873 ext. 222,
1-800-668-1448 ext. 222 or
membership@ontarioplanners.on.ca.

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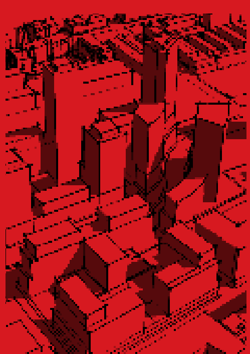

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