Ontario Professional Planners Institute

Ontario
PLANNING
Journal

SEPTEMBER / OCTOBER 2014 VOL. 29, NO. 5

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES • SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

Symposium Preview
Digital Platforms for Planning


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MOBILE

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PRIVACY CROWD

DESIGN THINKING WEB 3.0 CLOUD

SECURITY BIG DATA

INFRASTRUCTURE

Ontario Professional Planners Institute
Institut des planificateurs professionnels de l'Ontario

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES • SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES

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The Journal is published six times a year by the Ontario Professional Planners Institute.
ISSN 0840-786X

Subscription and advertising rates can be found at www.ontarioplanners.ca.
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October 1 & 2, 2014

Symposium: Healthy Communities and Planning in a Digital Age
Notice of Annual General Meeting
Niagara Falls
The 2014 AGM will be held in Niagara Falls on October 1st from 4:30-5:30 p.m. during the 2014 OPPI Symposium. Following the AGM, OPPI will be recognizing outgoing Council Members, Member Service Award winners, Ronald M. Keeble, Gerald Carrothers and Mary Lou Tanner scholarship winners and those Full Members who have been with the institute for 25 years. Review the 2013 AGM minutes and report here. All members are welcome! Register today; the symposium is expected to sell out.

November 5, 6 & 7

World Town Planning Day
Professional planning organizations around the world will mark World Town Planning Day 2014 with an international online conference on *Equality in the City – Making Cities Socially Cohesive*. Start planning your World Town Planning Day events now.

Follow OPPI using social media

OPPI's LinkedIn page is a great place to network with members of the planning profession. Follow OPPI on Twitter @OntarioPlanners. Not on Twitter? You can still check out the tweets posted on OPPI's homepage. Using facebook? 'Like' OPPI and follow the posts. On the go? Access our mobile site.

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is available on the OPPI website at
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COVER: SYMPOSIUM KEYNOTE SPEAKERS ANDREW ANGUS, JORDAN AXANI, NORA YOUNG AND JESSE HIRSH

Niagara Falls, Ontario, October 1 & 2, 2014

SYMPOSIUM

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES & PLANNING IN A DIGITAL AGE

No One Wants to Read Your Planning Report!

Lessons in getting people to actually pay attention

By Andrew Angus

As founder and CEO of Switch Video, I have helped people share their stories in under 60 seconds with video. Since its inception, Switch Video has produced more than 500 videos in 15 different countries and 10 different languages. With past clients like Microsoft and American Express, the Switch team has further honed its ability to convey stories and distill complex ideas using animated videos.

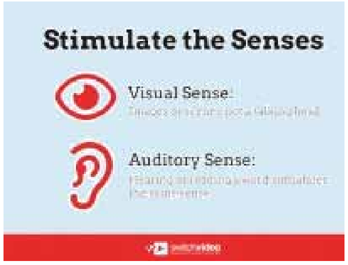
Andrew Angus

Over the years, I have learned some valuable strategies for communicating with video. A lot of these approaches derive from the brain science used in Switch's strategy. There are several things organizations need to keep in mind when putting together an explainer video: our attention spans are short and competition for our attention is increasing every day. So, how do you cut through this noise and get people to understand the key points you are trying to share?

The working memory has a limited amount of space. If you give your audience more information than necessary, they are going to miss a lot of vital details. With certain strategies, you can get around this problem. Think about activating multiple senses or understanding how people learn differently. When you have limited time, you want to make sure you are getting your information across as efficiently as possible.

Video is an unrivaled medium for telling an effective story, and a good story is integral to an explainer video's success. A story activates the parts of our brain that would be used if we were actually experiencing the events in the story ourselves. Because so much of the brain is engaged by a story, video has the power to connect the material you are consuming with personal experience, strengthening the message.

Storytelling, particularly of the visual variety, allows you to use metaphor to increase understanding by relating a new concept to with which something viewers are already familiar. Through harnessing the power of storytelling in video, you can tell a memorable story that connects with your audience. Telling a story with video is one of the best ways to get your audience's attention and make a lasting impression.



Making your story stick

Andrew Angus is the founder and CEO of [Switch Video] and will be a keynote speaker at the upcoming [OPPI Symposium] October 1 & 2 in [Niagara Falls]. With over 500 videos produced since the start of Switch Video, he has led the movement to integrate brain science and web metrics into the production of animated explainer videos. As a thought leader in the online video industry, Andrew writes and speaks about how to produce simple videos that explain what you do in an engaging and compelling format. His book, 60 Seconds – How to tell your company's story and the brain science to make it stick, is available at Amazon.

Web 3.0

What it means for planners

By Jesse Hirsh

The web is playing a significant and transformative role in our society as it changes our relationship with media and information. While we may take the time to reflect on how profound this change has been, we often fail to notice how fast it continues to change and how it is impacting planners' relationships with the public.

The web has made all of the world's knowledge and culture accessible, making it easier to reach expertise and wisdom, albeit with a necessary dose of critical thinking and skilled navigation. Certainly there are limits to the volume of information available, but the time we spend working with it increases, thus the interfaces we use to organize it must also change to keep up our ever changing relationship with information.

Jesse Hirsh

When the web started we would turn on our computer and see files and folders that represented our work and collections of documents and later pictures. However perceiving the web as purely informational is completely overwhelming as there is just far too much information for us to ever process.

Thus as the web has evolved it has become socialized. We login to see our friends and family, receiving status updates and photos about their activities, travels and adventures. Our relationship with media is more focused now on social context rather than raw information, and whether it is the news we see, or the search results we find, all is invisibly influenced by what our friends are also searching and reading.

With each day, each hour, each minute and each second, more content is created, by our friends, our family and our co-workers. Our collective digital history allows for a greater contextual awareness and customization so that our relationship with technology becomes one of automation and anticipation. The search engine and the news site anticipate our needs, anticipate our interests and desires, and automatically provide a customized experience.

The ongoing rise of artificial intelligence, led by mobile virtual assistants, allows for an inherently subjective experience that affords each user their own bubble or virtual environment within which they can live an insular experience.

The challenge for planners is twofold: How do you pursue, harness and comprehend a public interest when the technology and cultural environment encourages people to retreat from the public sphere into a digitally-enabled private sphere. How do you adapt to the emerging communications environment and make available the information necessary to the planning process to this fractured public? The bottom line is that this will require the same kind of customization employed by other media consumed by the public.

The irony of the retreat into the digital private sphere is that it is done while also inhabiting the public realm. People still use transportation, parks and retail, commercial and residential areas. They just tend to wear headphones and stare at screens while doing so. Present but not engaged. Thus how do planners both understand their needs, let alone communicate with them to either include their feedback or explain changes that will impact their lives?

Our inability to reconcile the multiple realities in which we currently reside has fractured our society and has the potential to further undermine any notion of a social contract. Understanding our changing relationship with the web helps us understand what we can and should do to support a society that is inclusive, prosperous and healthy.

Jesse Hirsh is a curious individual who has spent the last two decades researching our relationship with technology and the way we are transformed by the tools we use. He will be a keynote speaker at the upcoming OPPI Symposium October 1 & 2 in Niagara Falls.

A New Era of Public Engagement

From Lemonade Stands to YouTube

By Antonio Gómez-Palacio, Joost Baker, Bruce Haden

Every year expectations for public consultation continue to increase in the face of advances in social media and new forms of communication. These new tools promise to engage the disenfranchised, reach out to the unreachable and transform the conversation. But they are not a panacea for meaningful engagement. They, like more traditional tools, are only as effective as the engagement process that is designed and implemented. This article states the case for enhanced engagement in all its forms.

Antonio Gómez-Palacio

Not all ideas are good ones

Public engagement is often facilitated ideologically as a politically correct gathering of disparate people, where all voices are equally valid. Reality is more nuanced and more political. Yes, all voices should be welcome in the conversation. No, not all ideas have validity.

Facilitating a meaningful process requires: framing the conversation to create clear expectations; and engaging in genuine debate, where all ideas are put through a thoughtful, evidence-based sieve.

In city-building the objective is to imagine and deliver a better and brighter future. The problem is that when facilitation is only preoccupied with delivering consensus, it will often arrive at either the status quo or the lowest common denominator for change. Hence, facilitating meaningful public engagement requires leadership on difficult topics, subject-matter expertise and an honest conversation.

Not everyone can be the decision-maker

One of the best ways to engender frustration and bitterness for a process, is to promise people that 'we' will unquestionably do what they ask—and then not to. Another equally effective way to turn people off consultation is to have them express their opinions at meeting after meeting, and then completely ignore them. Somewhere in between, there is a fine line where input can be honestly received and reviewed, and a sympathetic response articulated.

Bruce Haden

For this to occur, participants need to know what role they play in the process: Are they making decisions, establishing direction, providing advice, providing feedback, or simply being informed. If the roles are clear, it will be easier to align expectations and ensure participants' voices are meaningful.

Engagement is a two (or more) way conversation

Equally important to the facilitators being able to listen and learn from the public is the public's ability to listen and learn from the process. In the best events, participants and facilitators are able to both contribute and learn something.

Therefore, facilitation is not only an exercise in recording a conversation. It is also an about capacity building. By sharing a knowledge-base participants are able to provide meaningful input and subject-matter experts are able to evolve their understanding.

This becomes especially important when evaluating the merits of communication tools. One-directional engagement tools that do not elevate the understanding of all parties involved will have inherent limitations, and should be used accordingly. Surveys and Twitter, for example, can often result in one-directional input and should not be mistaken for a full engagement strategy.

There's an App for that

Every day, it seems, a new way to communicate pops up. Many of them are valid, all of them are fallible. Unfortunately, there is no single mechanism that will guarantee meaningful engagement. So, we are left with the need to be strategic about engagement and the selection of purpose-specific tools. Consider the following questions.

Joost Baker

Are we reaching the intended audience? Many social media tools help to reach out to constituencies that do not normally participate in traditional town hall meetings. These participants are a welcome addition to the conversation. However, they are, most often, not the only constituency that requires engaging. Generally, parallel tools are required.

Are we building capacity? Are we able to drive people towards other tools that can? Twitter, for example, in 140 characters is able to create awareness and drive people to a website or a public event. Instagram can create buzz and help animate an otherwise dull event.

Is it truly a conversation? For outcomes to evolve they require multiple iterations with many participants. A single ranting email sent to a faceless info@project.org does not constitute a conversation. The deployment of traditional and alternative engagement tools should support each other, allowing dialogue to emerge and develop.

Is the process both open and framed? A risk with any engagement is that the conversation deviates from the realm of possible action or that it is hijacked by a small interest group. With alternative tools (as with traditional ones) the conversation must be framed and managed—allowing for openness and candour within specified parameters. There is nothing worse than a blog that remains unmonitored and is used to bully by a disgruntled and bitter few.

Will it deliver on the intended outcomes? For the conversation to matter it must move forward and be able to inform decisions. It should progress from blue sky, to concepts, to plans, to issues of implementation. Chosen methodologies should assist the progression of ideas.

Hand me the scalpel, please

Choosing the right tool(s), at the right time, for the right audience, is critical. People need to be able to conveniently participate in a way that they feel safe and articulate. Different tools cater to different people, at different points in the process. Twitter, for example, can be extremely effective to generate awareness and buzz with a certain constituency and to drive people towards other engagement tools. It is less effective in conveying the nuances of an iterative conversation. The following four examples offer examples of alternative forms of consultation.

Lemonade Stands—As part of the city-wide Toronto Parks Wayfinding Strategy we had undertaken a wide range of stakeholder workshops but wanted to engage a broader sector of the public. Rather than schedule an Open House, we decided to cart a Lemonade Stand across several city parks. Unlike a scheduled event where every participant is eager to engage in conversation, many people walked by the Lemonade Stand unfazed. At first, we were taken aback. Then, we realized that most of the people we were talking to had never participated in a public engagement process. We were reaching children, tourists, families, new immigrants... the typically silent.

In-the-mode workshops—Consulting on the creation of criteria for prioritizing and funding transportation investments through Toronto's FeelingCongested? campaign, it became clear that we needed to engage people from across the city and from differing commuting patterns—drivers, walkers, cyclists, transit users. Accordingly, we facilitated conversations 'in-the-mode': in parking lots, on city streets, while cycling, on running streetcars and on subway platforms. In this way, we were able to deepen our understanding with the unique voices of people who live the issues every day, and not just those who self-select to participate in a town hall meeting.

YouTube—Situated in the unique, eclectic, end-of-the road community of Tofino DIALOG led the development of new design concept for the future of the historic Main Street. As part of an extensive community engagement, we created a film featuring long-time residents and business owners telling stories about the history of Main Street and their experiences in that unique place. The interview-rich production was posted to the internet and became a catalyst for a renewed vision. Through this open and accessible media platform, we were able to give the plan an authentic voice, grounded in its own resident population.

YouTube: select your architect—When it came time to reduce the list of potential architects for the new University of British Columbia Student Union Building from seven firms to three, the Alma Mater Society of the UBC used an innovative social media based selection process to reach its final shortlist. The seven long-listed firms presented to students for an hour, and created a video based on their presentation. The firms were given three days to edit the video and post the final product to YouTube. Students were given a week to vote for their top three preferred architects online.

Be strategic

Public and stakeholder engagement should not be a token exercise—it has to be genuine. It is also not meant to be easy—that's how you know you are drilling down to worthwhile depths. To be meaningful, we need to be able to host a true dialogue, where participants engage in a manner that is informed and articulate. We also need to move the conversation forward with vision, arriving at worthy outcomes that meet clear expectations. To do so, we have an increasingly diverse set of tools we can deploy—many are new and exciting, but they can also be distracting. The skill is in understanding the purpose, resources and timing and letting these inform the choice of engagement platforms and tools.

Antonio Gomez-Palacio, MCIP, RPP, a founding partner of DIALOG, is committed to creating healthy places, where people thrive–through dialogue. Bruce Haden is a founding principal of DIALOG and a Leed-accredited professional. Joost Bakker is a founding partner of DIALOG with more than 35 years of professional practice. Antonio, Joost and Bruce will be speakers at the upcoming OPPI Symposium October 1 & 2 in Niagara Falls.

Active and Sustainable School Transportation

Strategy Roadmap

By Bob Yates, Richard Pauls, Jennifer Lay

In Canada, the percentage of children walking to school has steadily declined over the past few decades and the percentage of children cycling has remained very low. Meanwhile the percentage of children being driven to school has more than doubled.

Metrolinx, in The Big Move, set a goal of getting 60 per cent of children in the GTHA walking or biking to school by 2031. An ambitious target, Metrolinx and the Ontario Ministry of Transportation partnered with Global Vision Consulting to engage stakeholders in developing a Strategy Roadmap to implement a province-wide active and sustainable school transportation (ASST) system. The ultimate benefit is to achieve healthier communities.

Bob Yates

Prepared through a workshop process, stakeholders agreed that the strategic outcome for the Metrolinx Roadmap is to for more children to walk, bike or roll to school. This will only occur if a supportive context is created where children and families feel comfortable and safe with ASST. Thus three enabling outcomes need to be achieved: more families make ASST a lifestyle choice; communities and schools have the required infrastructure, programs, resources and regulations to make ASST a viable option; and delivery agents have the supports needed to implement ASST initiatives that are aligned with local needs and realities.

When asked to identify the highest priority areas for action, stakeholders identified the following as the top three: establish an Ontario-wide coordination hub with a clear mandate and charter; recruit champions and leaders at all levels; communicate the benefits of ASST to political leaders.

The methodology to create the Metrolinx Roadmap is driven by partnerships, formal networks, local communities and community groups with a shared vision and commitment to collective action. The process brought stakeholders together in a dialogue focused on outcomes over a three-month period.

Metrolinx continues to work on the implementation of the roadmap and the leadership of ASST initiatives in the GTHA. School travel resources can be found on Metrolinx website.

Bob Yates and Richard Pauls are associates of Global Vision Consulting Inc. Jennifer Lay is Program Advisor – School Travel, Policy, Planning & Innovation for Metrolinx. Bob, Richard and Jennifer will be presenting at the upcoming OPPI Symposium October 1 & 2 in Niagara Falls.

Mobility Management

Engaging travellers

By Bethan Garner

Mobility management is an innovative framework for the design, delivery and management of sustainable transportation systems. It takes a holistic view of all mobility options and all interactions between the transportation provider and the user. It aims to make transportation work better both for the community in which it is situated and for all individual travellers. Using technology and partnerships to create user-focused solutions, the framework, together with a design-thinking approach, targets the user—his or her lifestyle, needs and experiences—to change behaviour.

Design thinking approach

Using design thinking—a human-centered approach to innovation[1]—people are encouraged to think like a designer in order to transform how products, services, processes or strategies are created. There are a number of names assigned to the various stages in this methodology. Stanford's Hasso Plattner Institute of Design, for example, highlights five stages—empathize, define, ideate, prototype and test.[2] MMM Group has adopted the U.K.'s Design Council's 'Double Diamond'[3] phraseology—discover, define, develop and deliver.[4] When applied to mobility management, most design thinking processes will start with building an understanding of, and empathy for the travellers in question and their lives.

Bethan Garner

Professionals working in the sustainable transportation sector are beginning to move past traditional methods of supplying services based on statistically predicted demand and towards designing services to meet the needs of real users. We have started to ask: What are the lifestyles of our target user group? What lifestyle challenges do travellers face? What are their mobility needs and expectations? What do they value in their lives? How are users experiencing the transportation systems available to them? Which interactions work well and which work poorly?

A series of techniques have been developed to answer these types of questions, many drawing from ethnographic research methods such as observing users, focus groups, user diaries, contextual interviews, cultural probes and customer journey maps. Today, technological advancements are allowing researchers to be more creative about the methods they use to observe and engage with users. Examples include online interviews or focus groups, social intelligence gather from social media sources, open innovations platforms such as Open Ideo, sensor technology such as Emotion Sense and Moves, and Google glass.

Balancing user needs and community objectives

Empathy for the traveller is fundamental to the Mobility Management approach. However, it must go hand-on-hand with a community's objectives for transportation or mobility. To achieve a balance between the two, it is often necessary to change individual behaviours.

Mobility Management solutions can use various tools to drive behaviour change, including delivering personal feedback, offering targeted and personalized incentives, creating a proactive relationship with the transport provider and instituting dynamic pricing. The advantage with the Mobility Management approach is that each of these tools can be tailored to particular user's needs and values to create win-win situations. So, for instance, the right type of incentives can be offered and the right style of feedback sent to the user. As a result, these become real transformative instruments, which meet users' needs and support the achievement of community mobility objectives.

Beyond transportation

By understanding and engaging with travellers, the design of transportation systems will improve. However, the use of this approach should not be restricted to the field of transportation alone. An obvious first step is to consider its use where transportation interrelates with other policy areas. For example, improving the integration of land use and transportation planning as new neighbourhoods are built and existing ones re-shaped. Similarly, we might also consider the benefits to be brought to the intersections of transportation and health, or transportation and climate change resilience.

Practitioners from various fields should be encouraged to think like a designer: innovate by focusing on people and their experiences, don't be bound by convention and try to unearth what people may not be able to tell you—their latent and emerging needs and motivations, how they really behave in a given situation, their personal barriers to and drivers of change?)[4] The challenge is to harness this insight to create win-win scenarios where outcomes are beneficial to individuals and to the pursuit of successful communities.

Bethan Garner has worked for MMM Group for seven years in the U.K., Europe and Canada. She has taken a lead role in the development of the mobility management concept and its applications. Bethan will be one of the speakers at the upcoming OPPI Symposium October 1 & 2 in Niagara Falls. She can be reached at garnerb@mmm.ca.

End notes

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Suburbanization

Beyond stereotypes

By Sean Hertel and Roger Keil

We have been talking suburbs since 2010 and soon our roadshow is coming to Niagara Falls, as one the many rapid-fire ignite sessions planned as part of OPPI's 2014 Symposium.

Suburban talk, largely, has been limited to stereotypes. This limits our ability to see beyond what we think a suburb is, to understand what a suburb truly is. We started the Greater Toronto Suburban Working Group not only to find this out, but to begin to turn our talk into action.


Sean Hertel

The working group is a forum for suburb-building professionals in the Greater Toronto Area suburbs to come together and discuss issues related to suburban governance—government, market and private forces that influence processes of suburbanization. Between 2010 and 2013 we hosted several rich conversations on topics that included urban planning, development financing, infrastructure, community services, natural environment and greenbelt, aging and ways of life.


Roger Keil

We heard from over 50 participants from our 11 partner organizations: Building Industry and Land Development Association, Canadian Urban Institute, City of Markham, City of Toronto, DIALOG, Evergreen, Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation, R.G. Richards & Associates, The Neptis Foundation, United Way York Region and Urban Strategies Inc.

While simply bringing people together to talk is a good thing, we recognized early on in our collaboration that we had to work towards turning our talk into action. That is, sharing with a wider audience our ideas to make suburban governance more responsive to the needs and opportunities of suburbs that are, increasingly, outgrowing the very foundations that led to their creation.

Suburbs are evolving in ways with which old thinking and processes can't keep up. The notion of the suburb as a "bedroom community," for example, denies the fact there are more jobs in the suburban periphery than in the central cities they surround. This is the case in the Greater Toronto Area, and virtually every urban agglomeration in North America. In fact, in many ways, the periphery has come to the centre.

The suburbs are the new arenas for forming and contesting politics, the machines of economic growth and where new Canadians establish a home. It could be said that the suburb has become the new city.

Our process, ideas and recommendations are summarized in the Roundtable Report, published in September 2013 to mark the conclusion of our formal collaboration. But our talk, increasingly geared to action, continues.

The Greater Toronto Suburban Working Group is part of a seven-year Major Collaborative Research Initiative funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council and housed at the City Institute at York University, Global Suburbanisms: Governance, Land and Infrastructure in the 21st Century. Information about the working group, the larger research project and related publications can be accessed at www.yorku.ca/suburbs.

Sean Hertel, MCIP, RPP is a consulting planner specializing in transit-oriented development and intensification across the Greater Toronto Area and beyond. Sean also conducts suburban research at the City Institute at York University. Roger Keil is a professor at the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University and principal investigator in the Major Collaborative Research Initiative Global Suburbanisms: Governance, Land and Infrastructure in the 21st Century. Sean and Roger will be leading an ignite session at the upcoming OPPI Symposium October 1 & 2 in Niagara Falls.

Easing Commuter Stress

WORKshift

By Lise Guèvremont

How we communicate and share information is changing and so is the way we work. The City of Ottawa is making a significant investment in transportation infrastructure through a program called Ottawa on the Move, which includes roads, sidewalks, bridges and cycling pathways. While this extensive construction program is under way (spring 2014-2018) the city is promoting WORKshift—easing congestion by encouraging flexible work.

Lise Guèvremont

The intent of WORKshift, as implied by its name, is to shift or alter commutes by encouraging residents to work both where and when they are most effective. If successful this will lower demand on the transportation network and make it easier to get around the city. In the short term, this will help residents adjust to the necessary, temporary impacts of the major construction projects underway. Over the long term it will help reduce operating and infrastructure costs, increase employee productivity and retention, improve business resiliency and decrease participating organizations' overall environmental footprint.

Through partnerships with major employers, including itself, the city is implementing a three-prong mitigation strategy to reduce construction impacts on commuting:

- Communicating construction schedules as well as traffic and mobility impacts
- Encouraging businesses to participate in a city initiative offering a turnkey approach to alternate and remote work implementation and management
- Sharing expertise related to the implementation of Transportation Demand Management programs

WORKshift offers planners a tool for managing growth by embracing technological advances and leveraging the evolving nature of work. It supports choices that are both cost-effective and enhance the liveable for our communities.

Lise Guèvremont, MCIP, RPP, is an urban planner with the City of Ottawa. Her work has focused on stakeholder outreach, transportation demand management, light rail and transit planning, natural systems and infrastructure planning policy. Lise will be leading a session at the upcoming OPPI Symposium October 1 & 2 in Niagara Falls.

References

Ottawa on the Move Magazine, Vol. 1, 2013, page 5

Ottawa on the Move Magazine, Vol. 1, 2013, page 17

Report to City of Ottawa's Transportation Committee and Council, 25 April 2012

Creating goals, objectives & quick wins

By Suzanne Brown and Anita Fabac

Employing an asset-based community development approach, the Neighbourhood Action Strategy utilizes the greatest resource in any neighbourhood—its residents—to focus dialogue around the positive aspects of the community. This innovative strategy blends the foundations of asset-based community development with land use planning to develop resident-led, asset-based Neighbourhood Action Plans that build on social capital and address the health inequities in 11 Hamilton neighbourhoods.

The Neighbourhood Action Plans were developed through an intensive planning process led by a core group of residents and service providers and facilitated by staff. The key themes that emerged through the process include neighbourhood safety and beautification, increasing social capital and community connectedness, exploring creative ways of ensuring food security and housing affordability.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE AUTHORS

Work in progress

Creating planning teams

Planning Teams were established from a broad base of existing organizations, residents, service providers and business owners. Meetings were accessible and inclusive so that people with varied experiences and abilities were able to contribute. Efforts were made to ensure the planning teams were representative of the neighbourhood in terms of race, ethnicity, income levels and affiliations. Community development workers played an essential role in building and fostering relationships within the Planning Team and with the wider neighbourhood.

Suzanne Brown

Communication plan

The importance of communicating often, in as many ways as possible, and to all neighbours was critical to the project's success. The more people that knew about the planning process and the plan, the more they got involved and took ownership of the process and the actions.

Anita Fabac

The Planning Teams agreed upon a communication plan to keep residents informed of progress and to seek feedback at appropriate times. Face-to-face conversations, attending other community meetings or town hall-style meetings, and regular written updates via newsletters or e-blasts were effective methods of communicating.

Neighbourhood vision

An asset is anything that makes a neighbourhood a healthy, vibrant place to live. Assets can be physical things like buildings, or non-physical, such as relationships or skills. The neighbourhood planning process used an asset-based, community development approach, to build on the skills, strengths, and supports already existing in the neighbourhood.

The purpose of asset mapping is to gather information about the neighbourhood from the perspective of the people who live and work there. It is helpful to group assets into categories, such as: physical places and spaces, educational and health services, economic and employment, safety, cultural, faith and community associations and individuals. The successfully completed asset-mapping exercises left the teams feeling energized and validated. Results were compiled and mapped for use at subsequent meetings and events.

Once the asset map was created, the resulting Neighbourhood Profile was discussed and a vision of the neighbourhood's future began to develop. The neighbourhood vision is important because it established what the Planning Team wanted its neighbourhood to look like in the future. It served as the foundation for all the goals, objectives and actions to come. It also served to inspire and motivate the broader neighbourhood to get involved to achieve the vision.

Creating goals, objectives & quick wins

The Planning Teams then began to brainstorm and identify actions that would contribute to realizing the vision. Once these ideas were on the table—along with the feedback from the asset mapping and visioning exercises, as well as any additional information gathered—the Planning Team grouped the ideas into categories. Goals were then developed, priorities set, objectives created and specific actions identified. City staff members from across the organization were invited to the planning tables to lend their expertise to the discussions. Neighbourhoods were surveyed to gather ideas.

Once each objective and resulting action was agreed upon, roles and responsibilities were assigned, timeframes established and resources identified. The neighbourhood was then invited to provide feedback and endorse the vision, objectives and actions. The residents prioritized the goals and objectives to help guide the Planning Team's decision-making process as it began to refine and prioritize work plans. Throughout this process, the Planning Team communicated with neighbours and key stakeholders to test ideas to avoid wasting time on actions that were not a priority to the neighbourhood. This outreach paid off when the action plans were finished because community members felt that they were part of the process.

Council endorsement & funding

To date, 10 of the 11 neighbourhoods engaged in the Neighbourhood Action Strategy have developed resident-led, asset-based neighbourhood plans. Ten of these plans were presented to and unanimously endorsed by Hamilton Council in 2012/2013/2014. The eleventh neighbourhood is beginning the planning process in the spring of 2014.

Each completed Neighbourhood Action Plan lays out a clear vision for the future of the neighbourhood and describes specific actions that can be achieved and have widespread community support. The action plan details meaningful and measurable actions that can be reasonably implemented within the five-year timeframe of the plan. Funding may be sourced through the Hamilton Community Foundation, City of Hamilton, other levels of government or other foundations. Additional support has been received from service organizations and funding bodies with programs that are aligned with the actions identified in the plans.

Implementation & evaluation

Implementation is undertaken by workgroups comprising residents, service providers, business owners, City of Hamilton staff and other interested parties organized around each major initiative. Within the City of Hamilton, about 460 actions are being implemented by staff.

To ensure the ongoing success of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy, a comprehensive implementation and evaluation process has been established. It will identify both the successes and challenges and will help the city learn from experience. The evaluation has four components: a longitudinal survey conducted by McMaster University; quantitative neighbourhood-level indicators to measure other neighbourhood changes over time; outcome evaluation to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the Community Neighbourhood Plans; and a developmental evaluation that measures the impact generated by the Community Development workers supporting each neighbourhood.

Conclusion

The combination of people and place-based planning has facilitated the creation of Neighbourhood Action Plans that contribute to making Hamilton's neighbourhoods being healthy, vibrant places. Our experience shows that energy around actions in a neighbourhood can create its own momentum. It is not just about the math of how many people are involved—it is about the chemistry that happens when people who really care about their neighbourhood and their neighbours come together to make a lasting change.

The Neighbourhood Action Planning process has been documented in Neighbourhood Action Planning Toolkit, a resource developed by the city to assist other neighbourhoods create their own neighbourhood action plans. It can be downloaded from the City of Hamilton website.

Suzanne Brown is manager of the Neighbourhood Action Strategy with the City of Hamilton and Anita Fabac, MCIP, RPP, is senior project manager with Community Planning at the City of Hamilton. The Hamilton Neighbourhood Action Strategy is the result of a partnership among the City of Hamilton, the Hamilton Community Foundation and the Best Start Network and is a recipient of the OPPI 2013 Excellence in Planning award.

Accelerating sustainable home retrofits

By Cathrin Winkelmann

While many excellent strategic and environmental sustainability plans have been written in the last decade in the GTA, the rate of implementation is not keeping pace with the intended timeframe of the plans or added imperatives such as climate change adaptation. This is particularly true in older communities. Moreover, conventional approaches are not adequate to overcome barriers and engage the public in achieving the targets. To address these and other challenges, the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, in collaboration with municipal and community partners, has been leading the development of Sustainable Neighbourhood Retrofit Action Plans (SNAPs) in existing urban neighbourhoods since 2009. In partnership with local stakeholders TRCA is now implementing the action plans of three pilot SNAPs.

The action plans entail an integrated, one-window approach to urban retrofits at the neighbourhood scale. They address a broad range of objectives to improve the local environment and build resiliency against climate change by greening local infrastructure and encouraging positive behavior among residents and landowners. Most importantly, the action plans achieve these objectives while addressing social objectives of the community. Neighbourhood-level targets are guided by participating municipalities' strategic plans, official plans, infrastructure renewal plans and climate change plans, as well as TRCA's watershed plans.

Each SNAP uses a unique approach by partnering with a local stakeholder to delivery its programs and to promote sustainable practices.

Black Creek SNAP

One of the initial pilots—the Black Creek SNAP—is located in the Jane-Finch area, a Neighbourhood Improvement Area in northwest Toronto. The area has basement flooding issues and the city is interested in promoting greater site-specific stormwater controls to complement its flood remediation works. TRCA has recommended a series of actions for the regeneration of Black Creek's highly-degraded habitat and altered-flow regime. There is poor tree canopy coverage on the tablelands, resulting in an increased urban heat island effect in the neighbourhood.

About 25,000 people live in the Black Creek SNAP area. They are exceptionally avid vegetable gardeners and are extremely interested in rainwater harvesting. There are also 45 apartment towers in the neighbourhood.

Historically the population has been difficult to engage, especially regarding sustainability practices. The environmental issues plaguing this neighbourhood are not a priority among tenants or homeowners and the cost of implementing retrofits continues to be a barrier for many. Despite a number of available incentives, use of existing programs has been low. Furthermore, while there are many local NGOs, there are no groups dedicated to addressing environmental issues on the scale needed to make an impact.

The Black Creek SNAP comprises four action areas: vegetable gardening supported by rainwater harvesting; improved stormwater management and basement flooding protection; expansion of the urban tree canopy; and energy conservation and use of renewable source of energy.

Harvest the Rain

Launched in spring 2013, a residential renovation program—Harvest the Rain—was created to promote retrofits targeting single-family homes. These encompass improvements to stormwater management, addressing basement flooding, increasing the urban forest, promoting water and energy conservation, expanding urban agriculture and facilitating the distribution of excess garden produce. The program is supported by a partnership among the City of Toronto, RBC Foundation, Black Creek Conservation Project, LEAF, Enbridge, Toronto Hydro, Government of Ontario and Lowe's.

The Harvest the Rain program has been very well received and results from the pilot year are very encouraging. The program engaged almost 6 per cent of the homeowners in the area of whom 57 per cent implemented at least one retrofit measure by the end of the pilot year and almost a quarter (22.3 per cent) implemented at least two retrofit measures. The measure implemented most frequently is the installation of rain barrels: 116 rain barrels were distributed throughout the neighbourhood. Of the program participants, 31 per cent are planting new trees on their property and 16 per cent have disconnected their downspouts. Almost half the homeowners with vegetable gardens have expressed an interest in donating surplus harvest to support a local meal program and more than one-third of participating homeowners say they would be willing to pass their gardening skills on to others in the neighbourhood.

2014 Outlook

In 2014 the Harvest the Rain program moves out of pilot phase into full implementation. At the same time it is bringing on new partners. One of these is the City of Toronto Environment and Energy Division, which is interested in promoting the city's Home Energy Loan Program (HELP).

HELP was developed to function as a property-assessment financing tool to aid Toronto property owners in implementing energy and water efficiency retrofits. The program comprises low-interest, long-term loans tied to the properties on which the improvements are being made. The loans are re-paid to the city over time through installments on the property tax bill. This new partnership is expected to increase participation in the energy and water efficiency retrofits in the Black Creek SNAP area, one of a handful of Toronto neighbourhoods selected to participate in the pilot phase of the HELP program.

Harvest the Rain is also partnering with organizations to increase access to affordable fresh fruits and vegetables in the Black Creek neighbourhood. Plans are in the works for a fresh produce market to support the production and consumption of locally-grown produce in the neighbourhood. The market is to be run independently by a local community organization. TRCA is currently exploring options for sourcing the fresh produce to be sold at the market, including the apartment towers' community gardens and balcony gardens, the Black Creek community farm and surplus harvest from local homeowners' backyards.

Some of the market's fruit commodities also may be sourced from an emerging urban orchard group comprising Black Creek SNAP homeowners. The newly-formed collective appears to be providing its own leadership by creating a local fruit tree network to share knowledge, tools and bounty—perhaps one day even creating its own Black Creek label.

Concluding thoughts

Through the Black Creek SNAP, TRCA is engaging and empowering residents to improve local environmental conditions and trigger urban renewal. Early indicators suggest the Black Creek SNAP has a winning formula—one planners will want to keep their eyes on.

Cathrin Winkelmann, PhD, MLA, LEED AP is a project manager in the watershed planning group at Toronto and Region Conservation Authority and manages the Harvest the Rain program. Visit the TRCA website to learn more about the SNAP program or follow SNAP activities on Twitter.

EASTERN DISTRICT

CPL in action

By Colleen Sauriol

The OPPI Eastern District Leadership Team recently hosted a town and rural planning workshop in Perth. Three interesting topics were presented: Perth's Heritage Conservation District, CPL and locating medical marihuana facilities.


Colleen Sauriol

Town of Perth staff, Eric Cousens, Karen Rennie and Casey Buchanan, spoke about the town's Heritage Conservation District. The presentation covered the process to create a heritage district as well as the appeal process and the requirements to attain a building permit. Information was also provided on Perth's Tax Increment Equivalent Grant Program, which offers rebates to eligible applicants whose municipal property tax increased as a result of the planning, design, redevelopment or rehabilitation of a property within the Community Improvement Area. Grants are equal to a percentage of the municipal tax increment for a maximum period of 10 years.

Eastern District Leadership Team vice-chair Lisa Dalla Rosa spoke about the importance of documenting CPL points and different ways a member can attain CPL points. She noted that it is the responsibility of OPPI members to ensure they attain their required CPL points each year.

Jacinthe David (Health Canada), Carol Ruddy (City of Ottawa) and Bailey Chabot (Queen's University) spoke about facilities for the production of medical marihuana. Jacinthe addressed Health Canada regulations and requirements to become a licensed producer. Carol spoke about how the City of Ottawa has dealt with this issue by permitting it only in specified industrial zones and requiring separation distances between these facilities and residential and institutional uses. Bailey talked about her research paper which included criteria for determining appropriate locations for producers of medical marihuana.

The workshop offered an excellent opportunity to network and to learn about rural development issues facing other towns and communities. The Eastern District Leadership Team bid a fond farewell with many thanks to Forbes Symon who is leaving the Committee.

Colleen Sauriol, MCIP, RPP, is the manager of planning and building for the City of Pembroke. She is also the chair of the Eastern District Leadership Team.

NORTHERN DISTRICT

In recognition

By Wendy Kaufman

To say that Heather Robertson has had a long and meaningful career is an understatement. She retires as a vital member of Ontario's Algonquin Land Claim Negotiating Team and has held key positions in provincial ministries including Natural Resources, Northern Development and Mines and Municipal Affairs and Housing, as well Parks Canada and as a planning consultant.


Heather Robertson

Heather has contributed to strengthening OPPI and the planning profession through volunteerism related to publications, discipline and awards, as well as through mentorship of new members. Through Heather's commitment to work and the planning profession, she has helped to advance the importance of planning in northern Ontario, and has been a strong advocate for northern issues.

Wendy Kaufman, MCIP, RPP, is a planner with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in Sudbury.

TORONTO DISTRICT

PPS training

By Eric Mark

The new *Provincial Policy Statement* came into force and effect on April 30, 2014.

The OPPI Toronto District recently hosted a training session on the new *PPS*, the policy changes and their applications. Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing staff provided an overview of the major changes from the 2005 *PPS*, and the thought process and rationale behind each.

Eric Mark

MMAH planners emphasized that the 2014 *PPS* is largely a clarification and strengthening of the previous 2005 *PPS*, rather than a policy reset. The discussion focused, in particular, on settlement area expansion, rural lands, transportation corridors, planning for seniors and aggregates.

Toronto District extends a big thank you to the MMAH policy team for its thorough presentation and informative dialogue.

Eric Mark, BES, is a land development and policy planner with Dillon Consulting Limited, a Candidate Member of OPPI, and a volunteer with OPPI Toronto District.

Celebrating a 20-year milestone

By Paul Stagl

Do you remember your first contact with Robert Fraser, our (smiling giant) Director of Finance and Administration?

I do. It was shortly after he had started with OPPI in 1994. I had a mountain of questions about my membership dues, my Consultant's Roster listing, where I needed to be for a conference session, what happened to my certificates and my conference registrations, among many others. From his first day, Robert always had a ready, easy, knowledgeable and fully patient answer for everything—and over his 20-year tenure, he has heard every question imaginable.

When Robert joined OPPI he knew almost nothing about planners other than there were about 2,500 of us at the time and that we had big plans as a professional group. He has experienced and been an integral part of our growth and maturation as a profession. I know Robert is particularly proud of being part of a professional team of staff, volunteers and members.

Robert Fraser

I also know that we have benefited from his work.

Today we celebrate not only his 20th anniversary with us—OPPI's longest serving employee—but more importantly we celebrate his dedication, contributions, financial leadership and loyalty to the Institute.

Please join me in thanking Robert for his service to us (with that ever-present smile and humour of his) and in celebrating all of his contributions.

Celebrating our ED's 15 years of leadership

By Paul Stagl

So if you came across a job ad that said you would have a new set of bosses every two years, would you apply for it? That's largely what being the Executive Director of a non-profit group of professionals can look forward to—guaranteed change and guaranteed turn-over of volunteers and institutional knowledge every few years.

When Mary Ann Rangam joined OPPI in 1999, she had just left an ED position with the Dietitians after helping it grow into a regulated profession. In fact, she really was only expecting to fill a short-term position before deciding what to do next. Well, it seems we captured her interest as we now celebrate her 15th anniversary with us.

Mary Ann has brought us corporate stability, professional visioning and administrative leadership—all of which has enabled us to grow as a profession. And, it has given us the freedom to focus on what's most important to us and to our communities.

Mary Ann Rangam

Please join me in thanking Mary Ann for her dedication, her patient (but persistent) leadership and her commitment to our vision as we celebrate her 15 years as our Executive Director.

Litigate or Mediate?

Early dispute resolution

By Ian James Lord

In this second of a three part series on the Ontario system of land use planning dispute resolution processes, an alternative is presented in two stages.

Role of the planning professional

A significant number of professional planners in Ontario provide the assurances, solutions, standards or techniques necessary to avoid, ameliorate or resolve disputes. However, planning practitioners are aware of the imperfections in this opportunity to avoid conflict. Planners differ in interpretation, opinion and role. Further, not all disputes are reconcilable as policy and political priorities or employer/employee relationships interfere. However, the matters that are under dispute and the public and private interests at play can shape, make or break a project or proposal if forced through a formal decision process with a "win or lose" outcome.

Ian James Lord

The land use planning system has failed to seize—or lacked the opportunity or direction to embrace—voluntary early mediation to resolve differences. The *Planning Act* seeks to aid the process of information dissemination and participation through procedural tools to expose the issues. These include enhanced notice provisions to make known the project particulars in a timely and open manner. While these tools can be constructive they fail to address opportunities to build consensus.

Role of the local councillor

Local councillors, familiar with their constituents and locality, can intercede and suggest mechanisms to address dispute resolution. However, the councillor is ultimately a decision maker and generally must choose sides when an issue becomes politically charged. Councillors are not responsible or obliged to guide a dispute resolution process. In fact, they are not necessarily capable, available or trained to do so.

In practice, too often a local councillor will take a position on a land use planning proposal before s/he is afforded a mature assessment of the parties' interests. This is counterproductive both in terms of the potential to strike a resolution and the use of resources. Constituents would be better served if their representatives could promote a mediated proposal and champion consensus, rather than dissent and discord as is so often the case today.

Of course it won't be easy, but the change is worth trying. Mediated settlements offer a different approach: participation in a structured forum to air legitimate issues in a collaborative setting.

Clearly one size does not fit all. Nor is it conceivable that any system could universally mandate dispute resolution. But, what is within the realm of the possible, is a framework for early resolution of resolvable land use planning disputes. In this system there is the prospect of direct benefits to a range of stakeholders—fewer appeals, less councillor time, championed consensus, lower costs and timelier project development schedules.

Role of council/committee

Planning decisions are considered in a deliberative manner. Whether before council or committee, the political dice need to be cast by a majority vote at the statutory public meeting, or shortly thereafter. This is a pivotal time to assess circumstances, marshal resources and position the conversation for a win/win result.

This period offers another opportunity to resolve disputes by inviting or directing the parties to engage in a mediated solution. Mediation at this stage will not occur on its own. It needs a sponsor or champion to tell stakeholders that the opportunity is theirs to present a consensus for the receptive consideration of council or committee. Members are obliged to consider the proposal, even a consensus proposal, on its merits, through the lens of the public interest.

The question arises as to whether a council member, who has actively engaged in the mediation of a project approval, may subsequently participate in the ultimate decision. The response: Councillors should be the first to endorse a consensus proposal but circumspect as to whether they lead the initiative or the process for achieving the ultimate political decision.

Requirements

Councils and committees cannot shirk their statutory duties to deal with matters placed before them in the timeframe set out in the enabling legislation, but they can institute appropriate alternative evaluation approaches, such as suggesting or requiring and facilitating mediation, all on a without prejudice basis.

Such early mediation initiatives may not require legislation to be supported, instituted or conducted. But they do require a fresh look at the planning decision-making process. And they might benefit from council or committee rules that broadcast a new and local approach to dispute resolution.

Councils might consider instructing and supporting staff in the promotion of local dispute resolution mediations prior to matters being publically reported with recommendations. Consultants, stakeholders, pro bono participants and municipal staff need to be part of a supported and engrained local dispute resolution mechanism from the outset, to search out satisfactory solutions on a without prejudice basis. An efficient format for this activity is a mediation convened to explore the options, opportunities and responses to interest-based positions.

Part 3 addresses the Ontario Municipal Board and whether its continued presence is a necessary and contributing component to dispute resolution.

Ian James Lord, M.Sc.*(Pl.), LLB, is a mediator, municipal, planning law and counsel at WeirFoulds, LLP. The views expressed in this article are those of the author and do not necessarily reflect those of WeirFoulds, LLP, the publication or the Ontario Professional Planners Institute. Lord is a practitioner and lecturer in planning and municipal law with over 35 years' experience. He can be reached at ilord@weirfoulds.com. The full text of each installment will be available after publication at www.weirfoulds.com/publications.*

CNU22 revisited

By Adrian Cammaert

The Congress for the New Urbanism held its 22nd annual CNU Congress in Buffalo this past June. Since CNU's inception, these annual conferences have played a central role in identifying emerging issues to be addressed and new design concepts and initiatives to be explored. The 22nd Congress in Buffalo this past June was no exception.

Each year the congress is hosted in a different American city, but why Buffalo? As the event organizers and promotional material pointed out, Buffalo can boast architecture from three top American architects: Frank Lloyd Wright, Louis Sullivan and H.H. Richardson. The city exemplifies a Washington-esque style classic grid street layout overlaid by a radial system of parkways as designed by Joseph Ellicott. It is surrounded by a parks system designed by American landscape architecture founder Frederick Law Olmsted. In fact, in 1876 Olmsted declared Buffalo to be "the best planned city in the United States, if not the world."

CNU, however, is also quick to acknowledge Buffalo's more recent blunders, including its highway system, lack of mixed uses downtown and its large areas of urban decay. Ironically it was these latter aspects that set Buffalo apart from other potential host cities vying to host the congress. A goal of the congress is not simply to provide a meeting place for urban thinkers, but to analyze and strategize on ways to give back to the host city.

What is CNU?

In the U.S., CNU has emerged as the leading voice for the creation of sustainable, walkable, mixed-use neighborhoods, sustainable communities and healthier living conditions. It was established in 1993 when design principles such as mixed-use, high-density and transit-supportive development were considered unconventional. In today's planning context, it is easy to take these principles for granted and assume that they have always been upheld as good planning. However, evidence to the contrary can be seen in the single-use, low-density, auto-oriented developments that exemplified conventional development until the early 1990s. Over the years, CNU initiated Smart Growth, LEED-ND and Form Based Codes.

In Ontario, the congresses are still relatively unknown, but momentum is building with the recent formation of a CNU Chapter in Ontario.

This giving back philosophy of the congress was evident in the various workshops and tours that I attended, including a complete streets workshop where a Buffalo traffic engineer documented attendees' suggestions for improvement. I also attended an evening session where renowned architect Stefanos Polyzoides unveiled conceptual redevelopment plans for the outer harbour and, in line with CNU's Highways to Boulevards initiative, CNU president John Norquist spoke about the benefits of tearing down the Buffalo Skyway. This comment received applause from the packed convention centre as well as a 'thumbs up' from the mayor of Buffalo. It will be interesting to monitor these suggestions over the next couple of years to see if they come to fruition.

Now to begin preparing for the next Congress, Texas style! Dallas/Fort Worth has been awarded CNU23 and I have already begun packing my bags.

Adrian Cammaert, MCIP, RPP, CNU-A is a senior planner/project manager for Malone Given Parsons Ltd. and is the chair for the Ontario Chapter of CNU (cnuontario.org).

PPS and employment areas

By Ben Puzanov

The *Provincial Policy Statement, 2014* took effect April 30 and includes a number of new provisions and provincial objectives that resulted from stakeholder consultation. While a number of changes are of significant importance and warrant discussion, I would like to focus on two modifications relevant to employment areas and local economic development.

While promotion of economic activities continues to form an integral part of the PPS, the 2014 version separates the general employment and economic development policies from those that are specific to employment areas. This is indicative of the significance of these areas to the local economies of Ontario's municipalities and the economy of the province as a whole.

Section 1.3.2 (Employment Areas) reflects the province's commitment to economically strong and resilient communities. The importance of subsection 1.3.2.1 is rooted in the need to make certain that employment areas are not compromised by incompatible development and that appropriate infrastructure is made available to support municipalities' existing and future economic development needs.

Subsection 1.3.2.4 further notes the province's commitment to protecting "clusters of business and economic activities" and to promoting economic development by affording municipalities flexibility in planning for employment areas. As many readers of the *Journal* will be aware, subsection 1.1.2 of the *PPS* continues to generally mandate, with a few exceptions, that municipalities plan for a maximum time horizon of 20 years in accommodating various land uses within their communities. Presumably, 1.3.2.4 has been added to permit local governments to exceed this time constraint because of the significant land requirements of many employment sectors and the considerable investments that municipalities often make to ensure that such areas are shovel-ready.

At a recent PPS workshop in London, considerable debate was had over how to operationalize this policy direction. The complication, of course, lies in the fact that protecting employment areas beyond a 20-year planning horizon becomes problematic if the ability to designate them as such is not a viable option.

I would like to thank Bruce Curtis and his team at the Municipal Services Office (Western Ontario Region) for organizing the PPS, 2014 workshop in London. Special thanks also go to Jeff Brick, Stewart Findlater, Steve Cornwell, Valerie Towsley and Jessica Schnaithmann for joining me in a roundtable discussion and helping to inform the contents of this article.

Ben Puzanov, M.P.A., M.Pl., MCIP, RPP, is a senior planner with the County of Middlesex and will be starting his PhD studies in Political Science at Western University this fall, with a focus on local economic development. Ben is the legislative news contributing editor for the Ontario Planning Journal and may be reached at bpuzanov@middlesex.ca or @BenPuzanov.

Letter to the Editor

Weighing in with public input

Reading the various articles on public participation in the March/April 2014 edition of the *Ontario Planning Journal* brought home to me that although planners can learn and improve on how to involve the public, a key element that also has to be considered is what weight planners should give to what they hear—how to evaluate the input. As planning is not a science, this obviously is not an easy matter but will be influenced by matters such as the stage in the planning process and the "givens" for a particular project. (These must be enunciated up front in the public participation process, realising that not everyone will accept them.)

The planner needs to recognize that peoples' values are neither right nor wrong, or are wrong only to the extent that there are implementation impediments (e.g., provincial policy, exorbitant cost). The planner should respond to the comments received by explaining their ramifications and if it is felt that they have no basis, say so and why. In this latter regard, there is often a tendency for people to assume a worst case scenario, perhaps because such a position will cover all the bases. (A similar attitude may prevail in the Environmental Assessment process where people decide at the outset to oppose a project and are not interested in waiting for the results of the EA.)

The planning profession's commitment to upholding the public interest means that the planner must be able to enunciate what this interest is within the context of a particular project. This may differ from what the participants are asking. Such enunciation may be subject to challenge. In some cases there may be more than one solution that would satisfy the public interest and the planner should make this clear.

The biggest challenge for the planner is to know how much weight to give various inputs. There should be no embarrassment or professional failing for the planner to change her or his mind.

I would welcome further discussion or articles on this topic.

—Nigel Brereton, MCIP, RPP (Ret.)

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

Climate change, economics and the planning profession

By Mike Sullivan and George McKibbon

In a recent *Journal* article, Mike Sullivan asked why planners are not incorporating climate change into their planning. Here is our response to that question.

William Nordhaus[1] provides five rules that help put present and future climate change, economics and planning into perspective:

- Climate changes are the unintended by products or externalities resulting from economic growth.
- We live in managed and unmanageable systems: relatively managed industrial systems such as cities and unmanageable ecological systems such as ocean acidification. We should focus on impacts that are either unmanaged or unmanageable.
- Market economies in developed countries are largely insulated from climate variability and natural disturbances or these impacts are localized. Nature-based economic sectors such as agriculture are shrinking in size relative to other economic activities.
- Our societies are evolving, and in many cases growing rapidly. Forecasting and assessing the climate changes impacts in unmanageable systems on managed economies of the future is extremely difficult.


Mike Sullivan and George McKibbon

The most troubling climate impacts are far removed from the marketplace. These impacts are not valued in the same manner as market transactions value goods or services. Measuring impacts and translating these into economic values has been perhaps, too abstract.[2]

Or as William Gibson has said: "The future is here. It's just not evenly distributed."[3]

Scanning the horizon for new phenomena and knowing when and where risks associated with change are occurring is essential for survival. This is a talent we as a profession need to develop and then nurture and practice.

Daniel Kahneman, a psychologist and Nobel Prize winner in behavioural economic decision making suggests our understanding of decision-making needs to be re-considered, especially where rare events occur. He observes "when it comes to rare probabilities, our minds are not designed to get things right."[4] This statement is especially applicable where climate change impacts are concerned.

"A blind spot may contribute to this mess. Our brain's perceptual apparatus has fine-tuning for a range of attention that has paid off in human survival. While we are equipped with razor-shape focus for smiles and frowns, growls and babies, we have zero neural radar for the threats to the global systems that support human life. They are too macro or micro for us to notice directly. So when we are faced with news of global threats, our attention circuits tend to shrug."[5]

Kahneman observes we make simple rules to address risks, based on experience and often these rules prove useful in most circumstances. However, our experiences, and particularly the ways in which we store and recall memories, can play havoc with us in exceptional circumstances because our individual and collective experiences don't encompass risks from primarily unmanaged or unmanageable systems.

We also remember and characterize risks in ways that don't reflect their statistical significance. For example, consider the attention we place on minimizing aircraft accident mortality occurrences in comparison to the numbers who die or are severely injured each year in automobile accidents. Statistically, we are much more likely to be involved in an automobile accident than an aircraft accident.

When dealing with extreme events, we need to assume that each extreme rare event was preceded by another extreme rare event and will be followed by another in the future, particularly where unmanaged and unmanageable economic and ecological systems are concerned. In many ways we are blind to events of rare probability.

How can planners respond constructively?

One novel way for planners to respond to climate change and similar challenges, Kahneman suggests, is the use of "pre-mortems."[6] The basic steps involved in conducting a pre-mortem follow:

- Before a decision is made to approve a project, have the project design team meet for a "time out."
- Have each member imagine the project was built and contrary to expectations, it turned out to be a complete and utter disaster.
- After a moment of silence have each team member draft an imaginary project obituary telling the story of how the project failed with his or her reasons for the failure.
- Assemble the team and have members listen to the project obituaries and summarize the findings.
- By creating a space where otherwise committed project members can step out of their roles as project owner and designer and reflect, a realistic picture of risks and costs may emerge.

Kahneman[7] suggests reference class analysis would also assist. By carefully aggregating and synthesizing project experiences of comparable project classes that have been built and are operational, we can draw on this experience as a reference to ground our judgment and optimism with past experience. We can use this collective experience to develop questions to hone project analysis and prompt us to address project performance in ways we might not have otherwise considered.

Daniel Goleman observes his thinking on the ecological intelligence needed to address climate change has evolved. Guilt isn't a good motivator where ecological intelligence is concerned; encouraging positive behaviour is much more productive. "When we are motivated by positive emotions, what we do feels more meaningful and the urge to act lasts longer.”[8]

In addition several systematic models (e.g., community walkability assessments or ecological footprint analyses) can be used to help measure community designs. We should use these whenever possible and support development of other measurement tools.

We live in a time when our communities and clients deserve the best performance possible from the planning profession. Better procedures that address our decision-making biases will help serve the public better.

Climate change will affect communities in unique ways that challenge and stretch our profession. It is rare to have the freedom to be creative in the ways recommended by Kahneman and Goleman. Being involved as a volunteer planner in Nunavut with the Canadian Institute of Planners a few years back, gave Mike one such opportunity. It taught him the benefits of creativity and working with diverse ideas and data.

Using these approaches will help us to create a better future for our communities. It is time to shift our focus to address the unmanaged and unmanageable systems in which we live.

Mike Sullivan, MCIP, RPP is the manager of planning for the Township of Wainfleet, located in Niagara. Mike also runs a small consulting firm specializing in climate adaptation planning. He can be reached at 905.325-9096 or sullivanplan@gmail.com. George McKibbon MCIP, RPP, AICP CEP is an environmental planner with McKibbon Wakefield Inc. and an adjunct professor in the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development in the Ontario Agricultural College, University of Guelph.

Footnotes

1. Nordhaus, William., The Climate Casino: Risk, Uncertainty, and Economics for a Warming World, Yale University press, New Haven and London, 2013.
2. Ibid, Nordhaus, 2013, adapted from five themes developed on pages 135 and 136.
3. Goleman, Daniel, Focus: The Hidden Driver of Excellence, Harper Collins, New York, 2013, pg. 146.
4. Kahneman, Daniel., Thinking Fast and Slow, Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York, 2011, page 333 F.
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7. Ibid, Kahneman, 2011, page 251.
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Sewell on GTA suburbanization

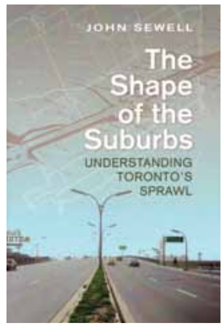
Reviewed by Kalle Hakala

Title: Shape of the Suburbs: Understanding Toronto's Sprawl
Author: John Sewell
Publisher: University of Toronto Press (2009)

In sequel to his 1993 book *The Shape of the City*, urban activist and former Toronto mayor John Sewell examines the forces behind the creation of the post-WWII suburban area of the Greater Toronto Area. His focus is on the specific local factors that led to the suburbs we see today. In doing so, he examines master plans, transportation, infrastructure and the influence of local and provincial politics.

The book includes a review of the various long-range plans, staring with Toronto's 1943 master plan and all the other provincial plans up to the more recent *Places to Grow Act*. He surmises that their varying levels of effectiveness results from the influence of local politics or lack of implementation mechanisms. Sewell suggests that, even though large-scale plans were rare in North America up to that point in time, they were more acceptable in Canada due to a history of robust central planning.

The book includes a detailed examination of the municipal reorganization schemes that were considered, and the politics behind those that were eventually enacted. He argues that the Metropolitan Toronto structure was largely successful in its suburban planning role, but was undermined by local municipalities outside its direct jurisdiction and provincial bodies. In contrast, he argues that the regional governments were unsuccessful as they lacked a central urban area to root them in an urban instead of suburban tradition.



Sewell argues that water and wastewater infrastructure influences urban form to a greater degree than land use planning—from which infrastructure decisions were often divorced—on its own. Now infrastructure costs are primarily a municipal responsibility, except for major highways, which Sewell says is one of the prime drivers of low-density development.

In addition to descriptions of plans, processes and politics, Sewell theorizes about the nature and influence of urban and suburban values on the development of the suburbs. Despite a few forays into personal sentiment, the book offers insights into the forces that created the GTA outside of Metro Toronto. It is an excellent resource on the history of planning in the GTA.

Kalle Hakala is a Non-practicing Full Member of OPPI, currently residing in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. She can be reached at kalhakala@hotmail.com.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Charting the course forward

By Paul J. Stagl

The millennial cohort of planning professionals is set to make its mark and by all indications it's going to be a very distinctive mark—a future all about change. Pragmatic and idealistic, millennial planners worldwide are changing the agenda to gain broad-based recognition that place matters and to focus on designing walkable and healthy communities.

Among OPPI members, the millennial cohort has now surpassed the baby boomer cohort (23% to 21%). While this shift is not unanticipated, it reflects a significant change. Within this context the Institute's challenge has been to ensure continued relevancy with a changing membership and an evolving profession—not just for today, but for the next 25 years.

Paul Stagl

An unparalleled team—Council, staff, volunteers and the membership—has responded with initiatives at both the provincial and national levels. Initiatives focused on ensuring professional planners have the skills, knowledge and commitment to the public interest to plan the communities and spaces the next generation needs. Initiatives demonstrating meaningful leadership in all spheres of practice. Initiatives that will ensure the planning profession is effective in the dynamic environment ahead. Initiatives that are already contributing to a stronger, more resilient profession:

- OPPI volunteer activity remains the envy of other professional groups. OPPI has broadened its volunteer opportunities to engage an ever-wider spectrum of members.
- Restructuring, allocating resources and delegating responsibilities to the Districts for direct membership engagement has increased participation.
- Adopting a comprehensive communications strategy, including a clear digital presence, has enhanced the reputation, credibility and profile of the Institute and the profession; as well, it highlights our continuing commitment to supporting the public interest.
- Supporting members' commitment to CPL with programs, resources and idea exchanges has been met with an exceedingly positive response from our millennials and gen x'ers.
- Advancing the knowledge base of the profession and facilitating resources to help members enhance their competencies has been formalized through OPPI's Learning Strategy.
- Designing a website to keep members informed, digitally linked and engaged has had visible benefits.
- Recognized as the voice of Ontario's planners, OPPI volunteers help to shape planning policy in pursuit of healthy and sustainable communities through briefs and calls to action.
- Delegating, with our provincial and territorial partners, membership administration and credentialing to the national Professional Standards Board and Professional Standards Committee, has enabled OPPI to redirect its focus to supporting its members.
- Engaging with accredited planning schools and their directors to share experiences and generative initiatives has helped to expand student programmes, outreach and participation. Dedicating an annual *OPJ* edition exclusively

to schools and students provides a platform for the next generation of planners' views. It also offers insights into how their academic and work experiences are shaping them and the profession.

- Adopting a new structure and mandatory CPL has better positioned the profession to qualify for self-regulation. This will ensure that anyone who calls herself/himself a planner has the requisite skills and competencies, and meets established ethical standards.
- Charting a course to self-regulation and enhanced title protection has stimulated meaningful engagement concerning how best to position members for the future.
- Supporting a restructured CIP to strengthen its national voice, promoting and advocating for the planning profession, is leading to a stronger partnership of institutes and associations across the country.

To mangle a well-known adage: the buck doesn't stop here.

Self regulation

A Focused Strategy Forward

By Paul Stagl

With the provincial election over, Council continues to move forward on advocating self-regulation and enhanced title protection for the planning profession. Seeking to position Members for the future, a focused set of actions are being taken. All lead to the drafting of proposed legislation with the support of the government and a broad spectrum of MPPs.

To date, OPPI has retained a government relations consultant to assist with meeting and gaining the support of government officials and MPPs. A position paper is being drafted and meetings scheduled with the minister and staff of Municipal Affairs and Housing, as well as other professional regulators and associations. We also continue to monitor recent legislative updates and efforts by partner Provincial and Territorial Institutes and Associations (PTIA), and those of other professions in Ontario.

In the ensuing months, OPPI will be engaging with members and stakeholders to keep everyone informed and to advance the conversation. For more details I invite you to attend the session on self-regulation that has been included in the Symposium agenda, October 1 and 2 in Niagara Falls.

LAND USE PLANNING SYSTEM

Reviewing Ontario's Land Use Planning System

DC Act review Why planners should care

By Pamela Blais

In conjunction with its consultation on the Ontario Municipal Board, launched in the fall of 2013, the province announced a review of the *Development Charges Act.*

Development charges are a major source of funding available to municipalities to pay for infrastructure. Levied against new development, they contribute to the capital costs of infrastructure that is needed to support new growth. In 2012, DCs raised $1.8-billion for new infrastructure in Ontario municipalities.

DCs undermine planning policy

DCs impact directly on key planning objectives and policies in this province. Urban development patterns are the aggregate result of thousands upon thousands of property market decisions made by homebuyers and businesses. Prices play a critical role in these decisions. DCs affect the prices faced by both developers and final consumers. They influence developer decisions about where and what to develop. And because DCs are typically passed through to the final purchaser in home prices, they influence homebuyers' decisions too. In influencing the relative prices of different types of development, DCs can have as much if not more impact as planning policy on urban development patterns.


Pamela Blais

The issue for planners is that the influence of DCs is not neutral. Because of the way DCs tend to be structured, they create powerful financial incentives and disincentives that usually undermine planning policies and objectives. From a planning perspective, some of the key issues follow.

Growth pays for growth:

A fundamental principle underlying development charges is that "growth pays for growth." One of the aims is to ensure that existing residents and businesses do not get saddled with the bill for the infrastructure needed to support new growth in their communities.

When the costs of new growth are not covered by DCs, they are typically picked up by property taxes. If the costs are paid elsewhere, then that new growth will not be paying its true cost. It becomes subsidized by existing residents and businesses. This is not only an issue of fairness. Prices for new development are discounted when others pick up part of the tab, providing a financial incentive to new growth and inflating demand. And the transferred cost can become a significant expense for municipalities that have many competing investment priorities.

One of the mechanisms through which growth costs are deflected to existing businesses and residents is through the "benefits existing development" provision. If some part of new infrastructure is deemed to benefit existing development, then a portion of costs can be deflected from DCs and is typically picked up by property taxes.

What constitutes benefits to existing development and how they should be measured is not well defined under the current *DC Act*. They are often an area of negotiation between municipalities and developers, so the portion of costs deemed to benefit existing development varies a lot between municipalities.

The consultation document provides data showing that across a sample of 19 municipalities, the share of infrastructure costs deemed to benefit existing development ranged from a low of 3 per cent of total growth-related capital costs (in Mississauga) to a high of 39 per cent (in Sudbury), with an average of 16 per cent. The amounts are not insignificant: across these municipalities a total of almost $8-billion in costs was deemed to benefit existing development[1].

A clearer definition regarding what actually constitutes benefits to existing development, and a requirement for more objective metrics in determining shares of cost allocated to this category are needed.

In addition, if costs are to be deflected to existing residents and businesses, it is imperative that those who will be picking up the cost are involved in the process. This is not the case now. DCs are typically considered a matter between the development industry and municipal finance departments.

Supporting compact forms of development:

Achieving compact, denser development is a planning objective across Ontario municipalities. Within the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the Places to Grow Plan establishes minimum densities for greenfields and urban growth centres. On the ground, this means encouraging development forms such as narrow lot singles and apartments.

But current DC norms mean that denser forms of development are financially penalized, while less dense forms are incentivized. This is because of the method used to establish DC rates. For residential development, growth-related infrastructure costs are divided by projected population growth to arrive at a per capita cost. Then costs are assigned to housing types based on average household sizes. That is why, with a typical DC, the cost for a single-detached unit is higher than that for an apartment unit.

But in establishing DC rates, the effect of density on the costs of infrastructure is not taken into consideration. Especially for linear or areal infrastructure like roads, transit, water and wastewater infrastructure and storm water management, higher densities mean lower costs per unit.

The fact that a person living in a unit in a three-storey apartment building will cause significantly lower infrastructure costs compared to a person living in a house on a 60-foot lot is not taken into account. For non-residential development, DCs are usually charged on a floor area basis, so that the more floor area you build, the higher the charge, thereby embedding a disincentive to densification.

This means not only that less dense development is discounted, creating a financial incentive, but more efficient development is overcharged, creating a financial disincentive. What's more, it is precisely the more compact development that subsidizes the less dense development.

DCs overcharge new apartment units across Ontario cities, with just a few exceptions. This is despite the fact that DCs for apartment units are usually lower than those for detached units and townhouses. If accurately costed, DCs for apartments would be much lower than they typically are now; while DCs for less efficient forms like large lot singles would go up.

Supporting intensification:

The typical DC also fails to reflect how infrastructure costs vary with location in an urban context. At the most fundamental level, development on greenfields, which requires all new infrastructure, is usually much more expensive than development within the already urbanized area, where existing capacities, roads and other infrastructure can be used.

By employing a charge that is uniform across a city, and not differentiating between these varying cost contexts, the typical DC will overcharge intensification and discount greenfields development. Of course these embedded incentives are in direct opposition to planning policies that call for greater intensification, including the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*, which includes a minimum target of 40 per cent of new units on already-urbanized land.

Some municipalities are beginning to differentiate charges by location. Halton Region, for example, distinguishes between development within the built boundary and greenfields for its water and wastewater DCs. It's worth noting that the distinction is not negligible: the charge in already-urban areas is about half that of greenfields.

Supporting transit:

DC rules around transit place it at a severe disadvantage. Current rules require that 10 per cent of transit capital costs be removed from DCs, while 100 per cent of road costs can be recovered through DCs.

But perhaps more deleterious is a restriction that ties the amount of transit investment that can be recovered through DCs to past levels of investment. Given that in most municipalities historical levels of transit investment have been low, this places a severe restriction on municipalities that are seeking to make a shift from auto dependence to transit. For example, Metrolinx's *DC Act* review submission notes that the maximum allowable funding envelope for roads in Hamilton is $9,083 per person, compared to $84 per person for transit; in Oakville the comparable figures are $12,131 and $312 per person[2].

At a time when we have recognized the need for a significant shift to transit ridership, current DC rules that provide generous funding opportunities for road investments while severely limiting transit funding are a critical issue.

Change is needed to align DCs with planning in Ontario

DCs influence planning outcomes relating to compact development, intensification and support for transit. Two key implications can be taken from the above. First, alignment of DC policies and rules with planning objectives and investment is necessary. And second, DCs need to be more accurate—reflect how infrastructure costs vary within cities and with density. This is to avoid market distortions and discouraging the very kinds of development and investment that planning seeks to encourage. Instead, DCs could and should be a powerful tool supporting planning objectives.

Pamela Blais, MCIP, RPP, is principal of Metropole Consultants and author of Perverse Cities: Hidden Subsidies, Wonky Policy and Urban Sprawl (UBC Press).

Endnotes

1 Development Charges in Ontario, Consultation Document, Fall 2013. http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=10253

2 Metrolinx Submission to the Development Charges Act, 1997 Consultation Process, January 10, 2014. http://www.metrolinx.com/en/regionalplanning/funding/Metrolinx_Review_of_Development_Charges_EN.pdf

ONTARIO'S GREENBELT

Building on our assets

By Burkhard Mausberg

Ontario's Greenbelt turns 10 next year. While there are many gains to celebrate, it is also time for the province to begin its legislated review of the three plans that make up the Greenbelt. While any birthday is time for reflection, a 10th birthday is notable and an important time for review.

The *Greenbelt Act* and *Greenbelt Plan* were passed with much fanfare in 2005. While there was some loud opposition especially from affected landowners and some municipalities, the plan received significant support from conservationists, planning experts and the public.

Since then the Greenbelt has enjoyed huge public approval. It is consistently the government's most popular environmental initiative garnering more than 90 per cent support.

Did the 2-million acre Greenbelt live up to its expectations? I suggest an unqualified "Yes."

Value added

Over the last nine years, the Greenbelt land has continued to stay productive, natural, and green: the area generates healthy food, cleans our air and filters our water. It continues to function as a habitat for wildlife and recharges its vast aquifers and Lake Ontario. And every year the forested areas of the Greenbelt alone have offset the emissions of 27-million cars.

Scientists and economists, in an unusual collaboration, calculate the ecological services provided by the Greenbelt to be worth a conservative $2.6-billion every year. This average of more than $3,500 per hectare is irreplaceable natural capital, much of it coming from the water filtration services provided by the Greenbelt land.

While it is impossible to determine exactly what would have happened without the Greenbelt plans, extrapolating from pre-Greenbelt business-as-usual data shows that the immediate area surrounding the Greater Toronto Area would have lost much of the productivity and ecological services that characterize it today. Without the Greenbelt, the province would have been in a position to lose an estimated 264,000 acres to urban expansion by 2031 (an area twice the size of the City of Toronto and an eighth of today's Greenbelt). This includes 244,000 acres of highly productive Class 1 (69 per cent), 2, and 3 agricultural land being replaced with single-family, low-density housing in areas with poor access to transit systems.

This form of development would have added to the pressures of auto dependency, such as increased commute times, increased costs to the taxpayer to build and maintain roads (an estimated $1.4-billion a year), increased traffic accidents and a 41 per cent increase in greenhouse gas emissions, with a corresponding decrease in local air quality.

The Greenbelt addressed a growing frustration with the land use planning in southern Ontario. Starting with the Oak Ridges Moraine protection, Ontarians asked for better regional planning. They recognized the negative impacts of poor development and the loss of greenspace and farmland.

That need for better planning is also reflected in people's understanding of the benefits of the Greenbelt. Consistently, in public opinion research commissioned by the Greenbelt Foundation, the majority of respondents highlighted water protection as the main benefit of the Greenbelt. People are making the link between land and water: protect the land and benefits to water quality will ensue.

Local food catalyst

The Greenbelt has acted as a catalyst to change the food supply chain. There has been an explosion of interest in local food in southern Ontario. And that makes sense. If we are asking farmers to keep their land in production and not have it paved over, shouldn't we eat what they grow and raise? That's exactly what has happened: restaurants and retailers offer more local food, farmers' markets have doubled, public institutions like hospitals and universities are localizing their menus and VQA wine sales have doubled in the last five years.

This change from farm to fork continues. Queen's Park passed a *Local Food Act* in 2013, municipalities are implementing local food procurement policies and at Canada's biggest food trade show Ontario was featured as its largest exhibitor. I wonder if southern Ontario would have been a world leader in this area if it hadn't been for the Greenbelt?

Economic development

The Greenbelt did not create destinations. The area's many tourism opportunities existed well before the land use plans came into effect. Hiking, skiing and biking are possible throughout the Greenbelt, which features the largest network of trails in the country. Add to that the many agri-tourism features, aboriginal sites, historical spots, cultural establishments and you have yourself a smorgasbord of family activities.

Moreover, the Greenbelt provides significant economic opportunity. McMaster University Professor Emeritus Atif Kurbursi calculated that the area enjoys an economic impact of $9.1-billion every year. This includes the output generated through land-based activities such as farming, tourism, fishing and hunting, and selective logging. With its 161,000 full-time jobs, the Greenbelt provides more employment than the combined fish, forestry, mining, quarrying, and oil and gas extraction sectors in Ontario.

All this adds up to a quality of life that is the envy of many. When asked, roughly 50 per cent of Ontarians say that the Greenbelt is extremely important to them personally.

Considerations for 2015 review

Infrastructure projects such as the 407 highway extension and the Holland Marsh electricity-generating peaker plant are at odds with the goals of supporting a working countryside and enriching ecological goods and services. The *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan*, the *Niagara Escarpment Plan* and the *Greenbelt Plan* all have different definitions, policies and governance structures that are challenging for planners, developers and citizens. Allowing aggregate extraction in natural heritage areas, when much of that resource is available elsewhere, still needs to change.

Despite those imperfections, which many hope to address during the 2015 review, the Greenbelt has sparked changes in the food system, maintained ecological treasures, provided economic benefits and jobs, and continues to allow families to spend time together with many enjoyable activities.

The public understanding and support shows a keen desire for permanently changing our historical development patterns. Simply put, the Greenbelt is a solution. It has acted as an example and inspiration to other jurisdictions, has won international recognition, and remains a profound statement of hope now and for the future.

Burkhard Mausberg is the CEO of the Friends of the Greenbelt Foundation and the Greenbelt Fund, and an occasional expert in the environmental sphere, with a science background and taste for pop culture. He can be reached at 416.960.0001 or bmausberg@greenbelt.ca.

ELTO

Expert Witnesses

Broadening the scope

By Ian Flett and Eric Gillespie

Malcolm Gladwell, the popular author of counter-intuitive non-fiction, suggests in Outliers that expertise develops after 10,000 hours of practice. In effect, he suggests expertise is not the exclusive domain of academics and professionals. For better or for worse, the Environmental and Land Tribunals Ontario have not been asked to endorse this approach to qualifying experts.

But these tribunals are beginning to accept less formal interpretations of who is an expert, and therefore, who may provide probative opinions at a hearing.

The law of evidence comprises a strict set of rules that control what evidence may properly be before a decision-maker. Opinions are a problematic form of evidence because of their complexity and the decision-makers' ability to assess their reliability. The courts have long acknowledged and grappled with this complexity.

Decision-makers will admit expert opinions as evidence only after the party seeking the evidence has persuaded them of two primary elements. The first is that the proposed expert is qualified to offer an informed opinion. The second is that the proposed expert is sufficiently independent from the parties to provide unbiased opinions.

The Environmental Review Tribunal considered this question at some length in *Erickson v. Ontario (Ministry of the Environment)*[1]. Appellants in that hearing argued in favour of a presenter (a modified form of standing that does not allow for written or oral arguments) testifying as an expert.

The tribunal first determined nothing in its rules barred participants testifying as experts. It also considered applicable legislation including the *Statutory Powers Procedure Act*, which governs almost all tribunals in Ontario.

Section 2 of that act requires tribunals to interpret their rules "liberally" to "secure the just, most expeditious and cost-effective determination of every proceeding on its merits."

The tribunal found allowing presenters to offer expert opinion evidence can "fill gaps" in the evidentiary record, concluding its process ought to be "inclusive." The tribunal did not qualify the presenter at issue in *Erickson* because it felt other traditionally qualified experts had provided the evidence he offered.

The OMB has also struggled on occasion with this question as it relates to participants, a form of standing similar to presenters. In some cases the board excluded participants from offering expert opinions because of their close ties to interested parties in the hearings.

However, the board contemplated qualifying participant expert testimony in the past on condition that the participant expert opinion is disclosed in advance.[2]

It is also clear the tribunals will not condone expert opinions by way of ambush. Participants and presenters who anticipate relying on expert opinions should make that abundantly clear during the preliminary stages leading to a hearing. Tribunals are likely to allow participant opinion evidence that is fairly disclosed; but will probably exclude those opinions if they come late in the game.

The prevailing tendency of ELTO decision-makers is to rely on expert evidence to determine matters. Excluding participants and presenters from providing opinions they are qualified to give would handicap their ability to play a substantive role in hearings. Therefore, the Environmental Review Tribunal's move towards inclusion is a welcome and necessary step in affirming the important roles of presenters and participants in hearings.

With the tribunals' changing attitude towards inclusion we may soon see cases where some of the most compelling and independent opinions come from presenters and participants.

Ian Flett is a 4th year associate lawyer at Eric K. Gillespie Professional Corporation. Eric and the other lawyers at his Toronto-based firm practice primarily in the environmental and land use planning area. Readers with suggestions for future articles or who wish to contribute their comments are encouraged to contact Eric at anytime. He can be reached at egillespie@gillespielaw.ca.

Footnotes

1 [2011] O.E.R.T.D. No. 29 at para. 758

2 Duncain Development Corp. v. London (City), [1999] O.M.B.D. No. 528 at para. 28

DEAR DILEMMA

Fairness and consideration

Dear Dilemma,

I am an OPPI member working for a conservation authority in Ontario. My role is to review and comment on development applications circulated to local municipalities within our jurisdiction. Another OPPI member has submitted a site plan control application.

I have advised the municipality and Planner X that the application is incomplete since a critical report is missing. Rather than providing the appropriate complete submission, the Planner X wrote to me, municipal officials and the municipal planner that he had "bent over backwards to work with the conservation authority" and that "rewriting the environmental report is excessive and an abuse of the planning process."

I believe that Planner X has not provided the information that I require to determine whether the provincial planning policy is met. That is, contrary to *section 1.2* of the *OPPI Professional Code of Practice*, he did not "provide full, clear and accurate information on planning matters to decision makers and members of the public."

I also believe that by writing as he did, he has questioned my professional integrity in the eyes of the municipality. Again, contrary to *sections 3.9* and *3.10* of the code, he did not act toward me, a fellow member, "in a spirit of fairness and consideration" and did not "when evaluating the work of another Member, show objectivity and fairness and avoid ill-considered or uninformed criticism of the competence, conduct or advice of the Member."

Has Planner X breached the *Professional Code of Practice* in this scenario? Am I obligated to file a formal complaint?

Thanks very much.

—*Wondering*

Dear Wondering,

Thanks for your letter. As you are aware, the OPPI *Professional Code of Practice* is clear on Members' ethical obligations to the public interest, clients, and professional colleagues. From your comments it is unclear whether Planner X did or did not comply with the code.

Section 1.2 is intended to benefit the decision maker and improve the quality of the ultimate planning decision. From what you described, the municipality accepted the application as complete. While this does not mean that Planner X did not breach the code, your dissatisfaction with the submission does not prove otherwise.

With respect to *sections 3.9* and *3.10*, it is not clear whether Planner X breached the code in his comments about you and the conservation authority. Reasonable disagreement and criticism is allowed between professionals and the quotes you provide regarding your professionalism and competence do not seem to be so excessive and malicious as to constitute a breach of the code.

When it comes to deciding whether another planner may have breached the code, I suggest you have a conversation with the planner in question about the situation. If s/he is not interested in having that conversation, then approach a professional colleague outside of your organization. Often a fellow planner, unaware of the situation, can help provide an objective and unbiased perspective on whether the conduct breached the code, or is serious enough to warrant further action.

If, after such consultation, you believe the code was breached, it is your obligation to report the matter to the OPPI Discipline Committee. Just remember, it is a serious matter for all of the parties involved.

Yours in the public interest,

—*Dilemma*

SOCIAL MEDIA & CONTEMPORARY TECHNOLOGY

Taking planning to new heights

By Robert Voigt, contributing editor

The ability to integrate technology into urban planning practices is generally becoming easier. In part this is because of the number and low cost of options available for new tools, many of which are accessible directly by smart phones. But it is also because of the inspiration gained when we see something used in another setting and recognize its potential to be adapted for professional purposes. It is not uncommon for creative advances and discoveries to happen at the edges of overlapping but not necessarily related fields. In the following example, the inspiration was found in a popular pastime and online TED Talk video.

Robert Voigt

It started with remote sensing technology for conservation programs and the great improvement it offered for recreational photography using Unmanned Air Vehicles (UAVs). This resulted in fellow planner Nathan Westendorp and I leading a team to develop an in-house drone program. And the rest is history...

Recognizing the opportunity offered by adaptations to new technology that made the flying of drones and remote sensing cost effective, we noted how other professionals were able to expand not only their physical reach, but the depth of information they could gather. Other commercial and public uses of UAVs include collision investigations by police, photography by reporters, videography for real estate sales and analysis of potential yields and crop health for agricultural fields. These applications will likely increase as the quality of remote sensors improve and drone payloads increase.

This looked like an approach that could be used to overcome common challenges planners face when conducting site analysis of large areas. It offered a way of adding another

September/ October OPJ Alert

Log your CPL

Have you been logging your Continuous Professional Learning activities? Routine logging is painless and won't leave you scrambling at the end of the year. Take a moment and log your CPL Units now.

CPL includes formal or programmed activities such as taking courses and attending conferences and workshops, as well as self-directed activities like reading, mentoring and volunteering. Have questions about CPL? Take a look at the CPL Program Guide.

meaningful perspective to our existing methods of assessing the built environment.

The program we developed allows us to fly a drone in defined flight paths to capture low-altitude aerial photography and video for development sites, street corridors, natural areas, and the urban form of communities. It is giving us perspectives and access to sites that are unprecedented. Since this program was a step into uncharted territory for us, and the planning profession, there was little in the way of examples that we could reference for our work. This made the transition from vision to reality, which would take us from recreational model "copter" flying to commercial practice, far more complex than anticipated.

Getting our "flying squirrel" drone airborne required equipment training; approvals from Transport Canada, flight planning, visual surveying protocols, communication with airports and review of flight corridors and extensive on-the-ground pre-flight preparations. Transport Canada requires that all commercial drone operations receive a Special Flight Operations Certificate (SFOC) pursuant to *Section 603.67* of the *Canadian Aviation Regulations for Unmanned Air Vehicle (UAV)* for each flight. This is not a simple license application and requires a lengthy process. As Transport Canada explicitly states as part of its UAV approvals, the certificate holder "shall comply with the applicable provisions of the *Aeronautics Act* and the *Canadian Aviation Regulations (CARs)*." In our experience this resulted in our approval certificates having 32 or more specific conditions. In addition to the logistical and technical requirements of drone flying, these certificates also define a complex framework for operating and supporting drone flights. This included supervision and operator requirements, emergency plans, flight schedules, visual flight rule operations and security plans. While it is an exciting and enjoyable activity, flying a drone requires maintenance of an operational and management system that provides supervision and control over the "flight team" and all its activities.

Beyond the benefits and huge potential for the use of UAVs by planning professionals, there are many concerns that will have to be addressed over time as the use of these tools increases. Moreover, flying a commercial drone for urban planning projects (in Canada) requires more training and preparations than we had anticipated when we began with an excited vision about adding some technology tools and play to our field work. We ended up with an unexpectedly intricate system of procedures and equipment; however, it has been worth it.

I highly recommend that planners explore this latest of technologies for their practices, regardless of the hurdles they need to go through to make it happen. Just think, in comparison to moonwalk that took place 45 years ago, this is truly child's play.

Robert Voigt,MCIP, RPP, is a planner, artist and writer, specializing in healthy community design, active transportation and citizen engagement. He is senior project manager for Cambium Inc., Chair of OPPI's Community Design Working Group, Member of PPS' Placemaking Leadership Council and writer for Urban Times and CivicBlogger. rob@robvoigt.com Twitter @robvoigt Google +robertvoigt

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