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THE COUNTER REVOLUTION

LIFE AS A SHOPKEEPER WILL NEVER BE THE SAME

by Glenn Miller and Nancy Adler

Few subjects stimulate the emotions like retailing. Shopping plays a major role in our lives. So, for good reason, everyone has an opinion on the subject. Retail sales account for more than a quarter of Canada's GNP; retail establishments contribute almost one fifth of the nation's property taxes and provide employment for one in ten workers. And countless chargeable hours have been logged on retail issues in the last three decades on OMB "store wars" and other skirmishes related to retail planning.

In post-war Ontario, the inroads made by the first supermarkets revolutionized food shopping patterns. In the 1970s, pitched battles to preserve Main Street against edge-of-town shopping centres resulted in new policy, new regulations and a trust in the nascent science of market analysis. In the 1980s, the term "store wars" was coined, with the regional shopping centre emerging victorious as a multi-purpose suburban hub, consigning smaller, more poorly located shopping malls to discount oblivion. The current angst stems from the onslaught of the big box, which has earned the epithet "non-place retailing" to describe its lack of aesthetic appeal.

In the coming months, the Journal will be covering retail planning from a variety of perspectives. The historical approach taken by the OMB is neatly summarized (see accompanying article by Nancy

Adler) in a recent OMB decision in Brampton. Former planning professor B.W. Krushelnicki and W.E. King ruled that the OMB "is not concerned if a store goes out of business because a competitor has built a better mousetrap."

Quoting another decision, it was stated that, "(The role of the Board) is to review the project and to make a finding that the project represents good planning and to make a judgement that is in the public interest."

The friction between good planning and allowing the market to evolve will always be with us. Upcoming articles will attempt to show how practitioners are handling these concerns, and how

different methodologies fare when put to the test at the OMB. In this issue of the Journal, we present the approach taken by the City of London, as well as a brief overview of how economics, technology and changing consumer preferences are affecting decisions in the marketplace. In future issues, we will also report on a retail needs study commissioned by a small town in Ontario, and compare practice in Ontario with the U.K. and American experience. The series will be rounded out with interviews with some of the leading practitioners from the fields of planning, law and market analysis, concluding with an assessment of the challenges facing Canadian department store chains and shopping centres.

A primer on retail economics

by Glenn R. Miller

The key to understanding retailing today is to grasp how new technology and changing consumer preferences have combined with fundamental shifts in the economics of distribution to revolutionize the way that retailers do business. In a span of little more than 20 years, forward-thinking companies such as Costco/Price Club, Wal-Mart and Office Depot have changed the retail landscape, both physically and figuratively. These big-box retailers are now able to capture value for their own balance sheets that previously required the efforts of three separate companies in the retail distribution chain.

As every student of Economics 101 knows, a basic tenet of economics is the

drive of owners to extract more value out of existing resources. Big-box retailers are doing just this, capturing a bigger share of the value added to a product during the distribution stage and keeping sunk capital costs to a minimum, relying on no-frills, high volume and low margins.

Food and certain consumer goods are now being distributed and presented to the consumer in ways that mimic the just-in-time methods already perfected in the manufacturing sector. As in manufacturing, this has resulted in radically different relationships between supplier and retailer. The revolution in data handling and pricing techniques is made possible by bar-coding and sophisticated direct-debiting procedures that combine cashflow management and inventory control, as well as an array of high-tech reporting techniques.

An example is the Price Club, started in 1986 by Sol Price in a converted aircraft hangar. Price Club, which recently merged with Costco, has now effectively cut out the distribution and wholesale function. This type of store now typically requires that manufacturers or suppliers deliver



products in predetermined amounts and formats suitable for direct transfer to the retail floor. Retailers are thus able to demand more frequent deliveries, with the supplier taking the responsibility for arranging products in convenient modules. This reduces the retailer's warehousing and set-up costs as well as the cost of inventory. To put this newfound power into perspective, consider that some retailers actually punish suppliers for tardy or incorrectly organized deliveries with substantial fines!

When consumers choose a product, they are implicitly taking into consideration what economists refer to as "the transaction cost," a term that encompasses a bundle of non-dollar items. These include indirect costs such as the time, effort and expense required to drive long distances to a regional-scale retail facility. The selection either tends to be limited – as in the case of a Price Club – or presented in an agglomeration of specialty stores, often competing in the same retail category. Most large towns and cities in Ontario have at least one such agglomeration, comprising furniture, electronic supplies, computers and other "category killers."

Another element of the transaction cost is the value that consumers place on convenience. This partially explains the migration of furniture and appliance sales from downtown department stores and shopping malls to retail strips and stand-

alone big boxes. This is reinforced by the fact that today's hard-working consumers cannot easily arrange to stay home to accept delivery of merchandise, coupled with the desire for immediate gratification. The convenience of having a bulky TV or small appliance loaded directly into the car – something that is not easily achieved in a department store environment – therefore has a direct influence on the consumer's choice of retailer. The disposable nature of many goods – who does repairs anymore? – also undercuts the appeal of department stores and other stores where customer service was once a driving force.

Stores such as Wal-Mart built their success by dominating local markets in small-town America with what some have termed predatory pricing. But the issues are far larger than price alone. Retailing practice is evolving so fast that the original big boxes have already outlived their utility in some mature markets. In the U.S., Wal-Mart is now gradually replacing as many as three or four "small" stores of 50,000 sq. ft. with a single 200,000 sq. ft. superstore in some regions. Ironically, having adapted to being served by a single store (which replaced smaller streetfront shops as a result of their ability to generate very high sales per sq. ft., thereby capturing the lion's share of available consumer dollars in a given trade area), some communities are now actively petitioning

Wal-Mart to maintain the status quo.

The town of Bridge City, Texas (pop. 8,000) recently became the first location where Wal-Mart reversed its decision to close in response to local protests. According to the New York Times, demonstrations in Bridge City attracted considerable media attention. Customers paraded outside Wal-Mart waving placards: "You'll kill Bridge City." "When you leave us, you leave us with nothing." "Crippled and elderly can't go to another town."

What does this tell us about the future of retailing? From the perspective of municipalities trying to ensure that the consumer has adequate retail services, the American example suggests that, driven by the desire to optimize distribution efficiencies, some retailers are ready to transfer substantial transaction costs to the consumer (expecting customers to drive very long distances to shop and to be fit enough to trek around a store larger than several football fields). Since the demographic profile of big box retail customers is known not to reflect the community as a whole – being a generally wealthier, more mobile group of consumers – this potentially leaves those without the means to reach superstores or the space to store huge boxes of merchandise badly off.

This article is based on file material and interviews with Garry Stamm, president of Stamm Economic Research. Glenn Miller is editor of the Journal.



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Planning for Big Box Retailers The London, Ontario, Experience

John M. Fleming

Early in 1993, concepts such as "power centres," "superstores" and "category killers" were still largely unknown to most planners in London, Ontario. However, the Price Club (now Price/Costco) had set up shop just south of the city's pre-annexation boundary beside Highway 401. Aikenheads (now Home Depot) was trying to get servicing approvals for a site in the same area. And Masonville, one of the city's regional malls, was seeking approval for expansion to allow a "big box" Zellers of 120,000 sq.ft. With big box retailers entering the scene, it was clear that the

face of London's retail market was changing.

In order to understand this trend, we carried out an extensive literature review. In contrast to the situation today, very little information was available. To fill the void, we carried out telephone interviews with several Canadian and American retail analysts and planners. We then visited and photographed big box retail uses in the Greater Toronto Area and the United States.

As simple as it may sound, a major finding of our research was that big box retail uses are, in fact, retail uses. They



Looking for a level playing field in London

are not warehouses or quasi-industrial uses. By virtue of their size and powerful consumer draw, they can create their own retail "hot spots." Recognizing this, we prepared a report which explained what big box retailers are, how they function, and what impacts can be expected. We also dispelled some of the myths that proponents for big box retailers often perpetuate. For example, stand-alone building format, building ownership and inexpensive land are more likely to be preferences rather than absolute requirements. We included examples of existing big box retailing without such attributes to support our case.

We also developed a two-pronged policy framework for big box retailers. (1) Do not allow big box retailers within quasi-retail/industrial areas (this did not apply to furniture stores, home improvement and lumber stores which do not typically compete with planned retail centres). (2) Ensure there are substantial opportunities for big box retailers within planned commercial nodes and corridors.

The first component of our framework was necessary to gain control over the location of big box retailers, which often proliferate within quasi-retail/industrial areas. We saw evidence of this in our field studies. Development of big box retailing in such areas results in a duplication of costly infrastructure in place elsewhere to support planned commercial centres. Concentrations of big box retailing can also negatively affect existing commercial centres, resulting in under-utilization of infrastructure in those locations. Through this first component of the policy framework we also wanted to create a level playing field between big

box and traditional retailing. It was neither desirable nor equitable to give big box retailers the advantage of being permitted to develop on much cheaper land within quasi-retail/industrial areas.

In the second component of our framework, we encouraged big box retailers

to integrate with designated community and regional shopping centres, thereby allowing big box retailers to use existing public infrastructure and revitalize traditional retail centres that might be failing. Big box retail uses were also permitted in locations adjacent to shopping centres, although such sites were not pre-zoned. Site plan and design issues were emphasized and re-zoning would not be supported if the dominance of the shopping centre was threatened. Although the City of London does not require market impact studies, this policy provided a forum for discussion and argument about potential impacts.

We also created a new official plan designation called a "Commercial Policy Area" to be applied sparingly to areas in the city that could not be adequately accommodated in the existing commercial hierarchy. The Commercial Policy Area designation allowed us to create specialized policies to address unusual mixes of commercial uses (including big box retailers), stress site plan issues and coordinate commercial development. Coordination was enhanced by policies which provided for the preparation of area-specific design guidelines. Four Commercial Policy Area designations were applied, two of which were intended to support big box retailing.

The major benefits to be realized through this policy approach are as follows:

- 1 A level playing field is created for new and traditional formats of retail development;
- 2 The duplication of costly infrastruc-

ture is avoided; a more sustainable approach is achieved by encouraging the reformatting of existing centres;

- 3 Big box retailers are directed to planned commercial concentrations in nodes and corridors;
- 4 Site planning and coordination is improved;
- 5 Unique commercial areas can be recognized and planned for by area-specific commercial policies.

This approach also recognizes that big box retailing is part of the retail market's continuing evolution. The approach does not attempt to reverse this process, but provides opportunities for big box retail uses. We feel that such planning will stand the city in good stead as the retail market continues to evolve - even if the big boxes are eventually superseded by another retailing trend in the future.

The city is currently circulating the official plan policy amendments which implement this policy framework to the development community, relevant

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agencies and the public. We expect that Council will consider these policies early in 1995. The policy framework report is available from the City of London Planning Division, (519) 661-5343.

John Fleming has worked at the City of London for four years. He has a B.A. (Honours) in Urban Development from the University of Western Ontario and an M.Sc. in Planning from the University of

Toronto. John has experience in both the public and private sectors, and is a member of the Institute.

Big Box Retailing and the OMB

by Nancy Adler

In Thunder Bay they call themselves a wholesale store. At another place they call themselves a warehouse store. They obtained a building permit in Barrie as a retail store. And in Markham they tried to establish themselves as a commercial club. This is how big box retailers have succeeded in getting into the commercial planning framework in Ontario. How has the Ontario Municipal Board reacted to the new phenomenon? Do recent OMB decisions mean that the Board has taken

itself out of commercial planning?

The Board has said it is not going to restrict the operations of large-format retailing because of possible impacts on traditional stores. The apportionment of market share and the regulation of commerce are not objectives of the Planning Act and are not within the Board's jurisdiction. As stated in the recent Brampton Costco/Price Club OMB hearing, the Board takes the view that "the grocery store leviathans" should be permitted "to duke it out in the market place. Presumably, whatever results from the process will represent good commercial planning and will be in the public interest."

The practice of the Board has been to consider two categories of impact that warrant its intervention. The first is a prospect that the approval of a large commercial

development will result in blight caused by what market analysts call "over storing" which can lead to a reduction in service or the closure of stores in existing commercial centres. This issue can be traced back to the early "store wars" hearings where the concern was that suburban centres would starve the traditional downtown of commerce, causing large-scale store closures and block-by-block decay of the historic core. More recently, the over-storing issue has been interpreted by some to mean that any existing commercial facilities – even those in fairly new suburban areas – will be abandoned, allowed to deteriorate, or be transformed into bingo halls, flea markets or video arcades.

The second reason for intervention is the potential threat to the level of service enjoyed by the public as offered by existing and planned shopping facilities. It has become accepted practice – and enshrined in official plan policies as the "planned commercial structure" – to protect a certain level of service and to ensure a convenient distribution of facilities throughout a community. On the other hand, protection against "over storing" must be weighed against the potential benefits to the consumer of lower prices and enhanced service from the introduction of new competitors or new ways of doing business. Commercial structure cannot be so static as to prevent commercial competition or inhibit retail innovation. The Board's practice is not to restrict competition between different types of operations unless there is some broader public interest at stake.

Before the decisions in Brampton and Etobicoke, the Board had developed principles governing the way it approached commercial planning issues and the acceptance of market evidence in resolving those issues. Formerly, the onus of proving market need with acceptable impact rested squarely on the proponent of the development. And that impact would be considered in relation to the planned function of both existing and planned facilities.

The recent Brampton and Etobicoke retail warehouse cases have been criticized because the onus of proving adverse impact has shifted from the proponent to the objectors; in this way, concern over com-

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munity structure and protection of the planned commercial hierarchy has shifted in towards encouragement of commercial development. Before the Brampton decision, the Board proceeded on the premise that it was up to the proponent to demonstrate a need for the proposal. According to some observers, the Brampton decision appears to have placed the onus on the objectors to demonstrate that there is no need.

Has the Board established a new standard of proof on the issue of impact? Previously the Board drew inferences from market evidence about the risk of unacceptable impact. In the Brampton and Etobicoke decisions, the Board indicated that objectors must show that there is no probability of store closures occurring solely as a result of the opening of the proposed facility; in addition, the Board required evidence of actual closures occurring in other jurisdictions caused solely by the kind of commercial competition being proposed.

On the other hand, the Brampton and Etobicoke decisions clarify the Board's long held position that market evidence should be more focused. The Board still expects proponents to produce market evidence to address whether or not store closures are likely, to demonstrate how an adequate level of service will be maintained for the benefit of the public and to prove that blight will not occur. These items directly or indirectly relate to "planned function."

What has changed is that the Board is no longer willing to speculate on potential impact. Market studies have to deal with real numbers and operators of new retail formats who seek to have planning approval should be prepared to disclose

detailed financial information. Likewise, the Board also expects objectors to be frank and to provide actual numbers for any store that they say is going to close.

Speculation about store closure is not acceptable.

Costs are being awarded against objectors who are not prepared for full disclosure, and the sums are not insignificant.

Basically, there are two things the Board will be looking for when evaluating a new proposal. It will consider intervening if the project will result in blight due to closure of existing stores and if the project will cause store closures that will lessen the level of service available to the public. The Board is saying quite clearly that store closures per se don't matter. What matters are closures that leave the public without conveniently located shopping facilities and mass closures that result in blight.

The challenge is to find a balance between the value to the community as a whole in protecting shopping centres versus the public interest in maximizing opportunities for diversity, choice and price that result from market competition.




Is the OMB removing itself from retail planning?

Nancy Adler provides editorial assistance to the Journal on a regular basis. She is a planner with Stikeman, Elliott in Toronto, concentrating on the preparation of cases before the Ontario Municipal Board. This article is based on OMB decisions in Brampton and Etobicoke as well as the transcript of a recent seminar hosted by the Municipal Section of the Ontario Bar Association.

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Rules of the Road in Southern China

by David Kriger

We get into a taxi at the station concourse. We go no more than 20 metres when we screech to a stop, and the driver runs out of the car, leaving the meter running. Five minutes later he is back, and we are on our way. No explanation or apologies for the interruption. It dawns on us that the driver was looking for the men's room. (We paid the full fare. His turf; his rules.)

This is my introduction to southern China, the world's fastest-growing region. The pace is frenetic. The entire region seems to be one vast construction site. Roads, expressways, office towers, apartments, factories and water works are being built everywhere. What were remote country villages only a few years ago are now thriving manufacturing centres. New suburbs the size of Markham or Kingston are being built from scratch. Economic growth rates are two to three times those of Toronto at the height of the 1980s boom.

My lasting impression is of constant motion amid clouds of construction dust. We drive by a large, open-air bus terminal, which is a main transfer point between local and regional bus services. We move through the streets as part of a veritable army of taxis, all painted the same colour. Nearby, an intercity passenger train gathers speed – at 20 cars, this is a length rarely

seen in Canada anymore. The streets are full of trucks, many bearing produce and other agricultural products. There are separate, fenced-off bicycle lanes on the main boulevards. Private cars – ownership of which is allowed in this region – bear witness to the phenomenal economic growth in this part of the world. At lunchtime,

They know what they want, and they can see the future evolving in their terms. We in Canada have much to offer and much to gain (not the least of which is helping to shape a unique society), but we ignore this – the second side of the story – at our peril.

the sidewalks are full of people.

I have lunch with the director of transport planning of a city of one million (and growing rapidly). My colleague has a doctorate from one of the top universities in China. He is keenly interested in how we have addressed public transport needs in Canada. His city relies on articulated buses operating in mixed traffic for public transport, but clearly a higher-capacity system –

such as light or heavy rail, or a busway – is warranted. As elsewhere in China, much of the major public infrastructure will be built by private interests, in a BOT partnership with the Chinese government, which owns all land. My colleague understands the urgent need for this infrastructure, but his instincts tell him that coordinating plans are needed to put it all together.

Although commercial opportunities for Canadian planners are tremendous, this is only part of the story. The taxi driver and my fellow transport planner represent two sides to China's economic boom: the former, the man on the street who sees the phenomenal growth around him and wants to be carried with it to prosperity; the latter, a highly trained professional who also sees what is happening around him but seeks to harness it for the broader need of the community. Although they express it in different ways, both are confident of the future. They know what they want, and they can see the future evolving in their terms. We in Canada have much to offer and much to gain (not the least of which is helping to shape a unique society), but we ignore this – the second side of the story – at our peril.

David Kriger is responsible for Delcan's national and international practice in travel demand forecasting.

He is the Journal's contributing editor on Transportation.

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he role of planners and planning continues to change, responding both to prods from outside the profession and soul-searching from within. At the tag-end of the 20th century, it is difficult to separate this search from the more universal desire for a more effective, accountable and affordable model of governance.

A timely initiative, therefore, is the inclusion in Bill 163 of a statement of purpose for the act that commits to "sustainable economic development." Planners working in both the public and private sectors should welcome this innovation. This is a clear signal that protecting and promoting the viability of the province's economy is everyone's business. Economic development and planning are not just complementary: they are inseparable.

What does this have to do with the quest for more rational governance?

As 1994 drew to a close, the federal Minister of Transport signed a conditional letter of intent to formally initiate negotiations for the transfer of Pearson International Airport to the newly formed Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA). The mandate of the GTAA is to provide "efficient, community-based management" of a key public asset which is recognized as a gateway to Canada and an economic powerhouse encompassing jobs, exports and tourism. A central purpose of this new authority is to promote regional economic development, backed with a mandate to plan its strategies for the benefit of the region as a whole.

To launch the GTAA required the cooperation of five regional governments, each of which nominates representatives to the board of the GTAA. Where formal planning initiatives might bog down in jurisdictional squabbles, a vision focused on the potential benefits of regional economic development may well flourish, fuelled by enlightened self-interest and the promise of mutual benefit. Getting the GTAA deal to the point of signature



Mike Manett

Planning, economic development and new models of governance

required the tireless efforts and support of senior bureaucrats in the regions and local municipalities, key provincial ministries (such as Transportation) and the federal government. Many of these individuals are planners, who, to their credit, were willing to take a risk. If the new authority indeed meets the tests of effectiveness, accountability and affordability, there is no reason why a pragmatic blend of planning and economic development cannot be applied elsewhere in Ontario or directed to other sectors of the economy.

♦♦♦♦

To ensure that the Journal is in a position to report on economic development issues, we are pleased to announce the appointment of Michael Manett to coordinate articles on this important aspect of professional practice. As a planning consultant working closely with chambers of commerce and economic developers, Manett sees first hand the changing face of planning and economic development.

In the course of 1995, the Journal will have articles about initiatives being taken in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ottawa-Carleton and Metro Toronto, to mention a few examples. Contact Michael Manett through the OPPI office or at (905) 889-1564 if you know of a story that should be told.

Glenn Miller, Editor

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POSITIVE ABOUT PLANNING SAYS SEWELL

It's always interesting to see what others think of one's book, so I approached Bill Fitzpatrick's review of "Houses and Homes" with some eagerness.

I was disappointed Mr Fitzpatrick hadn't read the whole book. He says there is little in the book on policy priorities, yet that's exactly what the last chapter is all about.

To give the reader a hint of my intentions, I even entitled the chapter "Toward a Reform Agenda" and made several dozen recommendations. How did he miss it?

And to say I'm not positive about planning is to miss the point. I sing the praises of the planning that encouraged the private sector to build Fairview Slopes in Vancouver or GROW homes in Montreal. I'm certainly against bad planning, of which we've seen plenty in the last few

decades – but given the debate in the pages of this Journal about the responsibilities planners should bear for poorly planned cities, it's hardly something I'm ready to apologize for at this point in my life.

But maybe I'll repent in the opening pages of my next book, and I'll get a glowing review.

John Sewell

Editor's note: The Journal expects to feature an interview with John Sewell regarding his Regional Sourcing initiative in an upcoming economic development column.

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SEEKING A GLOBALIZED EDUCATION? DON'T RELY ON OPPI FOR HELP!

In light of the issues of globalization and its impact on planning, Dr. Afshar explained in a recent Journal article that the "the profession and planning students need a more global perspective." Unfortunately, OPPI does not support this claim.

As a current postgraduate student at the University of Leeds (U.K.), I have found that OPPI policies serve more as a constraint than an encouragement to get a "worldly" education.

First, since I am not registered at a recognized Ontario planning school, I was ineligible for the OPPI graduate student scholarship. Should OPPI not be supporting endeavours outside Ontario? How equitable is this policy?

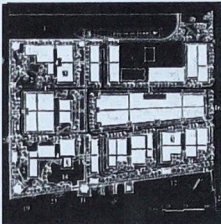
Second, OPPI policy does not allow direct mailings or announcements during my stay outside Ontario. Lack of information clearly does not support a global educational perspective.

We are in a situation where issues have expanded outside geographic boundaries, yet our professional body has failed to keep pace with this changing climate. Can OPPI foster effective planning when there are inherent institutional constraints towards developing a global perspective?

Mario M. Bozzo
Institute for Transport Studies,
University of Leeds

Editor's note: Notwithstanding the above, Mr Bozzo will be contributing articles to the Journal on transport issues during 1995.

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BILL 163 AMENDMENTS RESULT OF EFFECTIVE LOBBYING BY OACA

Your editorial (Small is beautiful to supporters of intensification – Sept/October) caught my attention, specifically the comments of the loss of minor variance appeals to the OMB. You seem unaware that others also took a strong position against this loss. As President of the Ontario Association of Committees of Adjustment and Consent Authorities (OACA), I think the following information would benefit your readers.

The OACA made several presentations to the provincial government on this issue and other concerns related to the minor variance and severance process.

The combined effort of all the concerned stakeholders did have a positive effect on the proposed legislation. Minor variances will remain appealable to the OMB.

The OACA is a provincial volunteer organization formed in 1973. The OACA works on behalf of committees of adjust-

ment, land division committees, consent authorities, secretary-treasurers and other interested groups working to promote the uniform interpretation of legislation affecting our members. Our membership consists of elected officials, staff and others involved in this specialized area of land use planning. There are over 600 active members.

The OACA produces six newsletters, a March training seminar, a June conference, and has recently developed a "Primer on Planning" course. With the appointment of new committees across Ontario in the next few months, it is hoped that this program will become an introduction to planning for the citizen members and others who need to know more about planning.

Cathlyn Kaufman, President, OACA

Editor's note: Information about OACA is on file at the OPPI office. Cathlyn Kaufman is a provisional member of OPPI in the Eastern District. Contact her at (613) 748-4261, or Linda Gavey, Secretary-Treasurer of OACA, at (905) 772-3324.

EXAMINATIONS REVEAL TRUE STRENGTHS

I have been an examiner for the oral exam ("C") since the practice was initiated. I think it is an important step in the process of allowing new members. I have learned a lot by being involved in this process. Some of what I have learned, however, is not comforting.

I have found that some of the strongest candidates have come from outside the traditional land use design stream. They tend to know more about what planning really is. Even some of my fellow examiners are weak on the difference between Planning Process and the Development Approval Process.

Tom Slomke

Editor's note. An opinion piece on this subject written by Tom Slomke will appear in an upcoming issue.

PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

Opportunities for innovation restricted by legislation

(Part two of a series.)

by Bill Gastmeier and Jeff J. Long

Noise is of particular concern to the Ministry of Environment and Energy (MOEE) when reviewing planning applications, especially where industrial facilities and "sensitive" land uses such as residential development may be in close proximity.

In this article we look at a residential plan of subdivision located near a grain-drying facility to show how existing MOEE Guidelines were applied and noise mitigation measures were implemented. We also suggest improvements to the guidelines.

In July 1992, the MOEE introduced its "Guideline on Separation Distance Between Industrial Facilities and Sensitive Land Uses" as its interim position to guide the review of documents and applications related to land use planning. The guideline is intended to minimize the exposure of sensitive land uses to potential adverse affects associated with industrial facilities, such as noise. It accomplishes this through the use of separation distances. The guideline is applied on a case-by-case basis, and separation distances are determined by the

type of industrial facility, classified as light, medium or heavy.



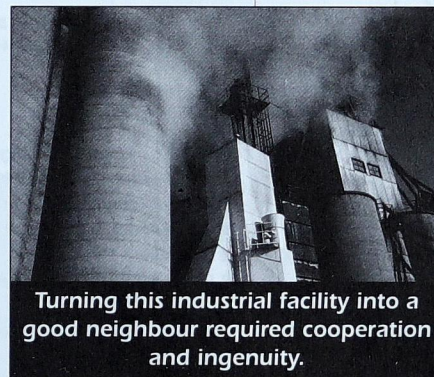
The recommended separation distances in the guideline are arbitrary. The guideline permits noise assessment in order to determine appropriate separation distances on a site-specific basis only if the proposed development is in a "Transitional Urban Area." These are defined as areas in which an existing designated land use is being phased out to be replaced by another incompatible land use, as part of a large-scale land use change initiated by a municipality.

A residential subdivision proposed by Shellards Place

Limited in southwest Brantford was classified by MOEE as a Transitional Urban Area. The proposal required an official plan amendment to redesignate the property from General Industrial to Residential. Adjacent lands to the south and west had originally been designated General Industrial, and had been redesignated residential by comprehensive amendments to the city's Official Plan. The Shellards

Place property was the only remaining industrially designated vacant parcel in the area. Industrial development bordered the property to the north and east.

The MOEE allowed the proponents to prepare engineering studies to determine if separation distances less than those recommended would be appropriate. Noise and



Turning this industrial facility into a good neighbour required cooperation and ingenuity.

air emission assessments were carried out to determine potential impacts from adjacent industry. This exercise depended on the cooperation of the industries, as on-site tests and inspections of their facilities were required. Industry representatives were also invited to participate in the subdivision design process.

The studies found that two adjacent industries were producing noise emissions in excess of MOEE limits. While noise from one of the facilities could be mitigated through construction of noise berms or walls on the property owned by Shellards Place, the other site, owned by Parrish & Heimbecker Ltd., required mitigation at source.

Parrish & Heimbecker Limited have operated a grain storage and drying opera-

tion on Highway 24 in Brantford for many years. The noise assessment determined that the grain dryer and silo aerator fans produced excessive levels of noise over the entire Shellards Place property. Unless the noise could be mitigated at source, much of the property could not be developed, because large buffers would be required in accordance with the guideline.

In cooperation with Parrish & Heimbecker, the developer agreed to purchase and install a new grain dryer (which was significantly less noisy than its predecessor) and fan silencers. Not only did these mitigation measures reduce the noise levels, but the new dryer was more energy efficient.

Based on its review of the noise assessment, the MOEE agreed that the

separation distance between industry and residential lots in the plan of subdivision could be significantly reduced from that required by the guideline. The installed mitigation techniques required a Certificate of Approval from the MOEE and a final acoustical audit to verify their effectiveness. These requirements were dealt with through the inclusion of special conditions in the subdivision agreement with the City of Brantford.

This case shows how a diverse group of stakeholders can work together to resolve noise-related issues. The MOEE guideline, however, is restrictive from a land use planning perspective in two ways:

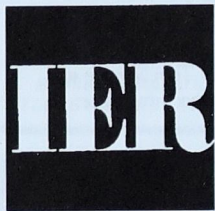
- Under the current guideline, the only opportunity to undertake site-specific studies is when the "Transitional Urban Area" conditions apply. Otherwise, standard minimum separation distances apply.

- The guideline is best suited to "green-field" situations; however, the guideline could prove overly restrictive and hinder opportunities for infill or redevelopment in inner-city areas where mixed uses predominate. Unless the area is officially "in transition," the minimum separation distance must be maintained. This can severely limit the development potential of a property, frustrating the infill and density objectives encouraged by the province for urban areas.

With the passing of Bill 163 and the new Comprehensive Set of Policy Statements, MOEE staff are preparing a new guideline. The new draft guideline is not available for review and is not likely to be available until presented in its final form.

Bill Gastmeier, M.A.Sc., P.Eng. is a principal of HGC Engineering, based in Mississauga. Jeff Long, B.E.S., M.C.I.P., is a senior planner with MacNaughton Hermsen Britton Clarkson Planning Ltd., located in Waterloo.

An article reviewing the guidelines of the railways and other agencies in relation to environmental noise, vibration and land use planning will appear in an upcoming issue.



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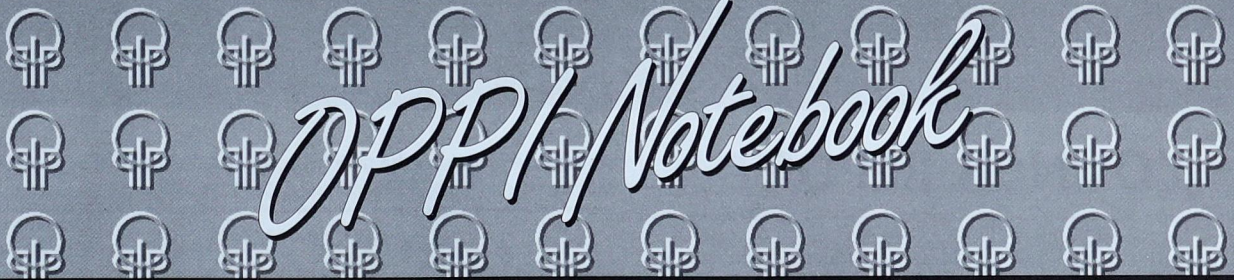
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A BI-MONTHLY ROUNDUP OF OPPI COUNCIL NEWS AND ACTION

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PRIVATE BILL RECEIVES ROYAL ASSENT



Philip Wong

It's official! On December 9, 1994 Bill Pr 129 – An Act respecting the Ontario Professional Planners Institute – received Royal Assent and came into force. This marked a significant event for our profession in Ontario. Following the other four provinces (Saskatchewan, 1963; Quebec, 1973; B.C. and Alberta, 1989), Ontario became the fifth province to provide statutory recognition of professional planners. The OPPI Act grants full and retired members of OPPI the right to use the designations "Registered Professional Planner" and "R.P.P." and enables OPPI to govern the rights and responsibilities of its members.

What started out as a directive from our membership to pursue provincial recognition at the 1989 AGM has finally been accomplished. I am sure those of you who have followed the progress of this initiative will not forget the many obstacles which had to be overcome. During the lowest point of the bill's development, lobbying efforts by the membership to MPPs helped revive the bill. Many have worked tirelessly on the private bill. I would like to recognize and

thank the following for their efforts: past presidents Barbara Dembek, Joe Sniezek and Tony Usher; other members of the Private Bill Committee (who served at different times) George Rich, Mark Dorfman and Gerry Carrothers; legal counsels Ian James Lord and Barnet Kussner; Deputy Minister Stien Lal; and Meredith Beresford from the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. I would also like to express OPPI's gratitude to Tony Martin, MPP from Sault Ste. Marie, who sponsored the private bill in the legislature. The efforts of staff in the OPPI office who kept abreast of the bill's passage are also recognized.

Some members were worried that the bill would unjustifiably discriminate against many long-established planning professionals. In this regard, Council will consult with the concerned individuals to ensure that their concerns are understood. I wish to point out the provision in the Act regarding the right to practice: "Section 9 (5) of this Act does not affect or interfere with the right of any person who is not a full member or a retired member of the Institute to describe himself or herself as a planner or a professional planner or to practice as a planner or a professional planner or to work in the field of planning."

An information package on the Act and other details on registration certificates will be forwarded to members in January. From now on, full and retired members, please remember to include the initials R.P.P. in your correspondence.

Philip Wong, MCIP, RPP
President

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COUNCIL REPORT

by Susan Smith, Executive Director

Here are the highlights of the issues and initiatives dealt with by Council at its meeting on November 17, 1994.

1995 BUDGET SET

Council approved a budget for the 1995 fiscal year. The budget includes funding to implement a number of initiatives of the Employment Issues Task Force (see separate article), the development of a strategic plan for the Institute, sponsorship of the 1995 C.A.P.S. conference, increased activity in the development of public policy, and a membership outreach program.

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE

Recognizing the financial challenges faced by unemployed and student members, Council approved policies reserving a limited number of spaces in professional development programs at substantially reduced registration rates. The special rates will be advertised in the promotional material for each program, and spaces will be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis.

SALARY SURVEY DEFERRED

Council reversed an earlier decision to produce a salary survey in 1995. The lack of movement in salary levels, particularly in the pub-

lic sector, was cited as the main reason for the reversal. The survey may be produced in 1996, pending further review.

APPOINTMENTS

Harold Madi was appointed to the Toronto Conference Committee as chair of the Student Program Subcommittee. Anthony Stoka, Eastern District, was appointed examiner for Exam B.

Council appointed the following committee chairs for the 1994-95 Council term:

- Bylaw Review Working Group - Joe Sniezek
- Code of Conduct Working Group - Mark Seasons
- Employment Issues Task Force - Robert Maddocks
- Membership Outreach Committee - Kim Warburton
- Nominating Committee - Jeff Celentano
- Private Bill Working Group - Philip Wong
- Private Sector Advisory Committee - Daphne Wretham
- Professional Development Committee - Robert Maddocks
- Public Policy Committee - Ron Shishido
- Student Liaison Coordinator - Nancy Rutherford

The terms of the current committees were extended to Council's February 1995 meeting, at which time committee chairs will bring forward recommendations for appointments for Council approval.

1996 CONFERENCE PLANNING UNDER WAY

OPPI's 1996 conference will be held from August 11-14, 1996, in Sudbury. Council appointed the following members to the Conference Organizing Committee: Sue Heffernan, Donald McCullough, Dan Napier, Carolyn Hart, Celia Teale, Joe Sniezek, Maury O'Neill, Mark Simeoni, Julie Hashimoto-Ingo and Steve Jacques. In addition to these members, many planners in the Northern District are part of the network that is being put together to bring you a great Northern experience in '96!

THE CHEQUE IS IN THE MAIL!

1995 invoices were mailed in December (except those for students). GST has been added to OPPI's fee, which enables the Institute to claim input tax credits on our expenses. Fees are due April 1.

INVITATION TO ATTEND COUNCIL

OPPI members are invited to learn more about their Institute by attending a Council meeting. In 1995, Council will meet in Toronto on April 7, June 23 and September 15. Please contact Susan Smith for more information.

Miller O'Dell

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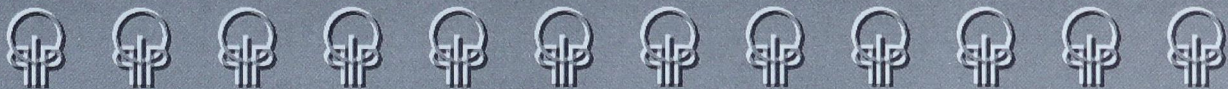
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STATEMENT OF PRACTICE ADVICE

Prepared by the Discipline Committee

This statement of practice advice has been prepared at the request of Council, following a complaint filed with the Discipline Committee concerning a member's employment circumstances defined by the Professional Code of conduct.

APPLICABLE SECTION OF THE CODE

Section 2.2.1 of the OPPI Professional Code of Conduct states: "the member shall maintain a professional and ethical relationship with the client or employer and specifically, shall, in matters where the public interest may be adversely affected, inform all parties and give public disclosure of the consequences, together with the member's professional recommendation."

NATURE OF INDEPENDENT PLANNING OPINIONS

The opinion of a planner (that is, a member of the Institute) is based on a combination of research, analysis, and experience. It should be possible to test the objectivity of the opinion and trace its independent origin. The member must be able to show the process by which the opinion was formulated, the rationale for the opinion, and the background material upon which it was based. However, the experience of the member can vary widely, and depth of experience is an element in

the evaluation of the independence and objectivity of the opinion.

VARIATIONS IN EMPLOYMENT

The type of employment in which a member is involved may also affect the quality of independent planning opinion. A member may be employed by an organization where an opinion might be based upon "in-camera" meetings, confidential information or restrictive decision making practices (i.e., caucus, ministerial and/or Cabinet meetings). In these cases the independent planning opinion may be compromised by the nature of the member's employment and the information referred to and opinions provided. Members should ensure that the opinions given are traceable and based upon open and accessible information. The independent planning opinion must be open to testing or it may contravene the provisions of the Code of Professional Conduct.

NEED FOR OBJECTIVITY

OPPI members are reminded that it is their responsibility to ensure that they are objective, and where possible, that they can be seen to be objective in their planning opinions, as intended by Section 2.2.1 of the Code; and further, that in order to accomplish this, they should ensure that when and where they are requested to render planning opinions on matters within their scope of experience and ability, such opinions are generally traceable from research and analysis and/or from their depth of professional experience, if someone wishes to test or challenge that opinion.

EMPLOYMENT ISSUES TASK FORCE REPORT

During the 1993 OPPI AGM, a resolution was passed requiring Council to organize a task force to determine the extent to which the Institute should be

involved in an individual member's dispute with his or her employer.

It is the opinion of Council, given the current economic times, combined with the increasing maturity of our Institute, that it would be a disservice to our members not to get involved. However, it was also the unanimous opinion of the task force that it would be inappropriate for OPPI to contribute any resources, financial or otherwise, to an

individual member who is already engaged in litigation. It was felt that involvement at this stage in the process was probably too little, too late.

Council has decided to adopt the principal recommendation of the task force report, initiating a four-tiered program: Education - developing professional seminars and workshop sessions dealing with employment issues; Mentor Program - sponsoring a buddy system between members of similar backgrounds, experience and levels of responsibility; Mediation Services - providing trained OPPI members to act as mediators in specific circumstances; and Professional Advocacy - offering specialized intervention by the Institute when the profession of planning or where OPPI's credibility is called into question.

The development of these programs is under way. Each member over the next few months will be solicited for assistance. Please give serious consideration to participating in the OPPI Mentor Program or making any other contribution to these programs.

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Robert Maddox, Chair



MEET THE COUNCIL



PHILIP WONG, PRESIDENT

Philip has practised planning in Ontario since 1975. He worked for Thunder Bay City for 14 years before joining Toronto-based First Professional Management Inc. in May 1994, as Vice-President, Planning and Development. A member of CIP since 1977, Philip previously served as Northern District Representative. He rejoined Council as President-Elect in 1993, and will serve as President until 1996.

KIM WARBURTON, VICE PRESIDENT (MEMBERSHIP) AND REGISTRAR

Kim has worked with several provincial ministries, and in consulting. She is currently Director of Public Affairs at Mediacom. A full member since 1984, Kim has been a member of the Central District Program Committee and Board of Management. Kim joined Council as VP (Membership) and Registrar in 1992.

VALERIE CRANMER, SECRETARY

Valerie is Director of Strategic Planning for Durham Region and is starting her second term on Council as Secretary. Her priorities for her term include membership services, continuing professional development and public policy.

ROBERT MADDOCKS, TREASURER

Bob has been with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs since 1987, and recently moved to the Kingston office. Bob was first elected to Council as the Northern District Representative in 1989, has served as Treasurer since 1990 and is chair of the Employment Issues Task Force and Professional Development Committee.

PATRICK G. DÉOUX, REPRESENTATIVE-AT-LARGE

Patrick has 17 years of experience working for the public and private sectors in both Quebec and Ontario.

A McGill graduate, he is a senior planner with Delcan Corporation in their Ottawa office. Patrick has been a member of CIP since 1983, and has been active on many of the Eastern District's committees, serving as the vice-chair of the Eastern District Board of Management and co-chair of the 1994 OPPI Conference held in Kingston.

JOSEPH SНИЕZEK, NATIONAL REPRESENTATIVE

Joe is the OPPI representative on CIP Council, and has been an active member of OPPI (and its predecessors) for over 10 years, including a term as OPPI President. Currently employed with the city of Sault Ste. Marie, he will use his work experience of 23 years as a planner and his experience as an active OPPI member to represent the views of the OPPI members to CIP.

STEVE JACQUES, NORTHERN DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE

Steve is a graduate of the University of Toronto, Master of Science in Planning (1989), and has been a full member of OPPI since 1992. He has been involved in planning in northern Ontario for over seven years in the private and public sector. Currently, Steve is employed with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation as Market Analyst for north-eastern Ontario, and is a part-time professor in the geography department at Laurentian University.

BRUCE CURTIS, SOUTHWEST DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE

Bruce has been a land use planner for the past 11 years, and is employed by the City of London Planning Department. An active member since 1985, Bruce has participated in many activities and capacities at the district, provincial and national levels, including chairing the 1992 CIP/OPPI Planning Conference in London. First elected to Council in 1991, he is in his second term on Council.

NANCY RUTHERFORD, CENTRAL DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE

Before joining the Region of Durham Planning Department in December, 1994, Nancy worked in provincial and municipal planning, having graduated from Ryerson in 1988. A full member since 1991, she served on the Peterborough and Area Planners Group Steering Committee and the Central District Board of Management and was elected to Council in 1993.

RON SHISHIDO, CENTRAL DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE

Since joining M.M. Dillon Limited in 1981, Ron has practised land use, policy, environmental and land development planning as well as project planning and development for public and private sector clients. Ron joined the Institute in 1981. He was elected to Council in 1993, and serves as chair of the Public Policy Committee.

DAPHNE WRETHAM, EASTERN DISTRICT REPRESENTATIVE

Since 1971, Daphne has been responsible for a wide variety of land use planning projects for municipal and private clients for J.L. Richards & Associates Ltd. She has been a full member of CIP since 1974 and was actively involved with the Eastern Ontario Chapter of CIP in the 1970s. She was elected to Council in 1993.

DAVID MORTON, STUDENT DELEGATE

David is a student member of OPPI and joined Council in 1994. The Student Delegate informs Council about student concerns, and encourages planning students to pursue OPPI membership. David is also a national student representative to the American Planning Association. He is in his final year of the M.Sc.Pl. program (environmental planning specialization) at the University of Toronto.



Philip Wong



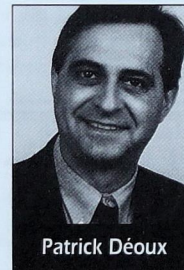
Kim Warburton



Valerie Cranmer



Robert Maddocks



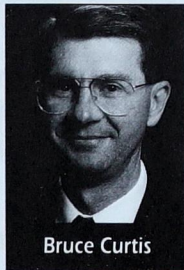
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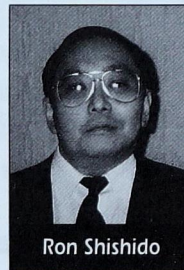
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Ron Shishido



Daphne Wretham



David Morton



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 Frances E. De Souza.....CD.....Reg. Mun. of Peel
 Gary A. Gregoris.....CD.....Walker, Nott, Dragicevic Assoc. Ltd.
 Sylvie Grenier.....ED.....Reg. Mun. of Ottawa-Carleton
 Vanessa D. Grupe.....CD.....Reg. Mun. of Hamilton-Wentworth
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WE REGRET TO ANNOUNCE THE DEATH OF THREE MEMBERS.

Peter G. McInnis earned his B.A. in geography from the University of Western Ontario in 1967. Two years later, he graduated from the University of Waterloo with an M.A. in urban and regional planning. He was elected as a member of the Town Planning Institute in 1973. At the time of his death he was President of the McInnis Group.

Liaquat M. Siddiqui earned his B.Sc. from Iowa State University in 1964 and, in 1971, and graduated from McGill University with a Masters in Architecture. Liaquat was elected to the Town Planning Institute in 1971. At the time of his death he was President of City Planning and Land Development Consultants Inc.

Ansel Garfin, who had been a member of the Institute since 1963, retired in 1991. Ansel went to high school in Edmonton, and later earned a B.Sc. in Civil Engineering from the University of Alberta. In 1953, he completed an M.S. in Planning and Housing at Columbia University. We extend our deepest sympathies to the families of these members.

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DISTRICTS



CONFERENCE SESSION PROPOSALS

by Rob Dowler

The work of reading through and judging all the proposals for conference sessions has been fascinating, if a little overwhelming. We received more than 600 proposals, five times the number of conference slots, in an impressive range of ideas and topics.

As of the middle of December, letters had been mailed out to those who sent us proposals. Those whose proposals were accepted received a letter asking for a description of the session for our preliminary program and information about speakers for the final program.

Unsuccessful proposals will be kept on file for research purposes. If you have questions, please call Renee Kaiser, conference manager, at (312) 955-9100, or Rob Dowler at (416) 585-4243.

CONFERENCE PROGRAM

The program is taking shape and promises to be both worthwhile and enjoyable. Look for registration information in January. Social events have been planned for the Eaton Centre, the Hockey Hall of Fame and the CN Tower. Maurice Strong has confirmed that he will be one of our keynote speakers; the committee is still considering a number of interesting possibilities for a second keynote speaker.

There may also be some surprises in the wide array of mobile workshops, even for those who have lived in the area all their

lives: you'll have a chance to explore ghost towns, movie back lots, old and new industrial sites, golf courses, canals, rural streetscapes, and artists' communities. The conference sessions are equally varied: electronic communities and cyber-cities, sustainable development, regenerating natural landscapes, accessory apartments, planning and native people, bike trails, retrofitting the suburbs, social equity and social activism, GIS wars, LRTs, ADR, TOM... not to mention personal development courses on time management, career change, and de Bono's "six thinking hats."

HUMAN SCALE DISCUSSION ANYTHING BUT COMPACT

The GTA program committee sponsored a debate on the inter-related issues of "what is transit friendly, what is human scale?" in late November. More than 100 members turned out to hear transportation activist Joell Vanderwagen and four panelists wrestle with the problem of how best to bring concepts such as intensification and transit-friendly design into the mainstream. Following a lengthy slide show backed up with anecdotal commentary by Joell Vanderwagen, the panelists took advantage of the remaining time to add their own views.

Bruce McCuaig, speaking on behalf of the Office of the Greater Toronto Area, discussed some of the projects nearing completion that he hopes will shed light on the "elusive search for density." These include studies of the intensification potential in the 407 corridor and Brampton Gateway, as well as enquiries into public opinion regarding concepts such as density and intensification.

Region of York planning commissioner

John Livey cautioned against relying on simplistic, ubiquitous solutions. He urged the OGTA to build on work already done such as the transit-supportive guidelines jointly published by MMA and MTO. Livey also questioned whether we are following through on opportunities, citing an example of a provincial requirement for a 45 m setback on a street being promoted as an area where pedestrian scale should dominate.

Angela Iannuzziello, PEng., a principal with Entra Consultants Ltd. urged planners to work with municipal departments responsible for setting standards for operations to challenge traditional assumptions. The design of development is the key to reversing trends on the dominance of cars in suburban and exurban settings. Regional governments can play an important role in forcing neighbouring jurisdictions to jointly create road systems that will support transit service.

Architect Ken Greenberg, a principal with Berridge Lewinberg Greenberg Ltd. made an articulate plea for considering built form as a key component in the overall "urban project." The traditional emphasis on separating incompatible components is not always productive. Greenberg cited the example of Vancouver, where the latest extensions of Skytrain are being carried out at-grade. "Friction is good," he commented to an appreciative audience.

In leading the discussions about density, planners and other urban development professionals are also often guilty of selecting inappropriate measures for the task at hand. The spectrum of opportunities ranges from densities - where discussions about the number of people and jobs per square kilometre might be in order - to measures more appropriate to designing individual build-

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ings, such as FSIs. Selecting the right words and terminology is key to having a rational debate, Greenberg suggested.

By the time that Bohdan Wynnycky was forced to wind up the proceedings, everyone agreed that more such debates should be held. If you are interested in helping to organize program events in the GTA, call Bohdan at (416) 440-3733.

CITY OF SCARBOROUGH BASKS IN WARM GLOW OF APPRECIATION

It's not often that municipalities get kudos from the media or the public for their work, so "good news stories" deserve recognition. Raphael Sussman, manager of GIS applications in the city of Scarborough's Works and Environment Group, and his staff have developed a counter-top PC User-Defined Mapping Application that gives the public ready access to a wide variety of data. Response from the media and the public has been enthusiastic. An article describing this innovation will appear in an upcoming issue.

OAA PRESIDENT URGES DIFFERENT ATTITUDE TO FOREIGN INVESTMENT

The Ontario Association of Land Economists held a dinner meeting at the Military Club in November. Guest speaker Ellis Kirkland, president of the OAA, passed on insights gained during travels in China, Mexico and eastern Europe on behalf of the OAA. She was critical of Canada's approach to economic development, suggesting that we are insecure about the effects of foreign ownership on our culture. Ms Kirkland cautioned that a "half-hearted" approach was unproductive and not likely to result in a share of global investment capital. This is evident in the construction and development fields where we have considerable expertise to promote.

Ms Kirkland also expressed concern about competitiveness among municipalities in the GTA. This is a negative approach that sends the wrong message. In contrast, we should be promoting our stable, safe environment. She praised initiatives such as those in China where development zones and enterprise areas have been successfully used to encourage investment.

The message presented to the Land Economists was timely, given the focus of the Economic Forum held at Metro Hall later that month. Speakers from the U.S. joined forces with local participants to outline initia-

tives for making the GTA more competitive. Central among these was the value in recognizing the larger GTA as the economic engine of Canada that has many attributes worth protecting. Rather than waste time worrying about jurisdictional issues that affect taxation imbalances and other key issues, the focus should be on determining the appropriate form of governance. Committees formed to develop ideas on specific areas will reconvene in the coming months to review progress on some of the concepts presented at the conference.

Bill Fitzpatrick, with files from Journal staff.

CHRISTMAS OPEN HOUSE HAD SPECIAL GUEST

The OPPI office was packed to the rafters before Christmas for six hours of merriment and good cheer. As news spread that the private bill was within hours of proclamation, the ghost of Thomas Adams dropped in to add his support. At least this is one explanation for the mysterious, unexplained and premature popping of champagne corks.

CENTRAL - SIMCOE-MUSKOKA SUBDISTRICT

In March 1995, the Simcoe-Muskoka planners will be holding an educational seminar on the Economical, Social, Political Impacts of Neo-Traditional Planning. The seminar will be held at the Sundial Motel in Orillia. The session is from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. Lunch will be provided.

After the seminar the Simcoe-Muskoka planners will be holding their annual general meeting to establish the 1995 education and social program. Volunteers are needed! Elect (or arm twist) one planner

to the Central District Board of Management to represent Simcoe-Muskoka. Anyone interested should contact David Parks, c/o The Township of Georgian Bay Planning Department RR#1 Port Severn Ontario L0K 1S0.

On November 4, 1994 the Simcoe-Muskoka planners and the Simcoe Muskoka Legal Association were joint hosts for a presentation from the Ontario Municipal Board on their new case management system. The Board was represented by the Board Chair and two other sitting members, a mediator, and a number of the Board staff. About 45 people attended what proved to be a most informative meeting, with the Board representatives suggesting that costs should be requested more often! Their new procedures indicate that they will be less open to last-minute adjournments, particularly when individuals say they have not had time to prepare or retain a lawyer. These and other matters discussed were most encouraging to hear.

David Parks



SUDBURY 1996 OPPI CONFERENCE

by Laurie Moulton

From August 11-14, 1996, you will have the chance to participate in something that's never happened before — the first OPPI Annual Conference to be hosted by the Northern District!

The 1996 Conference will be held in



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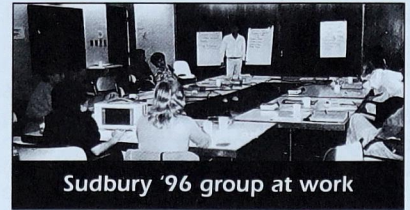
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Sudbury at the Sheraton Hotel. Why August 11 to 14? The 1994 Kingston Conference attracted 255 people during August and feedback indicated that the participants were happy to combine business with family

vacation time. August 11 to 14 in Sudbury will give opportunities to participate in several local events: the Fringe North Theatre Festival, the annual Blueberry Festival and the Perseid Meteor Shower Event at



Sudbury '96 group at work

Sudbury's Science North (for you non-astronomers, the Perseid Meteor Shower means the very best time of the year to observe hundreds of falling stars!).

Who's working on the conference? Besides our Northern District OPPI rep Steve Jacques and OPPI's Executive Director Susan Smith, we have an organizing team made up of 24 people (18 full and provisional members of OPPI and 6 non-OPPI participants). The team also includes a student member of OPPI, Julie Hashimoto-Ingo. Julie is a fourth-year student at Ryerson who lives in the Espanola area.

The majority of the organizing team members live in Sudbury, however, we also have seven members from Sault Ste. Marie, two from Parry Bay and other individuals from Parry Sound, Haileybury, and Wawa.

Some of the contact names you'll want to keep in mind are:

Chairperson: Sue Heffernan, Sudbury, (705) 560-0120

Programs Committee Chair: Carolyn Hart, Bruce Mines, (705) 785-3122

Publicity and Promotions Committee Chair: Celia Teale, Sudbury, (705) 560-9770

Corporate Sponsorships & Exhibits Committee Chair: Joe Sniezek, Sault Ste. Marie, (705) 759-5373

Treasurer: Dan Napier, Sudbury, (705) 674-4455

Secretary: Don McCullough, Sudbury, (705) 566-7883

Liaison Committee Chair: Maury O'Neill, Wawa, (705) 856-2244

On October 22, the Sudbury 1996 Organizing Committee held a "Themes Workshop". After much discussion, we chose the theme of "PLANNING ON THE ROCKS? CRISIS OR OPPORTUNITY." (Look for more on this in the next issue.)

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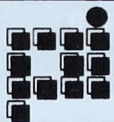
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STEVE SHAW APPOINTED AS CONSULTANT TO GTAA

In December, the federal minister of Transport signed a conditional letter of intent with the newly established Greater Toronto Airports Authority (GTAA) to formally initiate negotiations for the transfer of Pearson International Airport.

One of the first consultant appointments was that of **Steve Shaw** as Director of Strategic Planning. A transportation planner with extensive experience in infrastructure planning as a consultant, Shaw has been part of team involving Metro Toronto and four other regional governments who have been working with provincial and federal authorities to establish the GTAA during the past three years.

The GTAA is a not-for-profit public corporation with a mandate to lease and operate Pearson International and other airports in the region. In addition to promoting marketing of Pearson and efficient use of the airport's resources, the GTAA will be generating and participating in related economic development projects and initiatives. Its board of directors is made up of individuals nominated by the federal government and the cooperating regions (Metro Toronto, Durham, Peel, York and Halton).

NEW PRESIDENT OF ONTARIO ASSOCIATION, APPRAISAL INSTITUTE OF CANADA

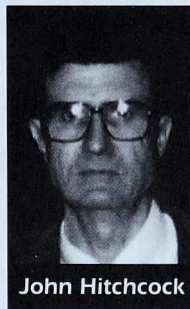
Ray Bower, AACI has been elected president of the Ontario Association, Appraisal Institute of Canada. The Ontario Association is the professional association for real estate appraisers in Ontario, and upholds the code of ethics and standards of professional practice of the AIC. Mr Bower is president of Ray Bower Appraisal Services in Windsor.

FORMER COLLEAGUES HAVE NEW AGENDAS

Beate Bowron and **John Hitchcock** both worked on the 1987 CIP conference committee (Other Voices). Both



Beate Bowron



John Hitchcock

have made significant changes recently.

Beate Bowron was appointed Acting Director of Site Plan and Zoning, City of Toronto Planning and Development Department last August, filling the vacancy left by Paula Dill. The move from economic development has its share of challenges, as Beate is responsible for new sign by-laws and studies investigating home-based occupations.

John Hitchcock retired from his position as a professor in the planning program at the University of Toronto at the end of 1994. John is the author of numerous papers and monographs. His recent paper on urban densities will be reviewed in an upcoming Journal. John's wife, **Pam Hitchcock**, a professor at the Ryerson School of Planning, also retired at the same time. Both Hitchcocks are looking forward to writing and travelling. John has promised to act as a roving correspondent for the Journal.

PEOPLE NEWS FROM EASTERN DISTRICT

There have been a number of changes and additions in the ranks of the OPPI Eastern District membership. **Sandra Candow**, formerly of Oliver Mangione & McCalla Associates, has joined developers Richcraft-Grilli and Urbandale Corporation. Her position with Oliver Mangione & McCalla, a consulting firm, has been filled by **Gregory Winters**, a Ryerson graduate.

Shortly after **Grant Lindsay** left the Township of Goulbourn for the City of Nepean, **Deborah Belfie**, the former Deputy Director of Planning of the Township, was promoted to Director of Planning. **Sally Switzer** occupies Deborah Belfie's vacant position.

Larry Spencer, a planner with the City of Ottawa, recently ventured out on his own, leaving the public sector behind. His new firm, **Spencer & Co.**, will focus on redevelopment issues facing the private sector and the impact of organizational changes for public sector clients. **Spencer & Co.** can be reached at (613) 730-2360 for more information.

The Eastern District has seen an influx of ex-GTA planners over the past eight months. During this period, **Steve Mennill**, **Michael Noonan** and **Karen Pianosi** all returned to the area after a spell in the GTA. **Karen Pianosi**, a recent addition to the Nepean Housing Corporation as General Manager, spent



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some time with the Region of Halton Planning Department. Shortly after my arrival in the office, Michael Noonan returned to Minto Developments Inc. as Vice President. For those of you outside of the Region of Durham, Michael Noonan

was the General Manager of the Region of Durham Non Profit Housing Authority. Lastly, Steve Mennill, is now working with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

Pierre Dubé will be leaving the Eastern

Ontario District and the National Capital Commission for a position with the World Health Organization in Paris.

Mary Jarvis

MANAGEMENT

Government customers are harder to satisfy

by John Farrow



As anyone who has reviewed the literature on customer service will realize, research has tended to focus on the private-sector customer. Ideas about how to serve government customers better have at best been poorly adapted from private sector models, even though government interacts with customers in ways that create different customer expectations and attitudes. This article explores three key differences:

THE CUSTOMER AS AN APPLICANT

Many of the situations in which the public deals with government concern an application for permission to do something, such as obtaining a building permit. Such situations highlight a number of problems in the applicant/regulator relationship that should be recognized.

- Customers feel vulnerable because they cannot control the outcome.
- Customers are uncertain about the process and don't know what is required.

- The desire of customers for a positive response creates fear of a rejection, and

- Customers question the process because they don't understand complex or arcane regulations.

The guidelines for government representatives responsible for service delivery in such circumstances should be as follows:

- Provide the applicant with a clear understanding of why the regulations exist, how they were created and how they are kept up-to-date.
- Ensure the application process is straightforward and easy to understand.
- Treat the applicant as a valued customer and deal with the application in a positive and personalized way, and be ready to problem-solve if the need arises.

THE CUSTOMER EXPECTS FULFILMENT OF A PROMISE

Even in a normal transaction between a service provider and customer in which the customer can weigh options with different attributes and prices, it is not always easy to achieve satisfaction. It is even harder with government services, because the customers feels that these have already been paid for through taxes, and service should be forthcoming. There is rarely middle ground between good and unsatisfactory: roads are always too crowded, buses too infrequent and school classes too large.

Paying in advance and the lack of alternatives in a monopoly situation makes customer satisfaction much harder to achieve, but possible solutions are as follows:

- Invite direct public participation in the budget process so that financial constraints and priorities are understood.
- Simplify tax collection and communicate the link between taxes and services to customers. This is important, because surveys show taxpayers are often willing to pay additional taxes if they are dedicated to a specific purpose but are highly skeptical about the benefit of taxes that flow into general revenue.
- Give customers the option of buying enhanced levels of service through user charges.

The price/value relationship is highly personal and is a topic on which individual attitudes vary from time to time. Putting decision-making power into the hands of the customer and then providing personal service is the best way to ensure consistent



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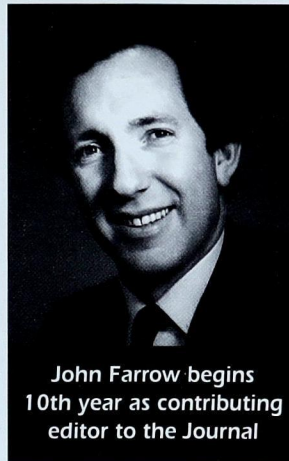
customer satisfaction in this type of transaction.

GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO CUSTOMER SATISFACTION IS NOT OBVIOUS

Research shows that achieving customer satisfaction has as much to do with the intangible aspects of service as it has with substance. It is therefore important for customers to believe that the organization is trying to serve them well. This message is communicated in many ways, from the attitude of service personnel, to the signage and design of buildings. A good example of a positive approach is the TTC's recent addition of the word "Sorry..." before the line, "Out Of Service" on the L.E.D. bus signs.

Most individuals come away from their transactions with government without a sense of having dealt with an organization committed to service or trying hard to meet their needs. No organization can satisfy customer needs all of the time but customers are more forgiving of failure if they believe the organization has made an effort to help them.

Government organizations can do a lot to improve and then communicate their



John Farrow begins 10th year as contributing editor to the Journal

commitment to customer service. Initiatives include publishing a customers' charter, training staff, publishing standards of service, researching customer needs, and providing appropriate channels for dealing with unsatisfied customers.

The last recession stimulated a worldwide re-engineering of major private corporations with a focus on customer satisfaction. The current need to reduce the deficit and therefore spending at all

levels of government is leading to the introduction of similar approaches in the public sector. In times of budget cutbacks, having a satisfied customer group is going to be one of the keys to survival. My analysis suggests that most customers currently approach government with a high level of uncertainty and anxiety. If such attitudes persist, it does not bode well for the future of current institutional structures.

Customer service must be immediate, personal and valued. This commitment must be put into practice through careful research, re-engineered processes, training and organizational support. Some planning departments are addressing these issues. Others are not. In the budget wars ahead, those without loyal customers to speak up for them will have a bleak future.

John Farrow heads the strategic planning practice of Coopers & Lybrand. This issue marks his tenth year as a regular columnist for the Journal.

Further readings: Customer Service in Local Government, Bruce W. McClendon; APA Press

Creating Value for Customers, W. A. Band; J. Wiley & Sons

STUDENTS

Student Delegate Report

by David Morton



arly in the new year, I will be going with other OPPI members to visit a number of

Ontario university campuses to promote student membership. I'm looking forward to meeting many of you, and getting to know more about the planning programs of each university.

The 1995 APA/CIP/OPPI Conference in Toronto is going to be a big one. I encourage you to get involved. There are many volunteer opportunities available for students. If you are interested, contact Brian Milne at (416) 392-0409. If you live in the Toronto area, and are willing to billet students during the conference, please call the OPPI office.

Don't forget the 1995 C.A.P.S. Conference, to be held at Ryerson from February 23-26. OPPI is pleased to be a sponsor, and will have representatives in attendance.



Kim Warburton visits U. of Waterloo

For more information, e-mail CAPS95@acs.ryerson.ca or call (416) 977-2710.

I look forward to seeing many of you there.

Good luck with you winter semester

course work. Hang in there!

David Morton is a student in the M.Sc.Pl. program at the University of Toronto. He can be reached through e-mail at morton@geog.utoronto.ca, or by phoning (416) 368-8087.

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URBAN DESIGN

The ABCs of Barrier-Free Design

by *Philippa Campsie*

"Over 15 percent of Canadians have a disability that potentially limits their access to public buildings," says Catherine Leitch of the City of Toronto's Action Committee for People

with Disabilities, "but good design is good for everybody."

Leitch knows from her everyday experience using a wheelchair what accessibility really means. She also knows that parents with strollers and senior citizens also appreciate barrier-free public spaces. However, she feels that the professional community still has a lot to learn about the practice of making spaces accessible to all.

The City of Toronto's Accessibility Design Guidelines should help bring planners up to speed. The comprehensive manual was created for design profession-

als working on city-owned buildings, from new buildings to heritage properties, but it can be used by anyone working in the field.

The technical specifications go well beyond the requirements of the Ontario Building Code. This is important, because a recent ruling by the Ontario Human Rights Commission found that inaccessible buildings were a form of discrimination against disabled people.

The case concerned a St. Catharines resident who was unable to visit the Village Green Plaza in Virgil, Ontario, because it had no parking spaces for her specially equipped van and no ramps for her wheelchair. In September 1993, the OHRC examined her case and ruled that compliance with the Human Rights Code overrides the requirements of the Ontario Building Code. The implications of this decision are far-reaching.

The Employment Equity Act also requires that employers with 50 or more employees must demonstrate that their workforce reflects the community at large. Since inaccessible buildings are a barrier to hiring people with disabilities, they affect hiring practices and may contribute to employment inequities.

The city's guidelines explain the reasons behind the specifications and provide checklists that can help with accessibility audits. To order a copy, call the city clerk's office in Toronto City Hall at (416) 392-7410 or fax (416) 392-1553. The guidelines cost \$35 (GST, postage and handling extra).

For more information about accessibility issues, call Geoff Eden at the Action Committee for People with Disabilities at (416) 392-0496 or the Advocacy Resource Centre for the Handicapped at (416) 482-8255.

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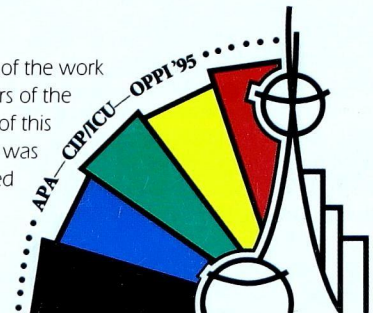
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CIP/APA/OPPI CONFERENCE: 1995 UPDATE

by *Rick Tomaszewicz and Brian Milne*

The Toronto conference committee has been meeting since September 15, 1993. Most of the work has been done by subcommittees, and hundreds of OPPI members and other members of the planning community have been drawn in to help with the development and delivery of this unique planning conference. A major milestone, the preliminary conference program, was reached on time. Collaboration with APA is proceeding smoothly and both we and they are pleased with our joint progress to date.

There is real excitement at the conference committee meetings as we recognize the exceptionally high quality of the program. Therefore, at this mid-point in our work, we want to extend our sincerest thanks to all our volunteers. We don't need to exhort you all to keep up the good work, because it is clear that the experience has been positive for everyone. We can sense that everyone has already shaken off the recession blues and is now moving forward individually and collectively in the work of the conference and of planning.



**Come to Toronto...Discover the World
Venez à Toronto...découvrir le monde**

