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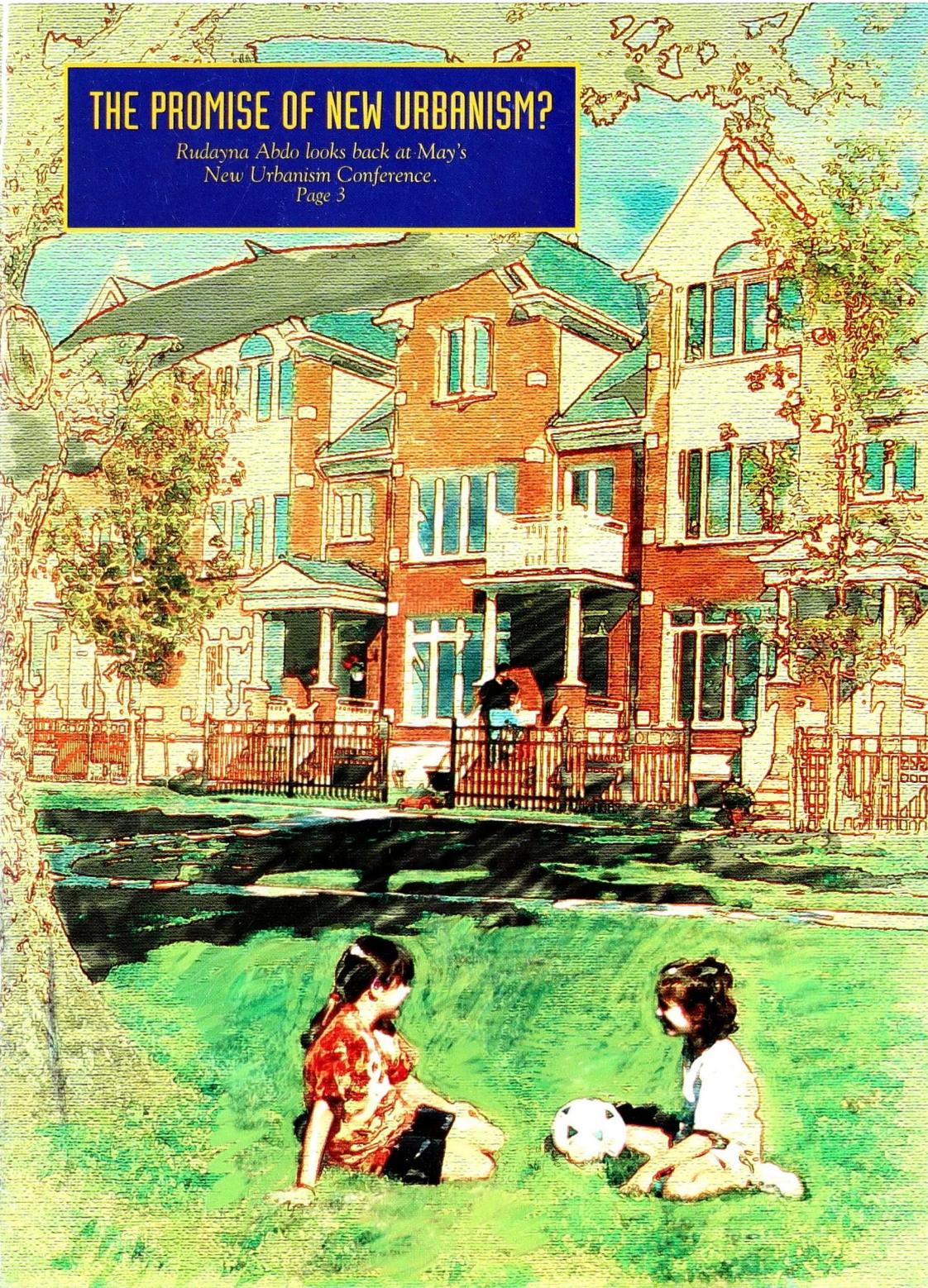
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NEW URBANISM

THE PROMISE OF THE FUTURE?

By Rudayna Abdo

The Congress for the New Urbanism V in late May put a voice to the names and faces that have been shaping this influential collection of principles on urban form. The host city, Toronto, shone as the city that does everything right, from its public transit network used by people of all income levels, to its rich and varied ethnic enclaves, its vibrant commercial nodes, its density and its variety of housing options.

New urbanism (or neotraditional planning, as it was previously known) emerged in the early 1980s in the United States as a reaction to the auto-centred growth that dominated the urban landscape. Fuelled by state highway grants and implicit land subsidies, this growth pattern catered to people hungry for a home away from the confusion of the city but fell short in terms of design and community building.

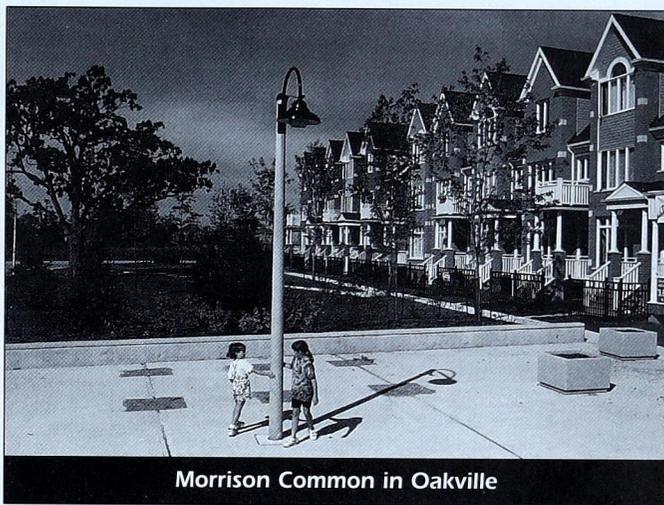
The new urbanists have done well in providing an alternative to suburban design, but have been less effective in addressing the issue of sprawl. The success stories most frequently cited suggest that new urbanist developments adapt themselves more easily to greenfield sites than to already urbanized areas. At the conference little attention was paid to the fact that the vitality of the urban core of many cities (Toronto included) is under constant threat from ever-expanding suburbs and satellite towns, including new urbanist enclaves on the urban fringe.

A PURITANICAL SOLUTION

For societies plagued by urban ills, it is easy to see the appeal of new urbanism. It provides a palatable, puritanical solution to city problems by emulating the urban village where good community is believed to result from good design and where neighbourhood kids would not dream of getting up to no good in back lanes. It is still too early to assess if mature new urbanist communities will live up to their initial promise.

Despite the forward-looking name "new urbanism," the term "neotraditional"

remains a more descriptive title for a movement that represents a return to the principles of traditional urban form. Cynics develop an allergic reaction to new urbanism



Morrison Common in Oakville

Photo: Harry James

when all they see is a contrived Victorian aesthetic.

Moreover, a certain uniformity of thought marks new urbanist planners and designers. It is difficult to distinguish master plans for one new town from those of another and, on closer inspection, it is not always evident that these plans genuinely respond to local topography and culture.

The Duany/PlaterZyberk team has devised "pattern books"—soon to be replaced by "operating systems." If the principles are applied correctly, you are guaranteed a mixed-use dwelling unit within five minutes' walking distance of the amenities you desire. In fact, you are no further away from the Victorian or Greek Revivalist dream home of your choice than a 1-888 phone call.

A QUESTION OF INTELLIGIBILITY

Now that the founders have opened up participation to the general public, it may be

wise to make the terminology more accessible. Not everyone may understand why this ideology is wrapped in the guise of a "congress." Some of us may need to turn to the dictionary to understand the implications of words such as "lexicon," or wonder what world treaty was resolved by the Ahwanhee Principles.

Future conferences should give greater attention to a number of issues. The signatories of the Charter should invite those with differing ideologies to the table. The level of discourse at Congress V was relatively nonconfrontational and selfcongratulatory. It would be nice to open the discussion to the likes of Rem Koolhaas who stands on a very different platform and whose presence would no doubt elevate the debate to a new level.

Another topic of discussion could be the export of this predominantly western idea to other parts of the world. Can the principles be modified for cultures that have different social and political structures as well as different attitudes towards, and encounters with, the built form? Finally, I hope

that the incremental infill of suburbs will become the next challenge for new urbanists as we tighten the belt on sprawl and build on our existing infrastructure.

Rudayna Abdo is a planner with the City of Minneapolis. Before relocating there, Rudayna worked in Toronto and played a key role in producing the special 10th anniversary issue of the Journal last year. She can be reached at (612) 673-2687.



Rudayna Abdo is a graduate of McGill's School of Urban Planning

Back to Basics: Lessons from Riga

By John Farrow



o paraphrase Oscar Wilde, urban practitioners know the price of everything but the value of nothing. Although the teams of professionals that run Canadian cities have a tremendous amount of expertise and achieve many things, they often report that it is not until they face the challenges of working in a developing economy that they begin to understand the true value of what they know.

Latvia gained independence only six years ago. The challenges that it faces along with its Baltic neighbours — economically, politically and socially — are of a magnitude that most countries only have to contend with in times of war or revolution. Economically, Latvia played a particular role within the former USSR. Its economy is complex, and is moving away from the specialized role in a large planned economy it once played.

The challenge in Latvia is how to re-orient the economy to function independently alongside other market economies and develop a country-wide culture that supports the new paradigm of competitiveness. There is also a desire to entrench new

democratic decision-making processes that support stable independence. The CUI work in Latvia is focused at the city and regional levels of government and has had an impact on these issues through strategic planning, regional planning and economic development.



Riga is both historic and economically complex

There are many benefits to working in a totally new context, such as exists in Latvia. Nothing can be taken for granted and many of the approaches used in Canada have to be adapted, developed and reasoned through from first principles. This article explores, from a personal perspective, what I learned from working with municipal staff in Riga, Latvia on a CUI project and how these lessons could be applied here.

KNOWLEDGE MUST BE CODIFIED TO BE COMMUNICATED

When working with contemporaries in Canada much is unconsciously understood and communicated using a short hand based on common experiences. However,

when communicating across cultures the lack of common background means that many ideas must be explained from first principles.

Carefully reasoning through ideas, workplans and concepts introduces a degree of rigour into the process that is useful in itself. As one of my colleagues noted, this activity encourages the professional to move

from being "intuitively competent" to being "consciously competent."

GOVERNMENT HAS A MAJOR ROLE TO PLAY DURING PERIODS OF TRANSITION

Although some question the role of governments in a mixed economy like Canada, when one sees the dislocation that occurs in emerging economies, it is evident that

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restarting the economy can only be achieved by concerted government action in partnership with other sectors. This is because there are many competing demands for public sector investments in infrastructure, coupled with limited resources. At this stage in the transition it is crucial that these investments provide a quick return. Although establishing priorities is critical, the turmoil that this type of transition creates makes this a difficult task. Without government leadership, the private sector is likely to make a number of false starts that will slow the process of reorienting and rebuilding the economy.

The complexity of the Canadian economy sometimes obscures the need for this government role. But all economic activity and wealth-building activity is faced with the challenge of constant change. In some of our regions this change would occur more slowly and be too socially painful without government guidance and assistance.

COMPLEXITY IS COSTLY

The underlying affluence of our society has allowed us to accept and even revel in the complexity of our system. But the urgency of the issues facing emerging economies means that speedy action is required. Systems that are hard to understand delay action in a way that causes obvious human costs. Helping to redesign governance systems in these emerging economies is one of the tasks that CUI plays. Returning to Canada, one wonders if the complexities of our government and private sector processes benefit either individuals or society.

MOBILIZE THE APPROPRIATE RESOURCES TO SERVE LOCAL NEEDS

As a consequence of the global economy, some parts of the labour force are assumed to be obsolete when they may still have a useful contribution to make. Global telecommunication allows global standards to be set on how things ought to be done. But the old ways of doing things, while not the best, often still work effectively. One of the dangers in emerging economies is the potential for adopting best practices from developed countries which may not be locally appropriate. Even here, the old ways of doing things often still exist and work quite well.

An example is the urgent need for infrastructure in emerging economies. With abundant labour, much of this infrastructure can be constructed in a low-tech way with older equipment. This can reduce costs by

reducing the reliance on imports and foreign exchange and because they use readily available local resources. This approach would be beneficial in parts of Canada where unemployment is high.

COMMUNICATION IS CRUCIAL IN TIMES OF CHANGE

One of the biggest challenges facing governments in emerging economies is unreasonably high expectations. Managing these expectations so that society remains stable

Observing the intensity of change at all levels of government in Canada makes me wonder if we have the communications mechanisms in place to cope with our own rate of accelerating change.

during rapid change needs frequent communication about the realities of what is ahead and an organized process of listening to the views of key stakeholders and the general public.

Observing the intensity of change at all levels of government in Canada makes me wonder if we have the communications mechanisms in place to cope with our own rate of accelerating change. When I look at the current processes for communicating government initiatives, I must conclude that these would be inadequate to cope with the rate of change currently being experienced in many of the jurisdictions where CUI international projects are underway.

CANADIANS ENJOY THE LUXURY OF PAST INVESTMENT

The major lesson I learned during my work in Riga is to be more humble. In Canada we talk about a fast rate of change. In reality, though, we are building on the success of earlier generations who have left behind a strong legacy of laws, organizations and institutions. When change is needed, it is often relatively minor. Operating in this context it is relatively easy to be effective. However, communities like those in the Baltics undergoing dramatic and at times turbulent change, require a high level of operational expertise and constant adaptive innovation. This situation challenged me, and I suspect most other Canadians working there, to operate in a way that is rarely necessary at home.

At the CUI we seek to help those urban professionals we work with to achieve their goals under what are often challenging circumstances. We hope and believe we achieve this, but at the same time find that we benefit as well by refining our skills and bringing back lessons that can be applied here in Canada. We are grateful for the privilege of having this opportunity and trust that it is a fair exchange for those we work with.

John Farrow, MCIP, RPP, is president of the Canadian Urban Institute. This article marks the return of his popular management column. A version of this article previously appeared in the CUI newsletter. In the past few years, many members of CIP/OPPI have travelled to Eastern Europe, Latin America and the Philippines on behalf of the CUI. For more information on the CUI's international and local activities, contact John at (416) 598-1606 extension 201 or <cu@interlog.com>



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A Manner Less Rigid: One Hundred Years of the Ontario Municipal Board

By Robert Shipley
(Part Two)



The first article in this three-part series explored the origins of the OMB in the 1890s. Part 2 looks at the changing responsibilities of the OMB as well as its relationship with the provincial government.

ELASTICITY IN JURISDICTION

The Ontario Municipal Board was officially constituted under its present name by a provincial statute passed in 1932. This was not a major change; for some time the practice had been to omit the word "Railway" in the title. Having established firm operating procedures and proved its efficiency, the OMB had become a useful, perhaps essential, instrument of the Provincial Government.

Some core responsibilities, such as overseeing municipal finances, have remained part of the OMB's work until recently. But as one commentator put it, the government tended, "when faced with the necessity of creating a jurisdiction to cope with a particular problem, to assign the problem to the Municipal Board."

Only when an issue ceased to be important or became significant enough to warrant creating a special tribunal, was the responsibility lifted from the OMB. Over the years these changes have meant a more or less steady increase in the areas of jurisdiction under the Board's review. In 1923 the Board was responsible for settling disputes under about 40 pieces of legislation. By 1980 the number was about 180.

Cabinet can also instruct the Board to "inquire into and report upon the establishment, organization, reorganization and methods of operation of any two or more municipalities in a designated area." In



lems arise related to the OMB's independence from the government.

In 1907, a Toronto newspaper railed against the Board saying, "This ruling, if sustained by the higher courts, will practically destroy the last vestige of control that the city has been supposed to possess." In the 1930s, the young Bora Laskin, who was studying law in the United States—where an institution such as the OMB would be unthinkable—said, "One's sense of British justice revolts at the idea of a judicial tribunal acting as prosecutor, counsel and judge."

While the argument that a board should not be able to overrule an elected council has often been made, there is still a need to ensure that local politicians follow their own stated policies, that the greater public good is protected from bad decisions made under political pressure, and, above all, that the rights of the individual are protected from majority rule.

This ongoing debate has led to several major reviews of the Board and its mandate. These included the Commission on Civil Rights (known as the McRuer Commission) in 1972, the Comay Commission on the Planning Act in 1977, and the Sewell Commission on Planning and Development Reform in the 1990s. Following some of these reviews, changes have been made in the Board's operation. Each review has tried to balance the need for independent review of local decisions with the requirements of representative democracy.

Finding this balance depends on the real and perceived independence of the Board from political pressure, which depends on the tenure of OMB members and the Board's relationship to the Cabinet. OMB Members are appointed

1951, the Board ruled against some attempts by Toronto and area municipalities to reconfigure themselves. The government subsequently asked the Board to inquire into the matter and make its own recommendations. From that came the 1953 Cummings Report which was the basis for creating Metro Toronto.

In other instances, OMB decisions have been overruled for political reasons. In the early 1970s, the Board ruled in favour of the Spadina Expressway, which would have cut through the heart of Toronto. In a rare use of its authority, the cabinet overturned the decision and the project was stopped.

TENSIONS AND BALANCES

The Board is an appointed body with review and refusal power over decisions made by elected representatives. Yet prob-

REPORTING RELATIONSHIP

1906-11	Lieutenant Governor in Council (Cabinet)
1912-33	Attorney General
1934-70	Minister of Municipal Affairs
1971-91	Attorney General
1991-present	Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing

and for most of its history the positions have been held "at pleasure." That meant that members cannot be removed without good cause. This left them free to make judgements based on evidence and law without fear that the decision would offend anyone. In the 1980s, the procedure changed. Members are now appointed for three-year terms. Some have argued for a restoration of the "at pleasure" system in order to ensure independence.

This issue is complicated by the OMB's relationship to the government. The Board, like the courts of law, used to report to the Attorney General. Recently the OMB has come under the authority of the Ministry of Municipal Affairs. Since Municipal Affairs is often a party to disputes before the Board, this arrangement is questionable. Municipal Affairs, however, insists that the Board is independent and that it reports to the Ministry only in administrative matters.

Robert Shipley, MA, MCIP, RPP recently completed his PhD. at the University of Waterloo. In addition to teaching, he is a consultant and author.

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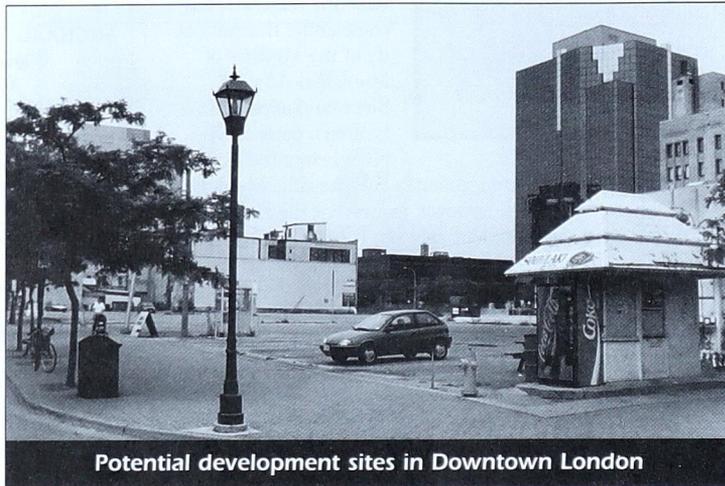
Entertaining Downtown Revitalization in London

By John Fleming



here is no question that entertainment uses are great activity generators. Most would agree that they can help revitalize declining commercial areas. But can we really plan entertainment uses to revitalize Downtown? The City of London thinks so, and has implemented a policy approach to make it happen. And, so far, the response has been incredibly positive. What did we do? How did we do it? What was the response? Read on.

In April 1996, London's Planning Division prepared a report to Council entitled "Planning Entertainment Uses for Downtown Revitalization in London." The report explained the growth of the entertainment industry, described new forms of entertainment facilities, and underscored the revitalization capabilities of entertainment uses. The report also cited several examples of declining commercial areas that have been revitalized with the development of new



Potential development sites in Downtown London

entertainment uses.

Of particular importance, the report noted that the new generation entertainment uses had not yet reached London's suburban areas. If concentrated in the Downtown, these uses could offer a unique destination and an anchor for the Core - a "bright ray of hope" for a Downtown which is in need of help. An added bonus was that entertainment uses operate after traditional

office hours, when the Downtown needs pedestrian activity the most. Based on this thinking, the Planning Division sought to direct future cinemas, theatres, and places of entertainment to the Downtown. Catalyst for debate? Controversial? You bet!

The key issues are straight forward: Should the City be controlling the location of entertainment uses? Could incentives be used instead of regulations? How should "place of entertainment" be defined? Would the City lose entertainment

development opportunities because of this approach? How important is the Downtown to London as a community? These issues were addressed through public debate, interest group discussions with staff and a succession of planning committee meetings. This debate led to a series of compromises.

Mall owners were the most vocal objectors to the first draft of our policy proposals. Their main concern was that they would

Festival Hall Groundbreaking Kick-Starts Toronto's CBD

Calling it the first major commercial development in downtown Toronto in 10 years, Ontario's Premier Mike Harris and Toronto Mayor Barbara Hall recently led a star-spangled groundbreaking for Festival Hall, a \$100 million multi-use entertainment centre. Located at Richmond and John Street immediately west of the financial core, Festival Hall is the brainchild of developers Michael Dennis and David Langer.



Festival Hall

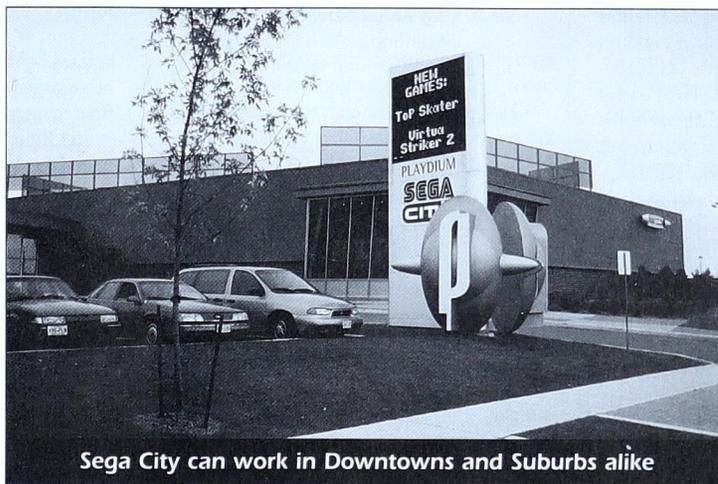
not have the opportunity to revitalize their own properties with the same entertainment uses that were targeted for the Downtown. Ironically, it may have been the suburban shopping centres, and the movement of department store type floor space to these centres (once focused in the city's Core), that were the largest contributing factor leading to the decline of the Downtown. If entertainment uses similarly spread throughout the suburbs, London could not offer the concentrated entertainment attraction and anchor qualities in the Core that the Downtown so desperately needs.

To everyone's credit a compromise was reached whereby regional shopping centres could use 10% of their total gross floor area for specified entertainment uses. This allowed for a limited amount of entertainment development within suburban areas, while still promoting the Downtown as the premier "entertainment destination place" in the City of London.

Several other compromises were reached. Provisions were also made to prevent the loss of economic opportunities. Specifically, a clause was included that allowed for exceptions to the entertainment policies where the proponents of entertainment uses could demonstrate that their specific requirements preclude them from locating in the Core. These requirements have to be legitimate, not just preferences.

Council approved these entertainment

policies in the Fall of 1996. This rather bold initiative cleared up any doubts regarding Council's commitment to revitalizing London's Downtown. This in itself has proven beneficial in attracting investors to look seriously at Downtown London.



Sega City can work in Downtowns and Suburbs alike

Both the official plan amendment and the accompanying by-law were appealed by the owner of an undeveloped community shopping centre site. This appeal could be resolved before the hearing takes place.

In the mean time, there has been considerable activity in Downtown London. A proposal is currently before the City for a 22 screen cinema complex. A major fitness club of 70,000 sq.ft. with space for 5,000 patrons has recently been constructed in the core. Seven developers submitted proposals responding to an RFP for a new Downtown Farmer's Market. These proposals suggested joint ventures that blended private sector

entertainment uses with the Farmer's Market component to be paid for by the City.

There have also been continuing discussions with a developer for the construction of a major sports arena and entertainment centre in the Downtown. A Celtic craft store has been established on Downtown's main street and a community arts centre has been launched just paces away. Further down the street a Virtual Reality Cafe has sprung up, a block away from a laser tag facility. There has been much discussion around the concept of a new performing arts centre in Downtown London and private sector interests are currently raising funds to build it. A commonly expressed reason for this interest in

Downtown investment is Council's clear commitment to the Core. The City's new entertainment policies are a major part of confirming this commitment.

While there is no doubt that these policies are controversial and require significant political will, they are already showing much promise in contributing toward the revitalization of Downtown London. Entertainment uses may well present a "last chance" for many downtown's throughout North America.

John Fleming, MCIP, RPP is a planner with the City of London. He is a regular contributor to the Journal. (Readers with comments on this article, or commercial/retail article ideas, should contact Brenton Toderian MCIP, RPP at (519) 576-3650. Brenton is the Journal's contributing editor on retail/commercial matters and an associate with MacNaughton Hermesen Britton Clarkson Planning Limited.

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Public-Private Partnerships and Municipal Services: A Lawyer's Perspective

By Stanley B. Stein

Dozens of projects in Canada are public-private partnerships: casinos, toll roads and highways, the Northumberland Strait Crossing, Terminal 3 at Pearson International Airport, and a New Brunswick prison. The new National Trade Centre at Toronto's Exhibition Place, a \$180 million project funded through the Canada Infrastructure Works Program by the federal, Ontario and Metro governments, is managed and marketed by a private-sector company.

Governments want to shed financing, management, and other aspects of service delivery and turn them over to private operators. The private sector in Canada, through large individual corporations and consortia, can provide that capability. With our sophisticated banking and financial services sector, Canadians in the private sector can mobilize funding for mega-projects both here and abroad.

Municipalities can also create innovative partnerships with the private sector. Here are some points to consider.

THE BENEFITS OF PRIVATIZATION

The most obvious benefits of public-private partnerships are financial. The GTA Task Force report (the Golden report), released in January 1996, called upon municipalities to pursue cost savings and efficiencies through competitive processes, including contracting out service delivery, after taking into account the impact on employees, service quality and accountability. Since partnering involves sharing financial risk, municipalities

can reduce capital costs, and in many instances, operating costs.

Competitive private-sector companies are responsive to consumer needs, and react quickly to changes in the market-

creates concern, requirements for accountability can be addressed in the final agreement.

In Ontario, many municipal services have been privatized under the

Community Economic Development Act, 1993. Schedule M of the Savings and Restructuring Act, 1996 also contains provisions enabling upper-tier municipalities to enter into partnership agreements for services or facilities assumed from its local municipalities. Although the Public Utilities Act restricts the sale, lease or disposal of a public utility required by the municipality, agreements have been negotiated for private-sector provision of water and sewage treatment. The apparent conflict in the relevant statutes may require legislative amendment to avoid future problems. Different structures for partnership arrangements are available. The most appropriate choice will depend upon the service and partners involved. Privatization or divestiture involves the sale or long-term lease of the entire public facility to the private sector. All or most of the risks are transferred from the government to the new owner. An example is the



Pearson Airport is on a long term lease to the GTAA

place. Municipalities can also rely on corporate expertise in areas where there is little in-house experience, or where it would be inefficient for a municipality to acquire specialized knowledge.

With careful planning and contractual arrangements, the drawbacks to privatization can be minimized. For example, if the loss of municipal control over a service

long-term lease last year of Pearson Airport to the Greater Toronto Airports Authority. However, this may not be a practical solution for most municipal services because of the loss of control and the difficulty of ensuring of service delivery quality.

- Build-Operate-Transfer (BOT) partnerships common in infrastructure pro-

jects. The government enters into a long-term land lease with the developer. During the term of the contract, the private-sector partner builds and operates the facility. When the term of the leases ends, the government buys the facility from the developer for a previously determined amount.

- Build-Transfer-Operate (BTO) arrangements are similar to BOT agreements; however, the facility is transferred to the government immediately upon completion, and the developer signs a separate contract for the operation of the facility.

- Joint venture partners contribute to the development and operation of the facility according to their areas of exper-

tise and arrangements for capital contributions. They divide the obligations and liabilities among themselves according to an agreed-upon percentage of interest in the venture.

- Turnkey operations mean that the private-sector partner designs and builds the facility but does not assume either financing or operational responsibilities. Although this may limit the government's cost benefits, turnkey projects are often successful when timely completion of the project is essential.

- Service contracting is a comparatively common approach to the provision of services and facilities that involves entering into contracts for specific services over a given period of time. Recently it has spread

from traditional areas (such as janitorial services) to the operation of entire facilities.

SHARING THE RISKS

The different types of partnering arrangements result in different risk allocations. "Completion risks" include every problem which may arise during construction, such as cost overruns, delays, and failure to meet design objectives. "Operating risks" are problems with the operation of the facility, including exceeding projected operating costs and failing to achieve expected demand levels or income returns. "Operation liabilities" include the potential tort liabilities of owners and occupiers.

The chart below summarizes the risk

Risk allocation in various public-private partnerships

	Completion risk	Operating risk	Operation liabilities
Privatization/divestiture	Transferred to private sector	Transferred to private sector	Transferred to private sector
BOT	Transferred to private sector	Transferred to private sector	Transferred to private sector
BTO	Transferred to private sector	Transferred to private sector	Remains with government, subject to statute
Joint ventures	Shared according to terms of contract	Shared according to terms of contract	Shared according to terms of contract
Turnkey	Transferred to private sector	Remains with government	Remains with government
Service Contracting	Depends on the terms of the contract	Usually partially transferred to private sector	Usually remains with government

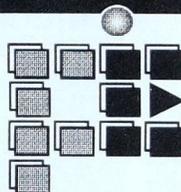
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allocation of various structures used in public-private partnerships.

HOW THE PROCESS WORKS

Privatization partnerships require a fair and open procurement process. The traditional tendering process is appropriate for clearly defined projects if the municipality can precisely delineate its requirements. However, if the project would benefit from innovative proposals, or if potential partners feel that the tendering process is too expensive or if many of the terms of the contract must be negotiated, the municipality should consider a different strategy. Request For Proposal (RFP) approaches, while more complicated than tendering strategies, offer more flexibility to both public- and private-sector participants.

RFPs start with a request for written expressions of interest, to create a prelimi-

nary mailing list. At this point, consensus on the objectives of the project must be reached, and the design process should be in place.

A Request for Qualifications is then advertised and sent to interested parties. Those who respond are invited to a bidders' meeting to discuss the project. Respondents are expected to outline their experience and provide a rough proposal. The municipality then creates a short list of bidders for the Request for Proposal stage. Parties on this list may be asked to suggest changes to the municipality's requirements.

The final requirements are released as the Request for Proposal, which includes a list of the criteria that will be used to evaluate the proposals. Other requirements such as the anonymous submission of pro-

posals or separate submission of technical and financial details may be included.

Proposals are evaluated according to the stated criteria, and the scoring and evaluation comments are made part of the public record. The municipality then negotiates a final contract with the winning proponent that ensures protection of the public interest. It is very important that this process is fully explained at all stages, and is included in the written request for proposals.

Public-private partnerships offer a flexible and innovative way of addressing the demands which are placed upon Ontario's municipalities. However, they must be structured individually; their strength lies in the fact that each partnership is unique.

Stanley Stein is a partner with Osler Hoskin Harcourt in Toronto. His column appears in alternate issues.

EDITORIAL



ince the first Ontario planning act was put in place just over 50 years ago, our appreciation and understanding of urban and rural environments has undergone many refinements. In terms of the breadth and scope of all kinds of economic, philosophical and legislative change, however, the current period is unprecedented. It is worth reflecting on another 50th anniversary being celebrated in the United Kingdom.

In war-ravaged Britain, the 1947 planning act ushered in a new era of regulation and intense interest in establishing a genuinely professional basis for town and country planning. The challenge then was nothing less than to remake the economy and reestablish the quality of life in cities, the largest of which were bombed-out with the rest suffering from industrial decline. In a retrospective by a former president of RTPI recently published, the author noted that "with the economy in a shambles, the country's infrastructure in decay" and severe rationing of practically everything, "two aspects of life were to be free at source . . . to be the best available in the world - education and health care."

In Ontario today, this emphasis on investing in human resources is worth underlining. At a time when the institutional basis of both our education and healthcare systems is being

Investing in the Future of Our Cities

radically revised we would do well to listen carefully to visionaries like Dr J. Fraser Mustard. He points out that children who do not receive adequate nourishment and stimulation in the first six years of life have measurably poorer coping skills later on. If we fail to invest now, he suggests, we are stacking the odds against ourselves down

the line. The essence of this message was understood in Britain 50 years ago, and embraced by the planning profession in that country.

As planners, we tell ourselves we are experts in managing change. The words "sustainable development" are banded about loosely and with little thought for their meaning. We should be careful not to define our interests so narrowly that we fail to comment on the true essentials for life in the 21st century.

Glenn Miller, MCIP, RPP is editor of the Journal and director of applied research with the Canadian Urban Institute. He can be reached at <ontplan@inforamp.net>

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FOOD FOR THOUGHT

By Valerie Cranmer

Recently, OPPI was involved in a national Associations Membership Study conducted by the Advantage Group. The project studied member satisfaction, value perceptions, loyalty and retention issues for individual associations. Twenty-four associations, including fifteen professional associations, participated in the project.

The survey found: "The OPPI has good net satisfaction ratings only for member communications. In the remaining three drivers of overall member satisfaction (General Member Benefits, Services/Accreditation, and Education Programs), the OPPI has relatively low satisfaction results." The following questions arising from the survey will provide food for thought for Council as they review the Strategic Plan this fall.

Should the Institute consider accreditation or additional changes to the membership requirements?

The survey showed that the general membership is not as satisfied as Council is with the certification process. It appears that members feel the RPP designation should mean an increased income and a competitive advantage over non-members.

Does the Institute communicate effectively with its members, and if not, how can the communication activities be improved?

Members seem to be generally satisfied with communications received from OPPI, particularly the Ontario Planning Journal. However, there appears to be some demand for more frequent communications, particularly in the area of professional development.

What is the best way to improve the delivery of the professional education program?

According to the survey, the need to provide affordable and accessible programs is a top priority. Should there be a requirement for continued professional education?

Does the Institute provide appropriate member benefits?

The survey indicated overall dissatisfaction with general member benefits and the need for additional opportunities for networking.

Does OPPI provide leadership in achieving professional excellence?

Members expressed dissatisfaction with the "real recognition by government that the profession has a role to play," in the degree of "respect of the business/professional for the accreditation," and the lack of "recognition that the accreditation equates to a quality professional." Should OPPI become a lobby group?

If you have any comments on these results, please contact any member of Council or the OPPI office. Watch for more details on the survey results in the next issue of the Journal.

Valerie Cranmer, MCIP, RPP, is principal of Valerie Cranmer and Associates.



Valerie Cranmer

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OUTGOING COUNCIL TACKLES FULL AGENDA

By Susan Smith

Here are the highlights of the decisions made at Council's meeting in June. Call Susan Smith for more information.

LEGAL OPINION SOUGHT

Council has asked for a legal opinion on the decision of the Commercial Registration Appeal Tribunal to disqualify a member as a witness. The member was employed by a law firm that represented a party at the Tribunal. Once the legal opinion is received, Council will consider its response to the decision.

COMMITTEE TERMS DEFINED

Council has set the term of appointment of members to committees at three years, renewable for one consecutive term. The policy will not apply to some committees (such as conference committees) because of the nature of their role.

HIRING A CONSULTANT?

Council endorsed in principle the devel-

opment of How to Hire a Consultant guidelines. The Private Sector Advisory Committee will consult with stakeholder groups, and will submit draft guidelines to Council later this fall. Members interested in participating in the consultation should contact Susan Smith at the OPPI office by fax (416) 483-7830 or e-mail: oppi@interlog.com.

REIMBURSEMENT POLICY SET

A new policy on the reimbursement of course and conference fees was adopted as a result of losses incurred by the Institute caused by last-minute cancellations. Commitments are made to trainers, hotels and caterers based on the number of registrants for events, and the Institute must cover any shortfall. The new policy allows for a full refund for cancellations at least 30 days in advance; 80 percent refund for cancellations less than 29 days and more than 8 days in advance; no refund for cancellations less than 8 days before an event. The Institute may waive the notice requirements for just cause.

THANK YOU, GERRY

Council adopted a resolution to formally recognize Gerry Melenka for his contribution to OPPI as Student Delegate on Council, and for his work on the OPPI home page. Our new Student Delegate is Megan Wood, from the University of Waterloo.

CONGRATULATIONS STUDENT WINNERS

Council awarded the 1997 OPPI Undergraduate Scholarship to Michael Smith of Ryerson Polytechnic University, and the 1997 Gerald Carrothers Graduate Scholarship to David Smith of the University of Guelph. Both students have excelled in their academic performance and have shown a high level of commitment to community service.

Susan Smith is Executive Director of OPPI.

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DISTRICT PLANNING AWARDS ANNOUNCED

The winners of the 1997 Excellence in Planning Awards (District Level) were announced at the Gala Banquet in Windsor. The District winners now move on to be judged at the provincial level. The provincial awards will be presented at the University of Waterloo Alumni dinner in November.

DISTRICT WINNERS

CENTRAL DISTRICT

OUTSTANDING PLANNING AWARDS

1. New Directions Category - Ballantrae Golf and Country Club Development Proposal - The Forhan Group
2. Communications/Public Education Category - Trent-Severn Waterway Management Plan: A New Vision for the Waterway - Parks Canada
3. Planning Studies/Reports Category - Welland Canals Parkway and Trails Master Plan -Regional Municipality of Niagara

PROFESSIONAL MERIT AWARDS

1. Communications/Public Education Category - Development Guide to Planning Applications in Hamilton-Wentworth - Regional Municipality of Hamilton-Wentworth
2. Communications/Public Education Category - Township of Oro-Medonte



Outstanding Planning Awards: (left to right) Steve Lindley, Bruce Timms, George Nicholson, Lily Meleg, Bob Forhar

2. New Directions - West-Carleton Growth Management Strategy - FoTenn Consultants
3. Planning Studies/Reports Category - Greenbelt Master Plan - National Capital Commission

SOUTHWEST DISTRICT

PROFESSIONAL MERIT AWARDS

1. New Directions Category - Advanced in Adaptive Reuse and Heritage Preservation: A Case Study of Kaufman Footwear Limited, Kitchener - MacNaughton Hermsen Britton Clarkson Planning Ltd.

2. Communications/Public Education Category - Branchton Heritage Village Planning and Vision Report - MacNaughton Hermsen Britton Clarkson Planning Ltd.

NORTHERN DISTRICT

1. New Directions Category - Township of Temagami Local Government Study - The Planning Partnership

- Official Plan Review Discussion Newsletters - The Planning Partnership
3. Planning Studies/Reports Category - Integrated Shoreline Management Plan - Tommy Thompson Park to Frenchman's Bay (ISMP) - Fenco MacLaren Inc.

EASTERN DISTRICT

PROFESSIONAL MERIT AWARDS

1. Planning Studies/Reports Category - Downtown and Harbour Zoning By-Law 96-259 - City of Kingston



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OPPI COUNCIL CHANGES

The contributions to the Institute of outgoing Council members Philip Wong (President-Elect, President, Past-President 1993-1997), Ruth Coursey (Secretary, Central District Representative 1995-1997), Bohdan Wynnycky (Central District Representative 1996-1997), Bob Lehman (Central District Representative, Director, Public Presence 1995-1997), and Patrick Déoux (Representative-at-Large, Director, Communications and

Publications 1994-1997) were recognized at the AGM held in Windsor. President Valerie Cranmer thanked them for their efforts and their commitment to the profession during their terms on Council.

The 1997 Council election resulted in the election of Ron Shishido as President-Elect and Grace Strachan as Director, Communications and Publications.

Acclaimed Council members include Heather Jablonski, Director, Public Presence; Marni Cappe, Director, Public



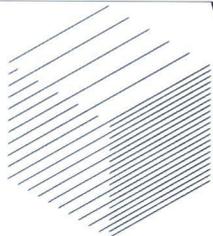
Free at last! (All except Valerie) Patrick Déoux, Bob Lehman (rear) Bohdan Wynnycky, Ruth Coursey, Valerie Cranmer and Philip Wong



Doug Caruso and Bruce Curtis



Valerie Cranmer presents Ann Joyner with a Member Service Award



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Policy; Dennis Jacobs, Eastern District Representative; Sue Heffernan, Northern District Representative; Hugh Handy, Southwest District Representative; and Don May and David Ozaki, Central District Representatives. Welcome aboard the new Council!

OUTSTANDING MEMBERS RECOGNIZED

1997 Member Service Awards were presented to Ann Joyner (Dillon Consulting),

Corwin Cambrey (Regional Municipality of Niagara), Doug Caruso (City of Windsor) and Bruce Curtis (City of London) during the recent OPPI Symposium in Windsor. The awards recognize the outstanding contributions made by members to the Institute and the planning profession.

"RESOURCE-FUL" GROUP ACTIVE IN POLICY

By Tony Usher

In the May-June Journal, outgoing director Ron Shishido wrote about how the Public Policy Committee has involved more and more OPPI members in policy development. I'd like to tell you about the Resources Working Group, one of the five that make up the Committee.

The Resources Working Group deals with policy areas within the mandate of the Ministry of Natural Resources, including aggregate, forest, and water resources, natural heritage, parks and conservation lands, Crown lands, and watershed planning. Since 1995, OPPI has made submissions to MNR on the Planning System Review, new Aggregate Resources Act standards and regulations, proposed amendments to the Public Lands Act, and a proposed Environmental Bill of Rights. These submissions are available from the OPPI office or on the Institute's web site.

Over the next few months, the Working Group will be:

- developing and refining interpretive and educational materials on MNR's component of the Provincial Policy Statement, building on the draft manuals distributed at the MNR Technical Training Sessions that many of you attended earlier this year
- commenting on MNR's new Lands for Life public lands planning program and the Niagara Escarpment Commission's new role in MNR
- developing strategies for implementing the Endangered Spaces Campaign in Southern Ontario, in partnership with World Wildlife Fund Canada
- participating in the 1997 A.D. Latonnell Conservation Symposium, "Conservation in Community: Sustaining Ecology, Culture and Economy," at the Nottawasaga Inn, October 20-22, in partnership with

Ontario's conservation authorities.

I recently followed up with all members who had indicated their interest in resource-related policy issues. The response was overwhelming. There are now 23 working group participants, all of whom have indicated specific areas of interest so they can be matched with the initiatives to which they can best contribute.

The door remains wide open. If you have the expertise and enthusiasm to contribute to the Resources Working Group, call or fax OPPI, or call me directly at (416) 425-5964.

Tony Usher, MCIP, RPP, leads the Public Policy Committee's Resources Working Group and is principal of Anthony Usher Planning Consultant. He is a past president of OPPI.

NEED ANY DATA?

By Jeff Kratky

Have you ever searched for planning data and failed to find it? Or found it for an area whose boundaries differed from the area being planned? Ever found a one-off set of data that answered your

question, but been frustrated because its lack of continuity made it impossible to use for monitoring, comparing, or projecting through time?

The Ontario government, through the Office of the Provincial Facilitator and with

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the cooperation of stakeholders such as OPPI, tried to solve the problem with the Ontario Land Information System (ONLIS). The province is now taking a second run at it through the Ministry of Natural Resources' Land Information Ontario (LI) program.

LI vision is to make "Ontario's land information . . . managed, accessible, integratable and affordable." LI will try to coordi-

nate federal, provincial, municipal, academic, and private geographic data so that it may be readily (perhaps digitally) shared on a continuous and affordable basis.

The Ministry has set up four work groups to prepare implementation plans for this vision by November 1997. OPPI is represented on the Socio-Economic Work Group. Please let us know what you believe is

important for successful data sharing to facilitate planning in Ontario.

Jeff is the principal of Jeff Kratky Land Use Planning and Real Estate Advisory Services. He is OPPI's representative on the Socio-Economic Work Group, and can be reached at (519) 743-4554.

WHERE WERE YOU?

"No-show" registrants for events are a headache for OPPI. Two recent examples include the workshop "Making Contact, The Art of Business Networking" held at Metro Hall in June, and the panel discussion on the "New City of Toronto" held at CBAO the next day. "No-shows" represent lost revenue

caused by unpaid registration fees (almost \$2,000 for the networking event). They also mean that other interested members are turned away because of limited space (more than 30 people for the amalgamation event). They denote a lack of respect for the volunteers who donate their time to organize these events and to prepare and deliver presentations. Anyone who has ever been involved in organizing or speaking at these events knows how much work is involved, and also knows how disappointing it is if participation is below what was expected. Don't frustrate volunteers to the point that they stop working on your behalf.

The financial losses are covered by taking money out of general revenues—in other words, everyone pays through their membership fees. In future we may require prepayment before certain events to avoid further losses and disappointments.

The next time you fill out a registration form for an event, please ensure that you really do plan to attend. If your plans change, let us know well in advance.



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The following have been removed from the membership rolls of OPPI and are therefore no longer eligible to use the designations "Registered Professional Planner" and "RPP" in accordance with the Ontario Professional Planners Institute Act, 1994:

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N. Koyama
Sada S. Sane
W.D. Thompson

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NORTHERN DISTRICT

NORTHERN DISTRICT RENEWS

Sue Heffernan reports that following an AGM in June, the Northern District has formed new District Management, Programs and Membership Committees. Paul Baskcomb, Bryanne Tait, Don McConnell, Glenn Tunnock are District Management, while Don McConnell, Bill Lautenbach, Mark Simeoni, Bryanne Tait, Jeff Celentano and Heather Robertson are responsible for Program. Membership is chaired by Joe Sniezek, joined by Dale Ashbee, Glenn Tunnock and Dan Napier.

SOUTHWESTERN DISTRICT

A.D. LATORNELL CONSERVATION SYMPOSIUM

The A.D. Latornell Conservation Symposium will be held on October 20, 21

and 22, 1997 at the Nottawasaga Inn, Alliston. OPPI is pleased to be among the conference's sponsors. The theme is "Conservation in Communities, Sustaining Ecology, Culture and Economy".

Sessions on topics such as new land tax rules, land trusts, community/professional development, municipal government changes, ecological planning, and corporate conservation sponsorships are offered. For information contact Conservation Ontario (formerly Association of Conservation Authorities of Ontario), at 905-895-0716.

CENTRAL

By Bob Lehman

SIMCOE COUNTY PLANNERS ON THE BALL

The 25th Annual Simcoe County Recreational Softball Tournament was held in July in Wasaga Beach. Members of OPPI dominated the Tournament. The Planning Partnership team with three OPPI members made it to the finals for the third year in a

row, but failed to three-peat, losing their title to the steroid-assisted Clearview Township team. And speaking of drug-enhanced performances, the winner of the home-run contest was no other than Wes Crown, Planning Director for the Township of Tay. Other OPPI members participating included Ron Watkin and Rich Vandezande of Ainley and Associates and George Vadeboncoeur of Penetanguishene.

Bob Lehman, MCIP, RPP is a Partner with The Planning Partnership.



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High Stakes Planning in Windsor

By Philippa Campsie

The weather was the only dis-

appointment. Doug Caruso and his team deserve a big thank you for their efforts, which produced an interesting, varied, and well-organized program.

Wednesday evening's dinner was enlivened by the presence of buskers from the International Buskers Festival. It's not often you get to see someone juggling machetes over the prone body of a planner, although there may be some people who would find this an enticing fantasy.

Thursday morning, however, was a return to reality, with a sobering speech at breakfast by Howard Pawley and another by Dr. George Galster at lunch.

Pawley, the former premier of Manitoba, now a professor at the University of Windsor, is well aware that politicians make short-term decisions that create long-term predicaments for cities. He cited the decision to make Winnipeg, a city on a



Tours of Windsor and Detroit offered stark contrasts

flood plain, a provincial capital, as well as the decision by the Ontario government to let polluting industries regulate themselves and to offload services onto municipalities. He wondered aloud if planners dare to speak up about political choices—and whether it would make any difference if they did.

Pawley also spoke of the forces of global capital, which local municipalities find hard to counter.

Dr. George Galster of Wayne State

University painted a grim picture of “mortropolis,” the suicidal city that makes its citizens less productive, less cooperative, and more threatening to each other.

Mortropolises sprawl across the land, politically fragmented and economically and racially segregated. This morally corrupt geography is the visible manifestation of collective irrationality: the tendency of individuals to act,

not as they wish others would act, but precisely as they hope others will not act. He suggested that the only antidote is metropolitan community-building, but once again, the means he mentioned seemed puny next to the problems he described. Nonetheless, he rightly pointed out that

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the stakes were too high for planners and community residents not to try.

In between these two speeches I sat in on a discussion of agricultural tourism. The speakers enthusiastically extolled the economic benefits of such things wine tours and fresh food markets, but seemed unwilling to discuss the environmental impacts of mass tourism in agricultural areas.

In the afternoon, I took a tour that compared downtown Detroit to the edge city of Troy. We gazed through partly-obscured glass at Troy's acres of manicured lawn, the miles of deserted sidewalk (the whole bus broke into applause when we spotted a couple walking their dog), the gleaming corporate headquarters, the vast shopping malls, the immaculate residential districts.

To figure out the size of the backyard, they asked one of the mothers to stand at the back door while her child walked away from her. When she flinched, that was as long as the backyard could be. The team used many other innovative ways to involve the residents and to attract funding for the project.

Traffic moved briskly on wide roads. There were no parking problems. Nothing looked older than five years. It was some people's idea of heaven on earth. Many people really do want to live like this, whatever the new urbanists may say. I found it fascinating and quite eerie.

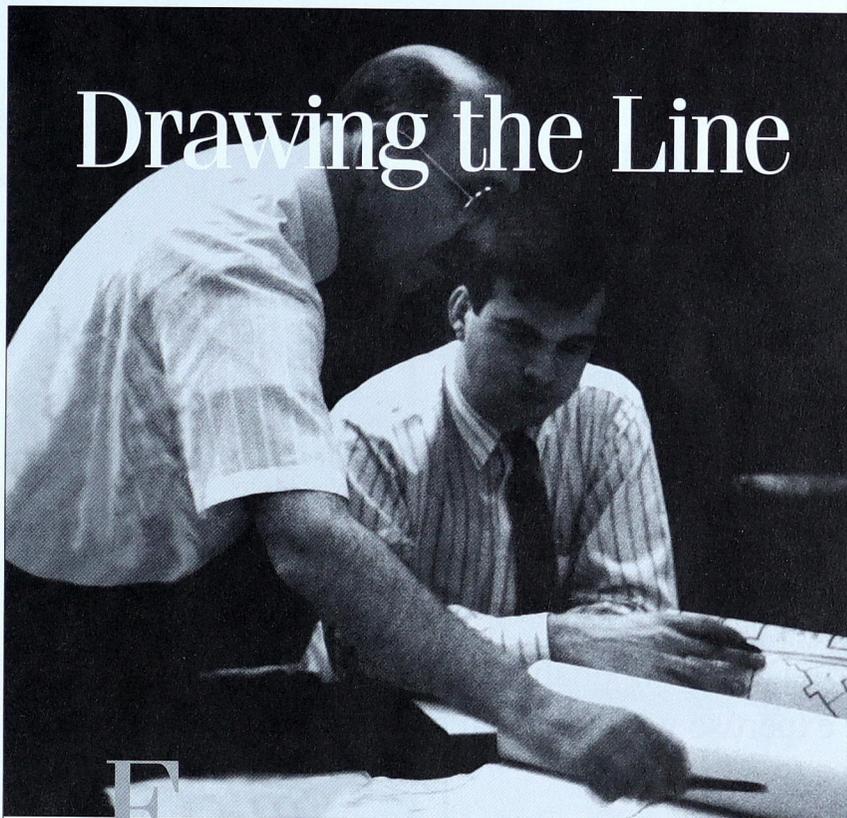
That evening we cruised the Detroit River and Lake St. Clair on a Sunset Dinner and Moonlight Cruise (minus sunset and moonlight, alas).

Friday morning, after the annual general meeting, I went to a seminar that called itself "Bout of the Century: Curves vs. Squares." Although nobody actually slugged it out, I was entertained by Doug Caruso's description of the plans for a landlocked site on a flood plain, distinguished by two landfill sites and a sewage treatment plant, bordered on one side by a municipality that has no interest in running streets across the urban boundary and on another by a well-to-do residential area that doesn't want new development. Moreover, the

plan uses the principles of New Urbanism in a city known (understandably) for its strong automobile culture, its preference for low-density, single-family housing, its lane closings and narrow rights of way, and its small-scale building and development industry, which makes overall design control difficult. I figure if you can get deal

with all that and produce something workable, you can probably cope with anything.

In the afternoon, I attended a presentation on the redesign of public housing, followed by a tour of two sites, one in Windsor and one in Detroit. Curtis Smith of Capital Needs Unlimited in Detroit, talked about the rehabilitation of Parkside,



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a public housing development dating from the 1930s. I was particularly interested in his description of "real-time, real-size" planning.

The planning team gutted one of the buildings and brought in walls, furniture and appliances on wheels. The residents pushed things around until they found a configuration that worked for them. To determine the location of parking, the team positioned and repositioned a car near the buildings until the residents decided it was neither too close nor too far away. To figure out the size of the backyard, they asked one of the mothers to stand at

the back door while her child walked away from her. When she flinched, that was as long as the backyard could be. The team used many other innovative ways to involve the residents and to attract funding for the project. The rehabilitation is just beginning and I want to go back in a few years to see the results.

Saturday morning dawned bright and sunny. At breakfast, Richard Ward of Development Strategies in St. Louis posed the question, "Will the New Urbanism Reach Middle Age?" He illustrated his description of new urbanist principles, not with the predictable pictures of Seaside

Call for Session Presentations Ontario Professional Planners Institute

**KINGSTON SYMPOSIUM,
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The 1998 Kingston Symposium Planning Committee invites individuals, groups and corporations to present or sponsor workshop sessions at the symposium. This is an opportunity to share your expertise, gain visibility and meet your planning colleagues. Students are encouraged to participate.

PROPOSAL AND SPONSORSHIP INSTRUCTIONS

To indicate your interest in presenting or sponsoring a workshop session contact:

Jim Peters, MCIP, RPP, Program Chair at (705) 653-1900, fax (705) 653-5203, or at OPPI, 234 Eglinton Avenue East, Suite 201, Toronto, Ontario, M4P 1K5.

If you would like to sponsor a session, you can choose from sessions now being organized or propose a topic and session. Sponsors will be provided with a list of available sessions, the sponsorship fee and the recognition method.

Those with specific proposals for sessions will be asked to provide the

committee with a brief summary of the topic and the names and resumes of speakers.

DEADLINES

In order for the program committee to meet its commitments, expressions of interest in presenting or sponsoring a workshop session should be submitted before December 1, 1997. Proposals after that date will be considered, although scheduling is more difficult.

SYMPOSIUM REGISTRATION

The Ontario Professional Planners Institute is a non-profit organization and the symposium organizing committee is entirely made up of volunteers. While we sincerely want your participation, we cannot waive the registration fee for speakers who want to attend other symposium events. Speakers are encouraged to support the Institute and register for the symposium. We are doing everything in our power to keep costs to a minimum.

To keep up-to-date on the symposium, read the regular updates in the Journal.

and Kentlands, but with photographs of his own neighbourhood, a turn-of-the-century streetcar suburb in St. Louis called Parkview.

Ward explained that new urbanists are trying to create streetcar suburbs, but without streetcars.

Ward expressed the hope that new urbanists will turn their attention away from brand-new subdivisions and towards downtown revitalization—an idea that is also expressed in Rudayna Abdo's article on New Urbanism in this issue. He went on to describe what he and a consortium of planners that includes BLGDG are doing in downtown Detroit.

I soon had a chance to see matters for myself on a walking tour of Detroit, led by two members of Preservation Wayne. The challenge of revitalizing a city centre where so much has already been demolished and where even more is going to be torn down to make way for two new stadia is a daunting one. Moreover, General Motors' move into the Renaissance Centre will create unpredictable effects, as current tenants in the Centre are displaced in a city with a shortage of Class A office space. Will they stay and take up residence in the available empty buildings or move to the suburbs?

The tour leaders also spoke of their frustration at the way in which matters were being handled behind closed doors by the Greater Downtown Partnership. They were especially angry about the proposal to demolish the enormous Hudson's depart-

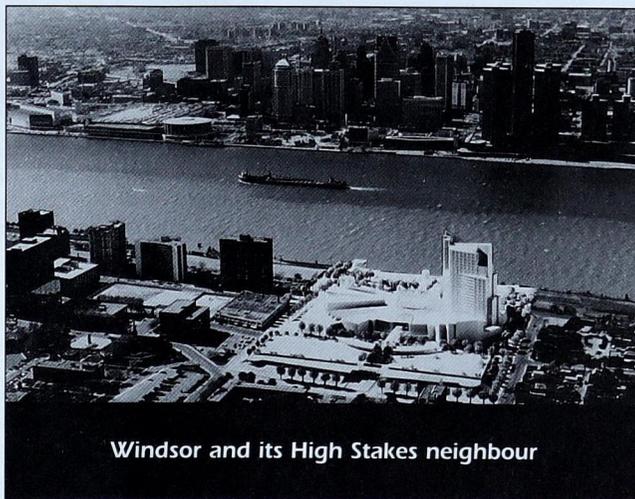
Detroit Opera House is under way and the results are impressive. The restored Guardian Building is a showplace, and rehabilitation may spruce up some of the other architectural gems still standing.

Steve Vogel of the University of Detroit Mercy spends a lot of time conducting planners around Detroit because: "Detroit is where we're all headed, sooner or later, and we want to know what to do when we get there." Given the current political climate, Canadian planners cannot afford to be smug. It could happen here too.

The Windsor conference was enjoyable, but it raised some serious and important questions. The "bout of the century" is not between curves and squares, but between lions and spiders: powerful business forces allied to political groups, versus

weak yet tenacious community groups (and planners), which have a certain clout as consumers and voters. Can we use it? Do we know how? Maybe next year's conference in Kingston, called "Breaking Out" will show the way.

Philippa Campsie, deputy editor of the Journal, is principal of her own communications consulting firm.



Windsor and its High Stakes neighbour

ment store building, even though there are no plans to redevelop the site. The struggles now going on perfectly illustrate Howard Pawley's comments on political decision making. It remains to be seen whether some kind of planning sanity will prevail.

Yet signs of life are apparent. The conversion of the Capitol Theatre to the

TRANSPORTATION

Why We Need Regional Planning Agencies

By David Kriger

A recent article in the Journal referenced a suggestion by consultant Frank Lewinberg that a non-governmental region-wide planning body is needed in the GTA. He cited New York's Regional Plan Association as a useful model. Are there any comparable organizations in Canada?

One example that comes to mind is JACPAT (Joint Administrative Committee on Planning and Transportation) which provides a venue for senior planning officials from two provinces, two regions and two cities. On the west coast, the Greater Vancouver Regional District (GRVD) has developed region-wide land use and transportation plans for the Lower Mainland.

GRVD is a regional planning agency - not a government - funded by its constituent municipalities and British Columbia. Fulfillment of these plans depends on cooperation, and not all constituents have the same development objectives.

In the U.S., Metropolitan Planning Organizations (MPOs) also are responsible for developing regional transportation plans. Like the GRVD, their plans depend on consensus but this is a pre-condition for funding of major projects. This is a big stick, and, with 300 MPOs, there is considerable variation in their success rate and efficiency. Some MPOs are looking at ways to accommodate tourist demand and freight movement. But land use remains a

jealously guarded local concern, so land use and transportation often are not well

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linked. It is not clear how such a system would work in Ontario, where funding for urban transportation has become a municipal responsibility.

The key attraction of a non-governmental regional planning agency is objectivity. In order to be credible, such an agency must have the tools to do the job, and, in

the interests of being non-partisan, could perhaps be housed in a university. Another requirement would be a funder with deep pockets to ensure that key issues are addressed in sufficient depth and from a sufficiently broad perspective. Could this be a new role for OPPI?

David Kriger, MCIP, RPP has examined the effectiveness of MPOs as transportation planning agencies. He is a consultant with Delcan in Ottawa and the Journal's contributing editor on transportation. He can be reached at <dkriger@delcan.com>

STUDENT VOICES

RYERSON: WORK HARD, HAVE FUN

By Belinda Morale

I would like to welcome returning and new students and faculty to the School of Urban and Regional Planning at Ryerson Polytechnic University for an exciting year.

The Ryerson Association of Planning Students (RAPS) will be holding traditional events such as the Urban Warzone and

the ever-popular Golden Bulldozer—an organized friendly competition between Ryerson and Waterloo, to be held at Waterloo this year. As yet, there are no dates set for these events.

The School held its annual barbeque to welcome our first-year students and its annual picnic and parade in September. On September 29, in conjunction with OPPI, Ryerson held a Careers Night, and pub nights have been tentatively scheduled for the second week in September, and Halloween, which will be a costume party.

Third and fourth year students will be

participating in field trips in October to Winnipeg and Boston respectively. There are many sites of interest in each of these two cities, and themes have yet to be decided.

With the aid of dedicated students and faculty, the School is organizing an Alumni Association, and has successfully organized an Employment and Skills Development Committee.

On behalf of all Planning Students at Ryerson I would like to congratulate Michael Smith (third year) who was awarded the OPPI Undergraduate Scholarship.

If you would like to attend any of the events, or wish to get involved in our Alumni Association, please call me.

Belinda is a third-year student at Ryerson, and has just begun her term as OPPI Student Representative.

STUDENT LIAISON COMMITTEE: IT'S YOUR COMMITTEE

by Megan Wood

Welcome to the 1997-98 term of the Student Liaison Committee (SLC). The theme this term is increased participation by student members.

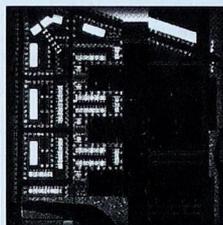
Students need to understand the Examination B process. They want the scholarship process to reflect their needs, to have their views solicited during school visits, and learn about potential career options. They want to know what is happening in the profession, and have their view of the future of planning incorporated into the Institute's policies, so that OPPI and the SLC can evolve. Today's planning students are not afraid of change, it's part of the world they live in. As your newly



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elected representative I accept the challenge of focusing this change in realistic directions.

But I can't do this by myself. A committee is only as committed to success as its individual members. I need everyone's help—the staff and Council members of OPPI, the student representatives, and you, the individual student. Each student member of OPPI is part of the SLC. Talk to your student representatives and talk to me. Make sure we hear what you are thinking.

The 1997/98 term will pass quickly and be full of challenges that require new and different solutions. The challenge we are facing can be summarized in the question, "How can the SLC help students to help themselves?"

Let me know!

Megan is a student at the University of Waterloo and is Student Delegate on Council. She can be reached by e-mail at <mwood@fes.uwaterloo.ca>

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO: YEAR IN REVIEW

by Marnie McGregor

While actively protesting the onset of the Megacity, as well as attempting to keep up with other planning and local governance changes occurring across Metropolitan Toronto, M.Sc. Students at the University of Toronto attended several OPPI events during the past academic year.

The year got off to an early start with an OPPI information session to demonstrate the benefits of membership. This event was well attended and introduced first-year students to the Institute as they were settling into their academic routine.

Another information session was held towards the end of the second term for graduating planners interested in fulfilling the Exam B membership requirements. This much needed "de-mystification" seminar was also well attended and provided invaluable information to students on how to become Registered Professional Planners.

Also throughout the Spring term, U of T's Alumni Speakers Series continued, bringing in several prominent members of Toronto's planning community including



Volunteers who made the OPPI home page anew: David MacLeod, Robert Young, Shawn Morgan and Gerry Melenka. (Patrick G. Déoux missing from picture.)



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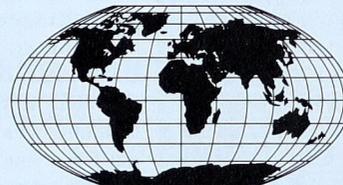
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OPPI Disciplinary Committee Chair Peter Walker of Walker, Nott, Dragicevic Associates Ltd. This series should continue next year to provide U of T students with valuable insights from the real world of professional planning.

The upcoming school year should bring even more exciting interaction between U

of T students and OPPI. The 1997/98 U of T students representatives are Eileen Costello and Antony Lorus. They can be reached at

<costello@cirque.geog.utoronto.ca> or <lorius@cirque.geog.utoronto.ca> Many thanks to Susan Smith and 1996/97 student

delegate Gerry Melenka for all of their hard work and keen desire to increase student involvement in OPPI.

Marnie McGregor was the 1996/97 U of T student representative. She is currently working as a planner with Landtactix Inc. in Vaughan.

COMMUNICATIONS

Cuttlefish, Frogs, and the Evils of Cut-and-Paste

Or, why writing letters to the editor is good for your professional stature

By Philippa Campsie

I was at the opening night reception of the OPPI annual symposium, watching an Irish busker trying to extricate himself from a straitjacket, when a planner nearby introduced himself. He came from Sudbury. "I enjoy your articles about plain language," he said. "But of course, you are simply attacking a symptom, not the real problem."

I was very pleased to hear this. For one thing, it's great to get feedback. Writing for the Journal sometimes feels like shouting down a well. I seldom know what planners think about particular articles.

For another thing, I happen to agree with him. And, for that matter, with George Orwell, who said, "The great enemy of clear language is insincerity.

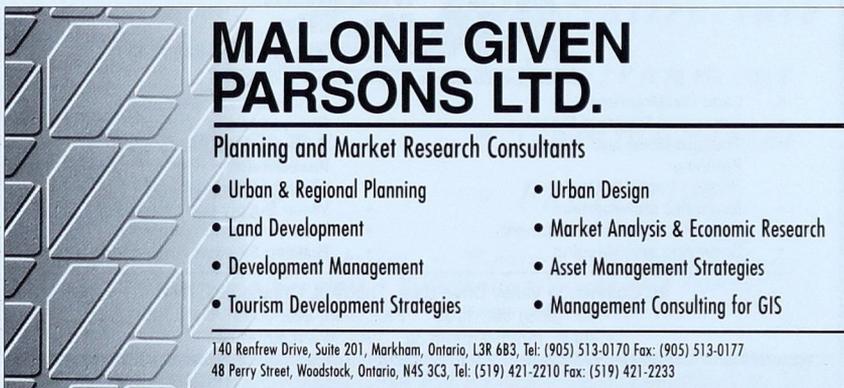
When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish squirting out ink."

We chatted for a while about the planning mindset and its relationship to jargon, but I forgot to tell the Sudbury planner one thing, so I'm telling him in this column: when you have a reaction like that to an article in the Journal, please write us a letter about it.

Treat the Journal as an interactive medium. Respond right away when something catches your attention. E-mail us (feel free to use emoticons), fax us, put your ideas on paper.

Not only will it improve the Journal, but it may improve your own communication skills. Getting into the habit of responding to what you read is one way to become a more active, more critical reader. Too often we read on auto-pilot, unquestioningly, unthinkingly.

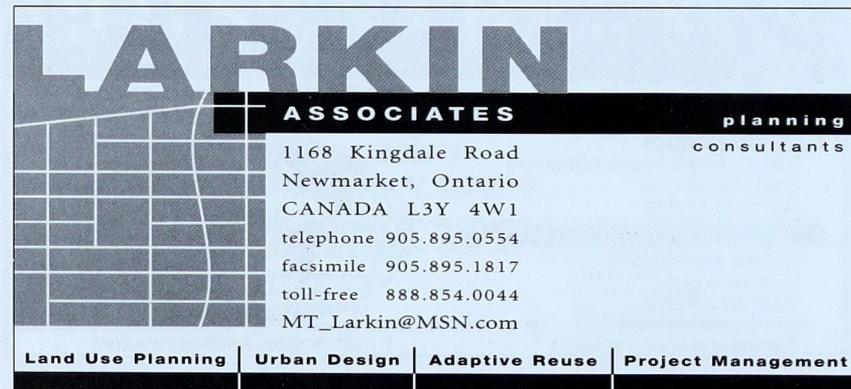
We may do this because we simply don't understand what we are reading. From time to time in my workshops on plain language, the class comes across a particularly dense bit of technical writing that no one can translate into straightforward terms. As often as not, the passage was not written by a planner, but was an extract from a technical or legal report that had been cut-and-pasted into a planning document without anyone inquiring too closely about what it meant, or even if it meant anything at all. I've also seen executive summaries that have been cut-and-pasted together without any attempt to make the material understandable. They're not a pretty sight.



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Planners routinely read reports and correspondence written by lawyers and engineers, much of it complex, jargon-ridden, and obscure. Some planners seem to have given up expecting to understand what these professionals say and quote their words in planning reports without asking themselves (or the lawyers or engineers) what they mean. Not only is this practice lazy, it is potentially unethical. What tiny time bomb awaits in that paragraph that you blithely inserted into your report? How will you explain it to the OMB?

When people stop trying to read critically, they accept what they read at face value. They read and quote statistics without checking whether the statistics are accurate or relevant. They repeat stories they've heard, forgetting that the plural of

"The great enemy of clear language is insincerity. When there is a gap between one's real and one's declared aims, one turns as it were instinctively to long words and exhausted idioms, like a cuttlefish squirting out ink."

—George Orwell

"anecdote" is not "data." They cut-and-paste other people's ideas into their own minds without looking at them closely.

Take the story about the boiled frog. I'm sure you've heard it. According to received wisdom, a frog who is dropped in hot water will jump out immediately, but if the frog is put in cold water and the water is heated gradually, the frog will stay in the water until it boils to death. Management consultants quote this story ad nauseam, to suggest that gradual change is dangerous, but when a journalist asked a biologist about this phenomenon, he was told, "Frogs aren't that stupid. They jump out when they get uncomfortable." So much for the boiled frog story.

People's ability to accept what they are told unquestioningly is what makes it possible for a store to put up a sign saying, "To serve you better, we are now open two

nights a week" (when they used to be open four nights a week), or "For your greater convenience, we are closing this location and reopening in Coquitlam." It also makes it possible for the Ontario government to pass a law called the Tenant Protection Act that make eviction easier. Too many people accept cuttlefish ink when they should demand spring water.

Our only defense against cuttlefish ink is a habit of questioning what we read, articulating our questions, and, if the issue is important, insisting on an answer. You can practice on the Journal. Question the articles, the assumptions, the conclusions. The articles are short and important ideas may get left on the cutting room floor. Fire off an e-mail when you read something that bothers you or puzzles you. It's a good professional habit to get into.

Philippa Campsie is deputy editor of the Journal. She teaches "Plain Language for Planners."

Letters to the Editor

"Question the articles, the assumptions, the conclusions. The articles are short and important ideas may get left on the cutting room floor. Fire off an e-mail when you read something that bothers you or puzzles you."

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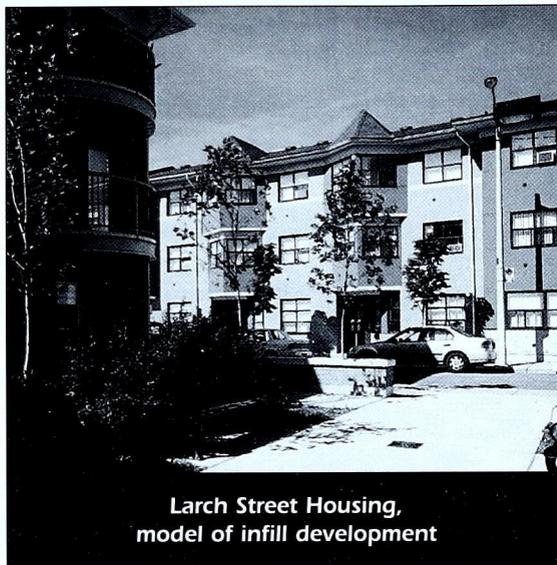
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URBAN DESIGN

Infill Housing One of 9 winners

The City of Toronto urban design awards of excellence were announced just before the Journal went to press. Among the winners was Larch Street Housing, developed by the City of Toronto non-profit housing department. The design team included Allen Ensslen Barrett Architects Inc. and James Floyd Landscape Architect. The project was cited as a model of infill development, located in the Chinatown district of Toronto. The housing is on the roof of a large new parking garage.



**Larch Street Housing,
model of infill development**

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Practical Solutions For Urban Transportation Needs

The Songs We Sing: News and Events in a Different Vein

By Greg Daly



Songs of Hope: I had the pleasure of attending "High Stakes Planning" in Windsor and was thoroughly impressed. We were presented with a wonderful cross-section of our profession. I was also pleased to see recent graduates leading many of the sessions. This conference showed me there is hope for growth in the professional nature of this organization.

Singular Performance: Much was heard about amalgamation. Our members have the opportunity to work diligently to make change as painless as possible. Add your voice to the discussion, but also remember to keep this column up to date on personnel moves. This will help make sense of upheaval and restructuring.

Minstrels and Pied Pipers: Karl Van Kessel has recently joined Proctor and Redfern as a planner where he will be working on projects throughout the province. Bill Fitzpatrick, MCIP, RPP has moved to Wheeltrans where he is helping prepare long-term strategies for this essential service. Lorne Berg, MCIP, RPP whose first article will appear in the next edition of the Journal, has been named executive director of an intermunicipal task force on revitalizing the Black Creek area. Jeff Kratky, MCIP, RPP is the principal of Jeff Kratky Land Use Planning and Real Estate Advisory Services.

Sing Along: OPPI outreach activities will see Andrew McNeely, Michael Mizzi, Cindy Rotenberg-Walker, Loretta Ryan (and me) visiting Ryerson to express the joys of planning and the realities of entering the workforce. Susan Smith is planning visits to the other six accredited schools so please consider participating.

Swan Song: Being a relatively new member after a long period of estrangement I am convinced OPPI can be a powerful voice. The People column is a great way to let your fellow members how you are making a contribution, and to let others know how diverse our roles as professionals can be.

Gregory Daly, MCIP, RPP is a planner with Weir & Foulds in Toronto. He can be reached by fax at (416) 365-1876 or <DALYG@weirfoulds.com>

