

# ONTARIO PLANNING JOURNAL

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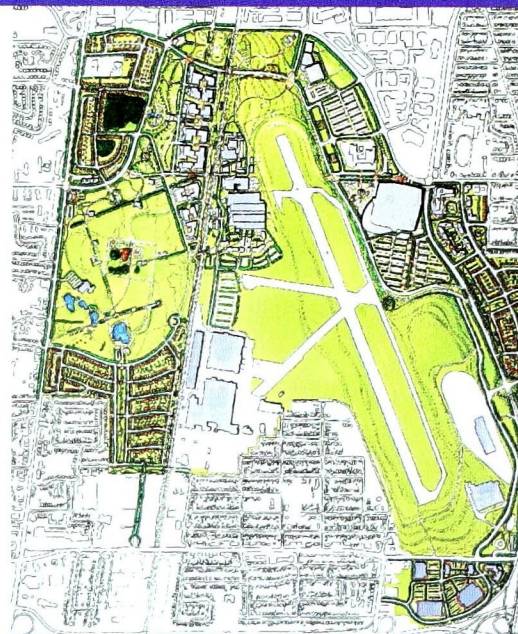
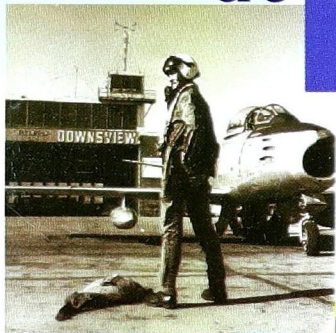
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## ONTARIO PLANNING JOURNAL

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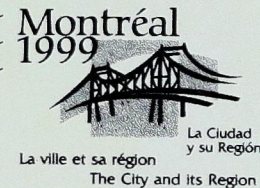
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# Planning for a National Urban Park

A public/private strategy for Downsview

There are few places in Toronto where the presence of the landscape is silencing. Yet almost perfectly in the middle of the GTA, surrounded by highway interchanges, factories, new and old neighbourhoods, Downsview floats like some dislocated prairie above the city.

When Caroline Carpenter, a local farmer, gave "downs-view" its name in the 1840s, she captured its essence as an elevated plateau with distant panoramic views to the lake and city skyline. Visiting the site today, which serves as the headlands of the Black Creek and West Don River systems, the land still retains these qualities. There are areas of Downsview which are remarkably akin to a western landscape. A dominant sense of sky. Grasslands stretching to the horizon.

The evolution of the site since Carpenter's time has only increased this link to the sky. Aircraft have ascended from this site since 1928 when various airfields were built in the area. DeHavilland Aircraft of Canada moved its first aircraft hangar to the site in 1929. And though Downsview has had many incarnations—recreational flying club, war period centre of production, military base, and as the focus for the development of civilian aircraft—the runway continues to be used and remains one of Downsview's most enduring elements.

## Creation of a National Urban Park

In the coming years Downsview will be transformed into a major park, conceived and managed by the federal government, combining large areas of open space within a framework of both heritage buildings and new developments. Collectively, this national urban park has the potential to become a fascinating and wholly unique public resource that will attract interest locally, nationally and internationally.

In July 1998, Toronto City Council unanimously approved the Downsview Area Secondary Plan. Although the area of the plan encompasses 1320 acres roughly bounded by Keele,

By Calvin Brook and  
Anne McLroy



Airfield / signalized intersection at Dufferin St. before it was closed in the 1940s

Sheppard Avenue, Wilson Heights and Highway 401, the focus of the planning exercise is a 644 acre site formerly known as Canada Forces Base Toronto.

Since 1994, when the Federal Government announced CFB Toronto would be closed as a military base, the Canada Lands Company (CLC) in collaboration with the City, has undertaken an

ambitious process to redevelop the site "...primarily as a unique urban recreational green space." In addition to creating a plan for the site this has involved extensive research, implementation of a self-financing development model which will provide revenue for the park, and an elaborate public consultation program (recently recognized with two OPPI awards).

## Design Framework Key to the Planning Process

Instrumental to the planning process, an extensive urban design study was undertaken to ensure that the relationships between the parklands and new and re-developed areas will be mutually supportive. Most importantly the study established a framework for design befitting an urban park of national significance.

Leading up to the City's secondary plan, CLC initiated a proposal call process which targeted private-sector and non-profit development groups interested in being part of the vision for Downsview. From this evolved three key new developments which both frame and provide complementary activities to the park.

Two residential areas, to be house-form in scale, are proposed to the south and north of Downsview Green—the park's main open space area. The adjacency of residents, with views onto the park, will provide a level of community ownership which will be key to the year-round, day and evening use of the park and its safety. Urban design guidelines

were created to ensure that a pattern of positive frontage would be used for all new development facing the park and street network.

The second development concept which evolved from the proposal call builds upon Downsview's long history as a centre of innovation and research as the home of both deHavilland Aircraft of Canada and the Defense and Civil Institute of Environmental Medicine (DCIEM). Both uses will remain in their present location with deHavilland contin-



Cultural Campus: former aviation complex

uing to operate the airfield. It was here that deHavilland manufactured Tiger Moths, Mosquitos and other aircraft during World War II. The history and development of Canada's North is intrinsically linked to Downsview where the Beaver, Otter, Caribou, Buffalo and Twin Otter aircraft were conceived and produced.

### Historic Buildings Provide Basis For An Urban Setting

One of Canada's most formidable structures, the Supply Depot, is located in the western portion of the site. This building which provides 900,000 square feet on a single floor level was the central receiving, storage and distribution centre for the Department of National Defense. It is built to withstand direct bomb attack!

This is the location of a new research and technology park that may eventually grow to three million square feet. The feasibility of reusing the existing structure as part of this complex is the subject of ongoing study. A major employment centre focused on research makes considerable sense at Downsview. The site is well served by transportation with the 401 and Allen Road at its southern and eastern boundaries respectively. Two subway stations, Downsview and Wilson, currently serve the area. A third station, potentially built on-site, is being explored as part of the eventual expansion of the Sheppard line north to York University.

The plan for the research and technology park recommends a campus of low and mid-height structures consolidated in a more urban setting. The scale and pattern of buildings, streets and open space are configured to support pedestrian activity between grade level building use, open space and parkland. Guidelines for the design and massing of buildings are based on a concept of 'park transition zones.' These areas

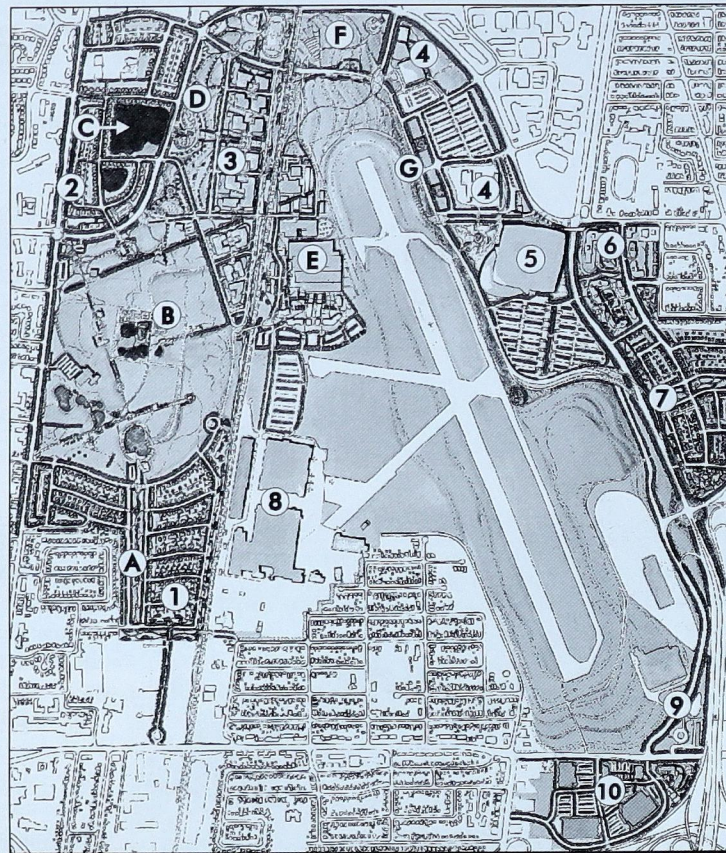
provide a transition between the four to six floor main building components and the adjacent public park areas with smaller

pavilion-type building elements that contain semi-public uses (cafes, daycare, show rooms, building entrances and lobbies) within a forecourt setting of gardens, urban squares and colonnades. These transitional zones support visual and active connections between indoor and outdoor space and civilize the relationship between the public and private realm.

Recently, there has been considerable publicity surrounding the Destination: Technodome project which is proposed for a site on the eastern edge of CLC's Downsview lands across from the Downsview TTC station. Plans call for a 2.5 million square foot facility combining a remarkable diversity of entertainment, recreation, sports and retail uses housed under one roof. The structure, which is vaguely reminiscent of a futurist space craft, features an indoor ski hill, a waterfall, a navigable river and an array of virtual-reality entertainment areas. While concerns have been raised regarding traffic impacts generated by a facility which will have a regional draw, Destination: Technodome as a component of the overall plan, reinforces the concept of Downsview as a public resource balancing indoor and outdoor activities which will appeal to a broad range of interests.

### Aviation Buildings Provide Link With History

Beyond the natural beauty of its landscape, perhaps the most compelling aspect of the site is the collection of aviation manufacturing buildings which were built between 1928 and 1944 at the very centre of Downsview. This complex, currently known as the Cultural Campus, produced roughly 17% of the aircraft that Canada supplied to the allied effort during World War II. The larger aircraft hangars reflect the Bauhaus form of industrial structures popular at the time. These are vast compositions of glass, light



DOWNSVIEW LANDS	
Park Components	Development Components
A South Linear Park	1 South Residential Area
B Downsview Green	2 North Residential Area
C Wooded Grove	3 Research + Technology Park
D North Linear Park	4 DND Facility
E Cultural Campus (Former Aviation Complex)	5 Destination Technodome
F Meadow Park	6 Downsview TTC Station
G Linear Parkway + Alcove Parks.	7 City of Toronto Lands
	8 de Havilland Aircraft of Canada
	9 Wilson TTC Station
	10 Block 'H'

Urban Design Framework Plan



The Tiger Moth biplane was manufactured at de Havilland

Illustration: Cochrane Brook

Photo: Canada Lands Company

and free-span steel structure that represent some of Toronto's finest modernist buildings.

Prior to the urban design study an evaluation had been undertaken of the ten buildings with the objective of determining which should be retained or demolished. Three buildings were deemed to have historical importance and reuse potential. Through a series of workshops held as part of the urban design study a new appreciation developed for the overall 'urban atmosphere' created by retaining all of the structures and the pattern of both intimate and eccentric spaces and streets that the campus offered. Vancouver's Granville island served as a useful precedent based on its ability to preserve and reuse even the most marginal of its industrial structures. Its success in revitalization was also linked to a careful diversity of uses including artisan's workshops, schools, produce and craft markets, small and non-chain retail and restaurant uses within a pedestrian oriented "urban park" type setting. While Granville is Vancouver's most popular tourist destination, it is still routinely used by local residents and retains its sense of authenticity and informality. Similar to Granville, the Cultural Campus has the potential to be redefined as a central focus of the park experience providing a year round destination for the public within a setting which is eclectic, informal, urban and builds upon the strong historical associations of the site and its structures.

The work completed to date for Downsview sets the stage for the detailed design of the park and associated developments within CLC's Downsview Lands. It is anticipated that an international design competition will be held in the near future to define the detailed park design.

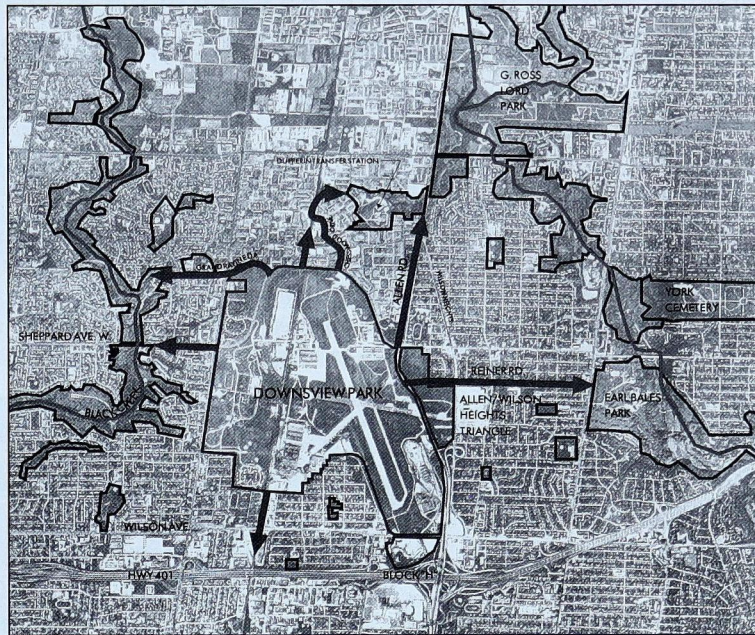
In J.B. Jackson's 1994 essay, *The Accessible Landscape*, he writes, "Those of us old enough to recall the world of seventy years ago can find some satisfaction in having played a role - minor and entirely unheroic - in the current exploration of space: we were the first generation to become accustomed to seeing the earth from the air."

The potency of Downsview can only be truly comprehended from the sky. It repre-

sents a collision between the airborne and the earthbound worlds. The congruity of the traditional order of settlement: conces-

modern landscape.

As a major urban park Downsview offers an unprecedented opportunity to explore through its design, and the activities provided for public enjoyment; the collage of natural and man-made worlds; the links between earth and sky; and the compelling history and future potential of technology and its role in shaping our communities.



Downsview links to a regional open space system

sion roads, orthogonal grid, are suddenly shuffled as if a twister had touched down. The result is a strangely beautiful yet truly

Leonhardt, Tom Keefe - City of Toronto, Erika Engel - Engel Consulting.

*Calvin Brook RPP, MCIP, MRAIC is a principal of Cochrane Brook Planning & Urban Design in Toronto. Anne McIlroy, MCIP, RPP, MRAIC is a senior associate with the firm. Cochrane Brook prepared the Downsview Urban Design Study for the City of Toronto. Additional sources and credits: David Sadowski, Adrian Litavski, Wayne Kelly - CLC, Barbara*

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Conservation authorities under pressure

Downloading of Provincial Responsibilities to Ontario Conservation Authorities

By Al Ruggero and James Stiver

This is the second of a three part series looking at changes facing conservation authorities.

The province is stepping away from many of its traditional roles by devolving responsibilities downward.

At the same time, transfer payments to the regions and counties have been cut. This caused overworked and underfunded regions, counties and local municipalities to transfer many duties further down still. Because of their special skills the Conservation Authorities (CAs) are logical recipients for new responsibilities.

**Current Reality**

The province initiated five pilot studies to formalize downloading of municipal plan review to the regional levels and to encourage streamlining of the plan approval process. To date, Durham Region is the only GTA region to begin a pilot study. To help with the new responsibilities for approvals the province made resources like mapping, studies and reports available. The Region, in turn, downloaded to the lower tiers the responsibilities of stormwater management for subdivisions and reviewing agriculture and food lands justification studies. This quickly revealed that urban and other large lower

tier municipalities have greater resources, equipment and library materials than others.

**What does this mean for Conservation Authorities?**

The passing of Bill 20 triggered Transfer Agreements between the regions, lower tier

being sought. With no help from the province to defer costs associated with the development approvals, alternative sources of revenue must be found. The most likely candidate for these lower tiers is the land developer, or applicant.

Undertaking the process at a level more in touch and more easily accessible to the public promotes grassroots planning. The impression that the decision-makers are more closely associated with local interests is an unintentional bonus. Furthermore, it will make it easier for the public to get involved in the day-to-day evolution of the planning process. It appears that in terms of costs, timing and public involvement the assumption of greater responsibility by the lower tiers should benefit the public interest.



Photo: Metropolitan Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

Doing more with less: Is pay per fish on the horizon?

municipalities and the local conservation authorities. This was done primarily to provide needed expertise and resources to the lower levels. At that time, the three levels reviewed new costs and compiled a new fee-for-service structure.

Even though the province no longer comments on development/draft plan circulations, no MOUs have been signed with York or Peel Regions or the City of Toronto.

**What does this mean for the development community?**

Now that lower tiers are required to do more with less, fee-for-service structures are being introduced in practically every agency where some form of expertise or expert opinion is

**Conclusion**

The Province is currently experiencing growing pains that are being felt in many areas. It appears that the government has reached a point where it cannot survive without drastic changes. What appears from the grassroots level to be a terrible situation of dumping of responsibility and funding at the same time may actually turn out to be a blessing to the local residents that have been fighting for more local control since the first urban areas emerged across the Province. Out of necessity the system must improve its efficiency. Duplication will be minimized and those who need services will be required to pay for it. The system is looking more fair, equitable and reasonable every day.

*Al Ruggero, MCIP, RPP is a consultant with InfoPlan Research in Toronto. James Stiver, MCIP, RPP is a municipal planner with the City of Vaughan in York Region.*

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## Taking the High Road on A Bike in the Lowlands

By Patricia Roset

Rain or shine, business or pleasure, the Dutch ride their bicycles. The fifteen million people living in the Netherlands own 12 million bicycles. On average, this vehicle is used for almost 30 percent of all journeys, including travelling to work, the grocery store, daycare centre, school, bar and gym. In the Netherlands, cycling is a way of life, not so much a lifestyle. Even the Prime Minister rides his bicycle to work.

Over the years, environmental awareness, personal health and road safety have become important public issues in the Netherlands. The federal government has been responding to these issues by actively stimulating the usage of the bicycle (and public transit) as an alternative to the car. In addition to a national Bicycle Masterplan, the government is encouraging the reduction of car use

by offering attractive fiscal arrangements to employers that adopt measures that increase bicycle ridership among their employees.

Municipalities are actively involved in bicycle promotion by improving and expanding cycling-infrastructure. Although in urban areas limited space is an issue, cycling requires relatively little room. A coherent cycling-network allows the bicycle to become competitive with other modes of transportation over short distances. The network needs to provide the most direct, attractive, safe and comfortable routes possible. To attain successful results the design should comply with the demands of (intended) function and (expected) use. Here are some examples of cycling infrastructure and regulation in the Netherlands, not common in Toronto:

*Bicycle lane:* A blue, round sign with a

white bicycle in the middle identifies the bicycle lane. Lanes are paved red and are raised or separated from the road by a continuous or broken white line, a ridge, a barrier of posts, or a strip of parked cars. Bicycle lanes might continue through the intersection and beyond.

*Right of way:* All traffic turning right or left has to give way to traffic going straight ahead.

*Speed bump:* A special design for speed bumps will slow down cars in residential as well as main streets, but will not slow down cyclists. On intersections without traffic lights, raised traffic islands or large speed bumps the size of the intersection are used to slow down cars. This or the use of yield signs is preferred over stop signs, to secure a flow of traffic.

*Roundabout (traffic circle):* All traffic in



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the roundabout, including cyclists, have the right of way. These right-of-way roundabouts have a separate bicycle lane. Cars wishing to leave the circle have to give way to cyclists in the this lane. A roundabout secures a continuous flow of traffic, slowing it down without bringing it to a

halt (a benefit for emissions).

*Shopping area:* During the day, certain shopping areas are closed down for motorized traffic at the street entrance, but accessible to cyclists. Deliveries can only occur in the morning and after-hours.

The bicycle consciousness does not make

an ultimate cyclist's haven. Cycling in the Netherlands is also faced with challenges. Increasing car use decreases cycling space, making cycling less safe and less attractive. Threats to social safety and the large number of bicycle thefts and vandalism also continue to keep people from cycling. With so many people cycling it tends to become very crowded and the need for facilities, such as bicycle parking, is tremendous. Cyclists are often ignorant of the rules, particularly adolescents. This adds to the number of bicycle-related accidents (note that no helmets are being worn).

Bicycling conditions in the Netherlands differ from those in Toronto. The diverse Dutch cycling community is sustained by a moderate climate, flat topography and dense population. Toronto is challenged by a car-based culture, extremes of climate, and sprawling, hilly neighbourhoods.

A focus on cycling is essential if Toronto is to maintain its ranking as most liveable city in the world and wants to regain the title of best cycling city in North America. If Toronto is to achieve these ambitions, the city needs to take two actions. The first is to continue supporting the efforts by groups and individuals to improve cycling conditions in the City, especially those of the Toronto Cycling Committee, to advise City Council on the design, development and delivery of bicycle policies, programs and facilities. The second is for City Council to implement the recommendations of the Coroner's Report on Cycling Fatalities. These actions will contribute to a socially and economically vibrant city which is characterized by accessibility to its homes, offices, stores, bars, restaurants and public spaces by all means of transportation. A bicycle-friendly Toronto is a healthy Toronto.

*Patricia Roset holds a Master's in Urban Planning from the University of Utrecht (completed at the University of Toronto). She currently works in the Department of Trade and Economic Affairs at the Consulate General of the Netherlands in Toronto and is a regular attendee at the City of Toronto Cycling Committee. She can be reached by email at [patricia\\_rosset@hotmail.com](mailto:patricia_rosset@hotmail.com).*



The "school run" in Holland is often accomplished by bike



The urban cyclist has a home in the Netherlands

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## Student Research Tackling Wide Range of Current Issues

At the suggestion of the Journal's editorial committee, OPPI Student delegate Belinda Morale invited planning students to tell Journal readers about their plans for current research. This is a sampling of the response.

### **Taking Action in Diverse Environments: A Case Study of Environmental Justice Activism in New York City**

Community education, organizing and planning are related ways of building social movements. Each challenges the conventional, systemic and oppressive power relations and structures in order to take action. The U.S. environmental justice movement has succeeded in drawing broad-based support by defining environmental issues in social and economic concerns. As a result, 'environmentalism' has become accessible and relevant outside of the mainstream movement, particularly for multi-ethnic communities.

My aim is to examine these strategies to explore possible connections, implications and differences for similar activities in Canada.

Drawing from a New York City case study, I will research how community-based planning for critical social change takes place at the grassroots. One of my research questions is: how does transformative community planning shape a community's development?

*Emily Chan is a candidate for a Master of Environmental Studies in Planning, Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University. She can be reached at [emilyc@yorku.ca](mailto:emilyc@yorku.ca) She is currently participating in the student exchange program of the Consortium on Sustainable Community Development and Planning, studying at the Pratt Institute in New York City, and doing research with the New York City Environmental Justice Alliance.*

§

### **When should ADR be used?**

Planners of the future will face a growing number of land use disputes as valuable resources become scarce. Currently, development pressures in urban and suburban areas threaten wildlife and their habitat. Planners are frequently caught in the middle of dis-

putes between developers and citizens concerned over the future of natural areas.

A growing trend in resource management is the use of alternative dispute resolution (ADR) to facilitate problem solving between stakeholders. My research looks at whether ADR techniques such as mediation and negotiation can settle land use disputes and still produce "environmentally-sound" decisions. This topic examines the relationships between science, policy, and decision-making within specific disputes. In each case, I am interviewing participants involved in the ADR process and experts who understand the specific technical or scientific issues that were part of the process.

My report will indicate when mediation or negotiation are useful tools for resolving land use disputes and when alternatives are appropriate. In addition, my research will provide a template for stakeholders considering, or already involved in dispute resolution.

*Marc Rose is completing a Masters of Environmental Studies at the University of Waterloo's School of Planning.*

*Comments can be sent via E-mail to: [mdrose@fes.uwaterloo.ca](mailto:mdrose@fes.uwaterloo.ca)*

§

### **Exploring Public Private Partnership Models for Economic Development**

The provision of most urban services has traditionally been a public sector responsibility but government revenues are increasingly insufficient to meet expanding demand. A new mindset incorporating inventiveness, imagination, efficiency, and flexibility must be adopted if economic development initiatives are to be successful. Public Private Partnerships (PPPs) represent an alternative economic development model where the talents of both the public and private sectors can be combined.

The significant elements of my senior thesis project include:

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- critical analysis of the strengths and weakness of PPPs
- a review of the roles and responsibilities of public and private members
- a determination of the contributing factors which create an optimum PPP
- a case study of the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance
- a comparative analysis of other Canadian and American examples

The overall purpose is to determine if Public/Private Partnerships are an effective way to achieve economic development goals. If PPPs are sustainable, what factors contribute to success and helping communities maintain a competitive edge?

*Kristine Nixon will be graduating from Ryerson's School of Planning later this year and is currently working for the Ontario Realty Corporation. She can be reached at nixonk@mbs.gov.on.ca*

§

### **Precarious Housing and Homelessness among People Suffering from Severe Mental Illness**

Currently, there are many factors that make it difficult for people suffering from serious mental illness to maintain themselves in permanent housing. These include disappearing government support for social housing, rising market rents, and social assistance that is not properly indexed to housing costs.

The goal of my report is to inventory the supply of housing for people with mental illness in Waterloo Region and develop profiles of those who are precariously housed or homeless. Much of the data will come from a study that is currently being done by the local District Health Council and Social Planning Councils on homelessness in Waterloo Region. The results of this study will be valuable to planners at the Region of Waterloo who are working on improving health and social services, and at the City of Waterloo where an Official Plan review will begin next year. It is also anticipated that the Ministry of Health will soon re-invest in the area of housing for mental health.

*Ryan Walker is a candidate for a Master of Arts in Planning, School of Planning, University of Waterloo. His email address is rc2walke@fes.uwaterloo.ca or you can reach him by phone at (519) 885-7212.*

§

### **Ten Year Aggregate Demand for Canadian Airports**

Through its National Airports Policy, Transport Canada is transferring responsibility for airports to local airport authorities wherever feasible. Although these authorities are public, non-profit organizations, they are required to be financially self-sufficient. With federal capital reserves no longer available, local airport authorities must plan

capacity, pricing, and expansions more carefully than ever before.

But the factors that determine demand for airport services are poorly understood, and little research directly addresses this issue in Canada. I am carrying out research using multiple regression to determine passenger and aircraft movement levels at Canadian airports as a function of socioeconomic variables, airport characteristics, and labour force composition. I am preparing a master's thesis and a paper for the Canadian Transportation Research Forum's annual conference (Montreal, May 16-19, 1999).

My data are from 19 large airports across Canada between 1986 and 1996. Information on passenger levels, aircraft movements, and socioeconomic data comes from government publications. But there are no known consolidated sources of data on airport capacity or finances for these years. I hope that this project will lead to further research on related topics.

*William Hamlin is at the School of Planning, University of Waterloo. He can be reached at (519) 888-4567 ext. 3408, fax (519) 725-2827 or e-mail, hamlinw@compuserve.com or wjphamli@fes.uwaterloo.ca.*

*Student members interested in having a summary of their thesis or major paper published should send a text file of no more than 200 words to oppi@interlog.com. These will be included in Student Voices from time to time.*

## **New approaches to restoration**

# **From Turf to Trees: Alternatives in Urban Design and Management**

*By Paul Heeney*

A great deal of attention has been given in recent years to the need to change various elements of urban planning and design in Ontario. The process has been revisited in order to incorporate mechanisms for sound environmental management and policies for the protection of natural features in and around our cities. Ecosystem planning has provided the theoretical basis but its application has been little more than the mitigation and reduction of some of the negative physical impacts of land use and development. Too often, it has not produced the desired results.

A new school of thought suggests that we should not be solely concerned with the impact of land use on the particular features and characteristics of a site or region. Rather, planning and design should recognize the collective attributes of water, soil,

air, and vegetation as an ecosystem, and address the potential to affect the ecological processes that result from the relationships within this system. These provide the environmental conditions of the landscape within which we live. Consequently, the 'health' of these processes and the entire urban ecosystem determines the quality of these conditions. Combining our buildings and infrastructure with ecological systems promotes sustainability, reduces the costs and negative impacts of managing cities, and contributes to improving public health. Project Green, a non-profit environmental organization based in Windsor, has undertaken an initiative to promote alternative design and management approaches based on this new level of ecosystem planning.

In response to defined needs in Essex

County to halt and reverse the loss of natural systems, Project Green formulated the Land Stewardship and Ecological Restoration Program. The goal is to both encourage and actively restore ecologically functional terrestrial communities. Project Green provides and coordinates the necessary resources to undertake these projects. A focus of the program is on seeking opportunities within urban landscapes. The most significant project to date is the restoration of the property surrounding the Ford of Canada Essex Engine Plant in Windsor.

The initiative for this project came from two sources. CAW employees at the Engine Plant initiated 'Wildlife at Work' in 1996, a program designed to enhance the environment and provide bird habitat across open spaces on the property. The desire to augment this program has grown over the last

year. Management was interested in reducing the cost of maintaining the property, which was approaching \$75,000 annually. The goal was to design a concept that would both reduce the cost of managing the lands (mainly turf) around the plant while complementing the environmental initiatives of the employees.

After an initial site assessment to evaluate the needs and opportunities, research helped us identify the natural communities that probably inhabited the site before intensive urban settlement. This was done through by analysing historical data and inventories of existing woodlots and other natural features close to the site.

A community model and restoration strategy was then developed. The model outlines the ecological attributes of the community to be established across the site, fitting the restored site into the regional landscape and ecosystem. Close attention was given to recreating such features as edges, non-linear boundaries, natural species composition, and the use of trees and plants that are valuable sources of food and habitat for native bird species. The restoration strategy outlines the implementation needs, including site preparation, planting, and human resources.

The final plan will see the restoration of 14 hectares of the property to an oak-hickory forest community. It was designed to meet the original goals of the project, but the opportunity was taken to address and highlight other important functions, such as moderating the microclimate, preserving native plant species, and reducing pollution both through a reduction in use of gas-powered maintenance machinery and herbicides as well as the filtration mechanisms of trees. Additionally, a walking trail will be created on the site as a source of recreation for employees and residents of the area.

The Program at Project Green is founded on the belief that environmental protection and restoration is a community-level responsibility. This work is being performed on private property, but it will impact on the immediate community and the larger region. With this in mind, the implementation of the project was based on community education and active participation.

The project was announced to the general public through media events. Brochures

were produced for distribution to residents and businesses in the immediate area. Site signage identifies the nature of the work being done. This enabled us to provide numerous means by which to inform the

employees, local businesses, the local residents, service clubs, students, and other local NGOs. This provides the opportunity to educate the public as to the role of ecological function in urban landscapes, its

importance with respect to public health and well-being, and how one can participate in contributing to improving these attributes. It is hoped that this will contribute to popularizing ecosystem planning and design in Windsor and elsewhere, stressing the importance of integrating sustainability, public health, and less costly management into broader planning goals.

*Paul A. Heeney is a student member of OPPI, having just completed a Masters in Environmental Studies at York University. He lives in Windsor and is Ecosystem*

*Planner with Project Green, which has offices London, Toronto, Niagara Falls, Kelowna and Vancouver as well Windsor.*




Ford Plant from the air

local community about the intents and purposes of the project.

The work itself will be performed through the cooperative effort of Project Green, Ford

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## Editorial

## The Monster OMB Hearing: Does Size Really Matter?

Are very large OMB hearings a good idea? Is there such a thing as too much evidence? Is the purpose of large hearings to reach a decision that represents good planning or to give objectors a fair hearing?

All over the GTA, planners and lawyers are gearing up for what promises to be one of the biggest OMB hearings in recent memory. At issue is whether a 1.4 million square foot "mega mall" proposed by Cambridge Shopping Centres should be allowed to proceed in Vaughan, a sprawling jurisdiction located south of Barrie.

The objectors predict that the effect of the new mall will be to devastate existing shopping facilities, creating "blight" conditions. They cite examples of U.S. communities where similar projects have already decimated local retailing. The proponents counter that the Vaughan Mills project, which will mark the Canadian debut of the Mills Corporation, will complement traditional shopping venues, mostly because Vaughan Mills represents a different type of shopping experience. The project will draw from a vast market area, say the owners, diluting any negative impact among hundreds of retail sites. Nobody seems particularly concerned about the effect on Greater Toronto's urban structure of establishing a major auto-oriented growth centre adjacent to Canada's Wonderland.

Meanwhile, in a hotel at London's Heathrow Airport, Britain's longest ever planning enquiry has just wrapped up after testimony and acrimony lasting 525 days.

At issue was whether a fifth terminal should be allowed at Heathrow, already one of the world's busiest airports. If the proposed terminal were to proceed it would be the third largest airport in Europe, all by itself! As in the upcoming Vaughan Mills hearing, the two sides are utterly opposed. No amount of evidence will convince the other that there is middle ground or even merit in the other's case. The British Airports Authority, the proponents, say that allowing the new terminal will not lead to demands for additional runways. Opponents point out that in the 1980s, Terminal 4 was approved with the proviso that a fifth terminal never be allowed. Which inevitably colours BAA's promise to not request more runway capacity.

Over a period of more than four years, 800 witnesses uttered more

than 35 million words (duly transcribed) in a hearing that has cost British taxpayers nearly \$200 million. A decision is not expected until well into the next century, 2002 at the earliest. Construction would take the better part of a decade. Are projects like this simply too large to have a decision made on the basis of evidence alone?

Although the time and expense of the Vaughan Mills OMB hearing will likely not rival that of the Heathrow enquiry, the two sides have much at stake and are gearing up accordingly. Which brings us back to the central question. What is the purpose of very large OMB hearings? Is it to reach a decision that represents good planning or to ensure that objectors are given a fair hearing?

If it is the former, then there may well be more efficient ways to reach a good decision. After all, how much evidence can any OMB member absorb? And how much testimony is needed to support the principles that underlie a proponent's case? On the other hand, if hearings are about process, how many weeks of evidence are justified to satisfy objectors' needs? Clearly, our system is about trade offs, with the expectation that we will arrive at a result that has carefully evaluated the public interest. To the proponents, the consultants' bills represent a cost of doing business. The time required to go through an OMB hearing is seen as a "delay." Objectors fear that it will be hard to say "no" to Vaughan Mills, which is why the arguments against the project are likely to be lengthy rather than incisive.

Unlike Heathrow, where the public interest issues have been narrowed to weighing the quality of life of a few hundred thousand people living near Heathrow against protecting the economic prosperity of a major world city, defining the public interest in the Vaughan Mills case will be difficult.

For a project as large as Vaughan Mills, it would be considered unseemly to have a hearing lasting only a week, even if expert witnesses for the two sides could make a convincing argument to the Board in such a time frame. How big a hearing gives all the stakeholders their due? At the end of the day, maybe size really does matter.

*Glenn Miller, MCIP, RPP is editor of the Ontario Planning Journal and director of applied research with the Canadian Urban Institute in Toronto. He can be reached by e-mail at [ontplan@inforamp.net](mailto:ontplan@inforamp.net).*

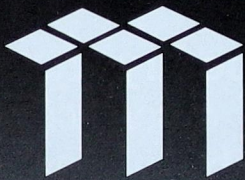
## Letters

## Brainstorming More Effective Than Task Force

Here are some comments on Ron Shishido's article regarding OPPI task forces aimed at improving OPPI's public role.

Having been a member of CIP for some time, a constant has been the need for CIP and its affiliates take a proactive role (in) increasing public presence, influence. The formation of OPPI replacing the former chapters and the OPPI act were in part intended to achieve these goals. We have a long way

(Cont. on pg. 32)



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## Unleashing Planning Education: Poetry Beyond the Profession

By Amy Lavender Harris

Reiner Jaakson recommends that the OPPI-determined accreditation of planning schools be "tightened up" (Ontario Planning Journal, January/February 1999). He queries the implications to CIP of planning graduates in non-planning jobs wanting to be MCIPs, and broods over faculty teaching planning part-time. He asks "is the profession being defined by the margins? Is planning almost anything that you say it is?" My response is that planning education (and the planning profession) must embrace the margins or it will lose its remaining relevance and disappear. Planning education must serve not only the short-term needs of the planning profession by providing skilled professionals in response to a continually evolving field, but must also address the long-term theoretical and scholarly concerns of planning. In this light, it is short-sighted to manage a perceived supply-demand problem by controlling accreditation.

There are two related questions here. The first is whether there is in fact an over-supply of planners. The second is about how we define the scope and nature of planning education, research, and practice. In other words, what skills and knowledge should planning graduates have, and how should they be using them? In part, this is an iteration of the theory-practice quandary which has dogged planning for almost a century. Pointless efforts to resolve this quandary result in paralysis, or rejection of anything but that which is most rigidly "professional": this is alarmingly evident in accredited planning schools taking their lead from the profession. The end result: planning schools which operate like vocational colleges, and where the social, cultural, and ideological underpinnings of planning are overlooked and dismissed, and which spew forth paper-pushing automatons who will don the grey uniform of the planner-bureaucrat or development lackey. We need a broader, not more narrow, conception of what planning,

and planning education, should be about. We need more, not fewer planners.

Why would CIP wish to enforce strict limits on MCIP eligibility? This has a lot to do with planning's efforts to establish itself as a profession, possessing esoteric knowledge and 'expert' skills not easily accessible to the general population. Unfortunately, we appear to have put the cart before the horse, and seem to be scrambling to define our own obscurity. It seems to me that it is a mistake to attempt to emulate the engineering, architecture, legal, or medical professions - which truthfully

*Planning education must embrace the margins or it will lose its remaining relevance and disappear. . . . We need a broader, not more narrow, conception of what planning, and planning education, should be about. We need more, not fewer planners*

ly have a far better claim on the 'esoteric' label than we do. Planning is, most fundamentally, a matter of opinion: it is a most slithery set of ideas, which defy characterization. And this is necessarily related to the notion that planning serves a changing society with changing needs: planning is so deeply bound up in the complexity of social, cultural, economic, ideological, environmental, and physical concerns that it should not

limit itself to a narrow set of professional concerns. The MCIP designation should reflect these concerns, and the variety of responses to them possible within the planning field.

What sort of work should be eligible for MCIP designation? In my opinion, any life-work which fulfills the ideals of planning should be eligible. We should be less preoccupied with how that work is done, and more concerned with its results. How about sculptors of public art; committed social activists; writers (Jane Jacobs and Lewis Mumford come to mind); academics who joyfully hurled their Planning Act from a train immediately after graduation; knowledgeable environmentalists; generalists with vision? Should a degree in planning still be required? Likely, although real-life experience with the society one serves would receive more credit. How can planning schools achieve this? By stretching the boundaries of our vision of planning to include all that which enhances our relationships with each other and our cultural, physical, ecological, economic, political, intellectual, and spiritual environments.

Planners need to move beyond our preoccupation with boundaries and limits, and start exploring how we can enhance planning research and practice by examining what lies outside conventional planning approaches. We should start by asking whether it is really ourselves, or society, whom we want to serve.

*Amy Lavender Harris (BAH, M.PL) is a PhD Candidate in the Faculty of Environmental Studies, York University. She can be reached by e-mail [alharris@yorku.ca](mailto:alharris@yorku.ca) or telephone (416) 661-7605.*

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## Southwest

### Challenging Traditional Thinking—An Encore

By John Fleming

(A report on the version of this seminar held in Toronto appeared in the previous issue—Ed.)

Late last year, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing and OPPI's Southwest District jointly presented an all-day seminar at the Elmhurst Inn near Ingersoll, called "Challenging Traditional Thinking." In itself, the event represented a departure from traditional thinking because it was the first time that the Southwest District has jointly sponsored a seminar with the province. The seminar covered two subjects: economic readiness and alternative design standards.

Panelists Norma Forrest, Rollin Stanley, and John Fleming discussed economic readiness from a variety of perspectives. Norma Forrest of the MMAH described the opportunities and issues for municipal development permitting systems. Rollin Stanley of the City of Toronto gave entertaining and useful insight into how design controls can be used to improve built form and function in intense urban environments. John Fleming of the City of London explained how London has prepared for economic readiness by forming the London Economic Development Corporation, the board of which is private sector; implementing Small Business Task Force recommendations; and making a commitment to downtown revitalization.

Darin Dinsmore of Green, Scheels, Pidgeon opened the afternoon session with an overview of alternative design standards and their potential for improving communities. Ted Foster built on this introduction, by

describing the Ministry's publication, Making Choices. He explained the issues that were raised during the development of the document and described the complexity of bringing together different disciplines to create design standards that are achievable, relevant and effective. Scott Hannah of the City of Guelph, Martin Jones from Stanley Consulting and Carol Wiebe from MacNaughton Hermsen Britton Clarkson Planning Ltd. gave their perspectives on subdivision projects in which alternative design standards have been applied.

Everyone agreed that the event was a success for both the Southwest District and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing in meeting their goals of educating planners and the development community.

*John Fleming, MCIP, RPP is with the City of London Planning Department and is editorial coordinator for the Southwest.*

## Northern

### Home Smart Home

(Abridged from Northern Ontario Business)

Ray Williamson may have found a niche in the housing industry by constructing "smart homes." The Thunder Bay developer, the recipient of a 1995 CMHC award for building healthy houses, says the company's smart homes project will serve as a model for housing developments in Canada.

Construction of 60 homes designed for seniors is expected to begin this year. Each home is equipped with a high-tech computer system that controls and monitors household functions such as utilities, security and lighting. For example, if the power goes out or the furnace does not work, the system will alert the utility company. In emergencies such as a

fire, the system will shut off electricity and gas to protect residents. Fibre-optic connections through Thunder Bay Telephone allow Internet access, videoconferencing and on-line shopping. More than 30 local organizations and businesses are contributing and are linked to the project, including Confederation College (for distance learning), banks, grocery stores and pharmacies. The houses start at roughly \$100,000 and are customized to meet individual needs.

Williamson plans to take his "smart home" concept to other communities, including remote areas of northwestern Ontario. He believes smart homes will link communities to each other and to the world.

### Sudbury Region Review

Mark Simeoni

The Regional Municipality of Sudbury is midway through a review of its 1978 Official Plan. The plan review was launched at a public meeting with the Region's Planning and Development Committee in March 1998. Since that time, planning staff have prepared background reports on population projections, patterns of development, sewer and water infrastructure, transportation, housing, and the role of Provincial Policy Statements relating to plan review. Staff presented these reports to the Planning and Development Committee and to community and special interest groups.

In February, a community visioning session, Sudbury 20/20: Focus on the Future, was held with over 100 people from all sectors of the community. The results of this visioning session will be distributed to all residents of the Region of Sudbury through a newspaper insert this March. The insert will invite citizens from across the region to comment on the vision.

After a review of public comments, a first draft of the plan is expected in late fall. The Region's primary review team consists of the Commissioner of Planning and Development, William E. Lautenbach, and staff from the Long Range Planning Section. The senior planners working on the plan are Paul Baskcomb, Mark Simeoni and Tin Chee Wu, and the technical support staff consists of David Brouse, Beverley Stradiotto and William Tanos.

*Mark Simeoni is the Acting Director of Long Range Planning with the Regional Municipality of Sudbury and Northern District Rep for OPPI.*

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Mark Simeoni, MCIP, RPP is the Acting Director of Long Range Planning with the Regional Municipality of Sudbury and Northern District Rep for OPPI.

## Eastern

# Celebrating Urban History

By Barb McMullen

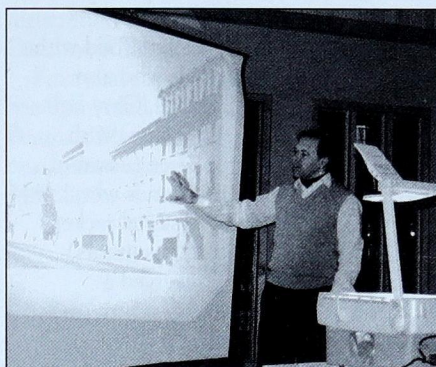
The last year of the 20th century began in Eastern District with a celebration of numerous forgotten visions for the Capital region, and with a discussion of some often contradictory planning priorities and approaches which sometimes characterize the development of capital cities.

The January Urban Forum "Ottawa's X-Files" event featured a panel of historians, critics and professionals. David Gordon (Queen's University School of Planning) discussed 100 years of lost plans by four Capital region planners. Author Phil Jenkins ("An Acre of Time") spoke about LeBreton Flats' multi-layered history; and Barry Wellar (Ottawa University School of Geography) revisited several planning and transportation proposals made during the 1960s and 1970s.

True to the image conjured up by the name "X-files", some of these visions might now instead be called planning nightmares or fantasies. Other persistent themes and ideas have survived, proving that at least

part of the capital looks very much as intended by planners past.

In February, OPPI Eastern District hosted two of the region's experts in the field of urban history, John Taylor (Carleton University Department of History) and Julian Smith (architect and coordinator of



Julian Smith: vernacular approach to planning

Carleton's Graduate Heritage Conservation program). In his presentation entitled "Symbol or City?" John Taylor discussed the planning of capital cities, contrasting the planning and development of greenfield capitals (Versailles) with that of evolved capitals (Ottawa). Julian Smith's presentation focused on the growing interest in the vernacular versus "high style" planning and architecture, using Ottawa's historic By Ward Market as an example of a vernacular approach to planning.

Barb McMullen, MCIP, RPP is a principal of MCM Planning in Ottawa and editorial coordinator for Eastern District.

## Central

# The GTA Program Committee Packs 'Em In

By Loretta Ryan

Here is a review of events recently sponsored by the GTA Program Committee, which is a sub-committee of the Central District.

## The Annual Get-Together

Central District's annual get together was in early December. Over 150 members and guests attended the event at the Wineyard Restaurant. Attractions included a wonderful jazz duo and good food. Door prizes were donated by: Walker Nott Dragicevic, Labatt Breweries of Canada, the Wineyard Restaurant, and the Organizing Committee for the 1999 OPPI Conference.

This was a busy time for networking, renewing friendships and gifts were given to the many OPPI volunteers. A portion of the proceeds from the evening was donated to The Daily Bread Food Bank (\$500).

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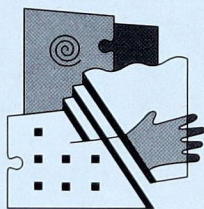
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The date for this year's event is Thursday, December 2, 1999 at the Toronto Lawn Tennis Club. It's never too early to book!

### 1999 Ski Day

A hardy group gathered at the foot of a tremendous white mountain, but for once it wasn't made of paper! On February 17 planners headed to Devil's Glen for a fantastic day of skiing, lunch, fun races and an après ski event. A special thanks to Lebovic Enterprises for sponsoring the event.

There was at least one spill in the cross-country fun race before Carolyn Hart (Town of Ajax) and C.J. Lamb (Student, University of Toronto) were victorious.

Both winners were presented with Hardwood Hills cross-country ski packages donated by Walton Hunter Planning Associates.

Meanwhile, the IBI Group Down Hill

Fun Race was both challenging and exciting for participants and spectators. The women's winners were Suzanne Ainley (Ontario Ministry of Energy, Science & Technology) who was presented with a complementary Club Link golf package, and Margaret Walton (Walton Hunter Planning Consultants) who received a First Professional jacket.

The men's winners were Jeff Todd with an impressive 26.01 seconds who also received a Club Link package, Gary Bell (Skelton Brunwell & Associates) with 26.48 seconds and Patrick Lee (Town of Orangeville) with 26.92 seconds who each received a First Professional jacket, David Slade (D.C. Slade Consultants) with 27.01 seconds who received a Michael Michalski Associates shirt, and Lloyd Cherniak (Lebovic Enterprises) with 27.39 seconds who received a ski bag compliments of Green Scheels Pigeon Planning Consultants.

Special thanks to the volunteers, sponsors and staff of Devil's Glen who made this first Annual OPPI Ski Day such a great success. Everyone who participated

is planning to attend next year's event next February at the same location.

### Toronto's 2008 Olympic Bid

On March 24 the Honourable David Crombie spoke to about 60 OPPI members about Toronto's 2008 Olympic Bid. Mr. Crombie is Chair of Toronto 2008 Olympic Bid Corporation and Chair of the Waterfront Regeneration Trust.

The event was held in Heritage Toronto's historic Banking Hall at 205 Yonge Street. The discussion included the many issues to be considered as Toronto prepares its bid for the 2008. This was an excellent opportunity to hear first hand about the issues and discuss these matters with fellow OPPI members.

### Upcoming Events

The GTA Program Committee is working hard on a number of upcoming events. Keep an eye out.

*If you are interested in participating on the GTA Program Committee or if you have any questions, please contact the Chair, Loretta Ryan, at (416) 862-4517.*



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## Niagara Sub-District

# Niagara Region Organizational Review

By Laurie Yip

In January, Niagara Regional Council approved the organizational review of the Regional Niagara Planning and Development Department. As a result of the review, the department will be restructured to place more emphasis on policy rather than on the approval of development applications. Corwin T. Cambray, has been appointed planning director, with a review in six months, based on the expected outcomes of the organizational review. He fills a vacancy left by Alan Veale, who retired in 1998 after many years of dedicated service. David J. Farley has been appointed assistant director of planning.

*Laurie Yip, MCIP, RPP is editorial coordinator for Niagara.*

## Peterborough sub-district

The Steering Committee, Peterborough

and Area Planners Group have organized an evening workshop, "Retail: The New Frontier," to be held April 15 from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in Oshawa.

The workshop will consist of three presentations and a panel question-and-answer session. A cash bar will follow the workshop. Registration is \$10 a person and registration forms are available from Caroline Kimble, fax (705) 324-2051.

Financial support for the workshop has been provided by the Central District Board of Management. For more information, please contact Kevin Duguay, (705) 748-8880.

## People

### New President for the Ontario Association of Architects

**Christopher T. Fillingham**, OAA, CMAA, MRAIC is the new president of the Ontario Association of Architects

(OAA). Fillingham was acclaimed on January 26, 1999 following stints on Council as Senior Vice President and Treasurer.

"One of my goals for '99 is to establish and foster relationships with others in the building industry, government, and related organizations," says Fillingham.

"Combined with a stronger connection to the public, this is key to strengthening the architectural profession."

Fillingham believes that strong practices rely on well-educated and well-versed professionals, with a business foundation. As president, he plans to keep business issues at the forefront. Fillingham is a Principal with Dunlop Farrow Inc. Architects in Toronto.

**Paula Tenuta** has joined the Urban Development Institute from the Toronto Dominion Bank. **Neil Rodgers** is another newcomer at UDI, returning from a stint in B.C.

**Rob McKay** of the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton and **Mike Boucher** of the City of Nepean recently began a one year job exchange.

**Mark Sarrazin** has joined Delcan Corporation as an urban and environmen-

# Avoid land mines...

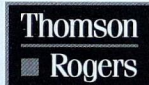


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tal planner and will be working on various local and international projects.

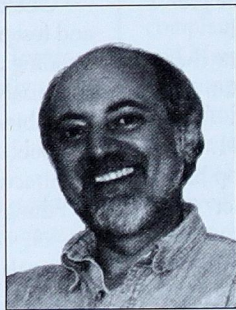
**David Forget** has been promoted to Manager, Quality Systems and Special Projects at the Town of Ajax.

After 11 years in senior capacities with the planning departments of Etobicoke, North York and the City of Toronto, **Moiz Behar** joined The Planning Partnership to help build on the firm's thriving design practice. Moiz was most recently the Director of Urban Design in the new City of Toronto (North District), in charge of urban design policy, streetscapes and site plan approval. He can be reached at [planpart@interlog.com](mailto:planpart@interlog.com) (The Planning Partnership).

**Richard Zelinka** and **Greg Priamo** have established a new planning practice in London. The new firm, Zelinka Priamo Ltd., provides a full range of planning, development and consultation services. The two principals bring nearly 40 years of

experience between them. Their new offices are on Commissioners Road in London and they can be reached by e-mail at [zp@zpplan.com](mailto:zp@zpplan.com).

The Haven Group is a planning management consulting firm under the sole proprietorship of **Anthony V. Sroka**. The firm was founded in 1998 and is headquartered in the Regional Municipality of Ottawa-Carleton. The firm provides professional services in planning, land use and business development matters, market research and forecasting, business geographic information systems and project management solutions. Clients include domestic and international private and public sector organizations, agencies, corporations and businesses. They focus on addressing strategic corporate, community and environmental planning and development needs, associated market research and forecasting demands, project management and business geographic information require-



Moiz Behar

mation systems and project management solutions. Clients include domestic and international private and public sector organizations, agencies, corporations and businesses. They focus on addressing strategic corporate, community and environmental planning and development needs, associated market research and forecasting demands, project management and business geographic information require-

ments. Target markets include large corporations, governments, private sector agencies and individuals involved with the planning, management and development of land, facilities and organizations. Anthony Sroka can be reached at 613-794-6295.

**Macklin Hancock**, who has long been a member of the Institute, has been elevated to the status of member Emeritus by the OALA for contributions to practice and establishing new courses of academic study. His name is often associated with the design of Don Mills but his practice has spanned the world. **Eha Naylor**, a provisional member of the Institute, was recognized for her volunteer efforts for OALA with the David Erb Memorial Award.

*New contributing editors for People will be announced in the next issue. To improve our coverage of this important section, we will be appointing individuals in a number of different geographic areas. In the meantime, send your information to [ontplan@inforamp.net](mailto:ontplan@inforamp.net) with an appropriate notation.*

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## Housing: Solutions for an ageing population

### Housing to Celebrate the International Year of Older Persons

By Linda Lapointe

Nineteen ninety nine is not only the year before the next Millennium, it is also the International Year of Older Persons. What better way to celebrate these events than to create an organization called the Millennium Community Building Association! The goal of this group is to encourage the creation of 1000 housing projects for seniors in communities across Ontario. The MCBA is endorsed by the Millennium Bureau of Canada and its mission is to "promote community-based housing and practical and positive alternatives of housing-linked-to-services by inspiring and supporting local groups in the provision of independent lifestyles for the aging society."

MCBA is the brain child of Bob Hart and George Barker - two seniors who refused to retire. Bob Hart is still active with the organization and until recently, was its chairperson. A former federal civil servant, his background includes working on resettlement projects in China in the post-war period as well as working with a major housing organization in Britain. After retirement, he became active in the development of the Glebe Centre, a seniors' housing project in Ottawa. He was also instrumental in the development of Leaside Gate, a condominium oriented to people over 55 years of age in the former municipality of East York. George Barker, the other co-founder, was a former Chairman of the Metropolitan

Toronto Housing Corporation. He died in 1997.

MCBA is a non-profit organization formed by seniors, professionals and others which seeks to work with local communities to address seniors' housing needs in ways that are not dependent upon government funds. The organization hopes to help seniors utilize the equity that most have invested in their homes and enable them to live independently in small, residential developments where they can be linked to community services. By living in a multi-unit development, seniors can escape the demands of maintaining their own home and at the same time overcome the loneliness that is a problem for many seniors living on their own.

MCBA is looking for support from municipalities across Ontario to help identify sites and to provide other assistance as needed to facilitate the development of MCBA certified projects. While MCBA developments often use life lease, this is not the only financial and tenure option that is utilized. The actual financial and physical model in particular areas will be developed through the involvement of the local community including prospective residents.

(Editor's note: the new condominium act may have ramifications for life lease projects. Look for articles on this subject soon.)

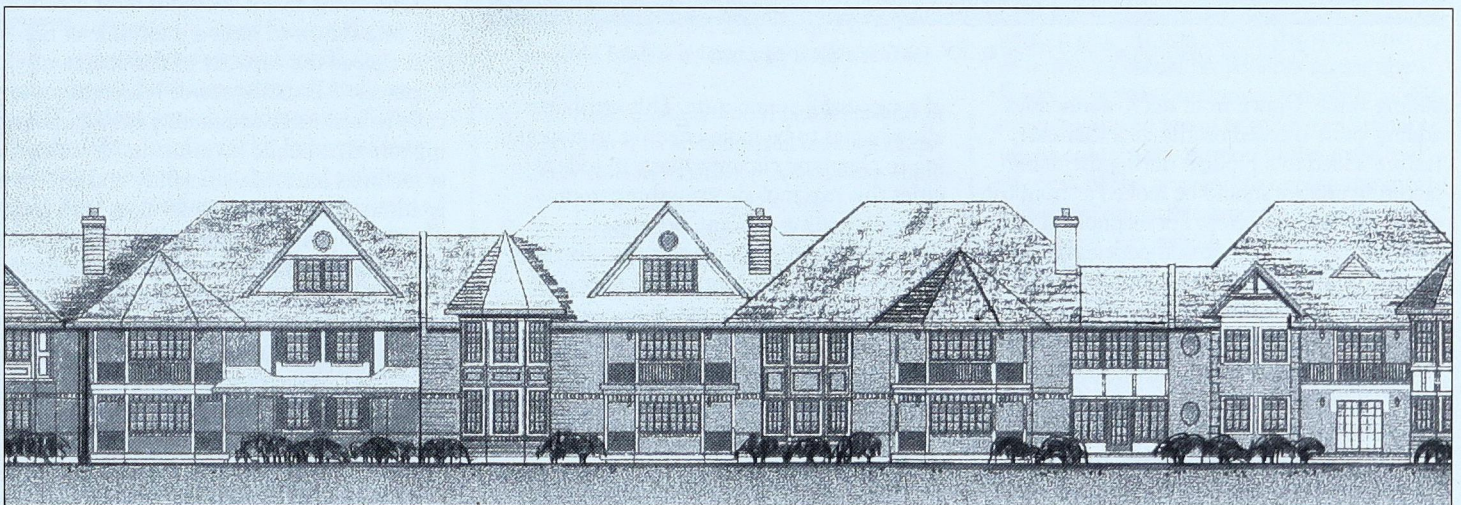
MCBA certified housing projects will:

- be sponsored by non-profit groups;
- employ professional expertise to achieve superior quality planning, design, construction and management;
- provide sufficient space for communal activities and efficient delivery of support services;
- be financed from a range of self-sufficient financing models to meet local needs; and,
- provide integrated housing and care models.

If you want to join the MCBA or learn more about the organization and its early summer conference (end of June), visit their Web Site at [www.mcba.on.ca](http://www.mcba.on.ca) or contact their Executive Director, George Burton at 416-698-1348.

*Linda Lapointe, MCIP, RPP, is principal of Lapointe Consulting, a private firm that specializes in housing, demographic and residential planning matters. She is the Journal's contributing editor on housing. If you have an idea for an article, please contact her by phone (416-323-0807) or fax (416-323-0992). She can be reached by e-mail at: [311markham@sympatico.ca](mailto:311markham@sympatico.ca).*

Please note that the credit for the design of the Hamilton Housing Project in the previous issue was inadvertently left out. The architect was Graff Architects Inc., Hamilton, Ontario.



A Life Lease Project in Kleinberg. Sponsored by Rotary International.  
Development Consultant Donna Hamilton (member of MCBA), Ian Malcolm Architects, Barrie

## How Planners Add Value

By John Farrow

Those of us with school aged children often face the question What do you do at work? As the children get older our answers have to be more sophisticated, which does us a favour because these are questions that our clients, politicians, city managers and the public often ask less directly.

Because planners are a trusting group, we do not always think long and hard about how to explain what we do to those outside the profession. This is a missed opportunity to market ourselves. This article is a simplified attempt to explain how planners add value and generate benefits for our clients.

But first a word about the concept of

ties that others believe are worthless, I look forward to the debate!

### 1. Developing a Shared Vision

The need to work with the public to establish a shared vision for the community is valuable in a number of ways. Planners are traditionally involved in visioning because it is a good way to make land use plans but the process used for developing a shared vision can be useful for other purposes.

Robert Putnam (*Making Democracy work*) concludes that the ability to develop a shared sense of purpose and to collaborate in taking action is one of the key attributes



A sound plan provides certainty for community and investor alike

adding value. Drawn from micro-economics, adding value is based on the idea that each feature added to a product during the manufacturing process should be looked at from the customer's point of view. For example, if a car manufacturer chooses to add personalized reading lights to a new model, unless more customers are attracted to purchase the model or are willing to pay more for the new feature, no value has been added. This concept is powerful because it provides a test of utility that relates directly to user needs. In recent years this basic concept has been extended to the public sector. What follows is a short list of ways that we can add value through our work. Since it is possible I see value in activi-

of a successful community. This attribute allows cities to be more effective in responding to changing circumstances: in today's cities this can include everything from reduced funding to plant closures.

Developing a vision is part of the process of creating a sense of identity and a sense of purpose, both of which enhance community spirit. Planners have the skills to do this and using our skills in a way that keeps community spirit alive is beneficial to taking action on many matters.

### 2. Designing liveable communities

This is a big subject which could be subdivided into a number of topics, however, I will address just two.

- a) Providing the concepts for community living. The tragedy of the overgrazing of common land during medieval times illustrated only too well that the sum of individual decisions can be disastrous to both individual and community interests in the long term. By providing concepts of how different components of the city work together planners establish a framework for individual decision making that avoids some of the extreme consequences of large numbers of people and institutions making individual location decisions in an unstructured way with no regard for the big picture.
- b) Providing a framework for individual investment decisions that reduces risk. Because of the plans and phasing that planners develop, individual investment decisions can be made within a set of rules that provide a high level of certainty about the nature of adjacent uses, the quality of public amenities and the availability of infrastructure and community facilities. In addition, this framework identifies natural hazards like flood plains or avalanche hazards, which reduces investment risk.

### 3. Urban Design

People experience the city in many ways, but in public space they are usually walking, cycling, driving or playing. The quality of this experience in public space is in part determined by the way the urban fabric is designed. Planners can influence the creation of this urban fabric and when they are effective in doing this they create value for citizens. In considering this issue, planners are often working with or through developers to achieve their ends.

### 4. Efficient Use of Scarce Resources

One of the major decisions most communities face is how to meet a multitude of needs that exceed the capacity of the community's resources. Allocating scarce resources strategically to best meet community needs and making sure that public investments in community facilities are made efficiently and effectively allows communities to do more with less. This basic planning activity is usually focused on capital budgeting but in an environment where uses change, companies close and community facilities become underutilized there is usually an ongoing operational component.

### 5. Attracting Investment

In a competitive world most communities are working hard to attract investment. Planners play a major role in creating an investment friendly environment and in presenting this opportunity effectively to the

investors. Winning and keeping investment is necessary for a community's economic health and the value of this activity can be directly measured in terms of investment attracted and jobs created.

### 6. Protecting and Enhancing the Natural Environment

In a world where new buildings are becoming more similar one of the unique sets of features that creates a sense of identity and place are the natural features. Protecting this aspect of a community's assets has value to current and future generations. Closely related to this are a set of activities designed to channel activities in a way which minimizes the impact of human activity on the natural

environment in a more general way. For example, planning land use so that growth in the number of trips by automobiles is slowed, thereby reducing the emission of greenhouse gases and other pollutants yields health benefits and a reduced rate of global warming.

### 7. The Efficient Use of Land

Land is a unique, scarce and valuable resource and decisions on how and where to urbanize are for practical purposes permanent. Planners help society make these decisions on how to use this asset with regard for long term public interest. This is an important role because it is recognized that market forces do not always adequately reflect the long term public interest.

Planners are obviously not always successful in their attempts to add value, but when we do achieve success, we should ensure that these examples are more widely understood. In fact we have a responsibility as professionals to explain to our customers and clients why our mission is valuable and why we deserve their support. Cities face major challenges: if planners don't speak up, our urban future will be less than it could have been.

*John Farrow, MCIP, RPP is president of the Canadian Urban Institute and the Journal's contributing editor on management and strategic planning. You can reach him by e-mail at cui@interlog.com.*

## OMB: Long term thinking versus expediency

# Protecting the Industrial Land Base: Is the Pendulum Swinging Back?

By Paul Chronis

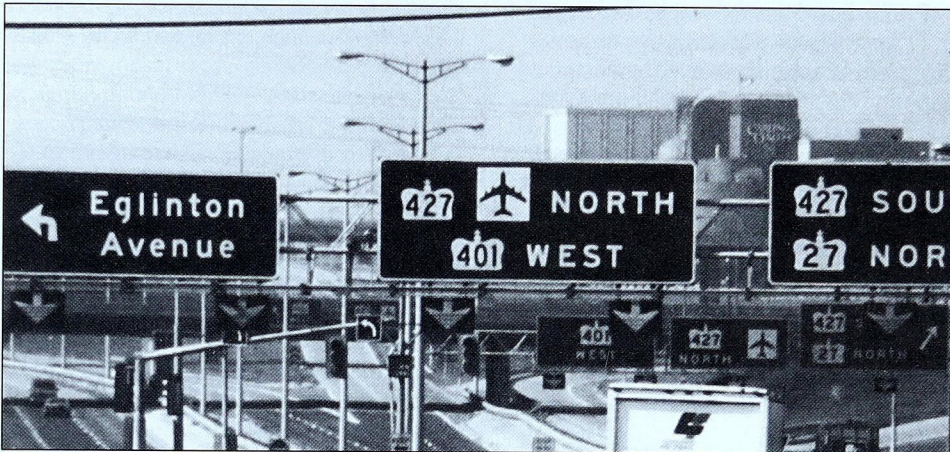


Photo: M. Manett

*In which direction are decisions on protecting industrial land heading?*

The (former) City of Etobicoke, in response to a series of social and economic forces operating in and forecasted by the City, adopted a new Official Plan in 1992. Insofar as the industrial base was concerned, the City adopted policies promoting an intention to maintain areas of employment and provide for new industrial trends, and to retain an adequate supply of land for long-term business needs.

The policies contained three criteria defining the standard by which conversion applications should be measured:

"As it is the City's intention to retain industrial designation for employment generating uses wherever possible as indicated in Section 2.3.8, applications to amend the plan for non-industrial uses may only be considered if:

- a) Council is satisfied that the site is not feasible for use by industry over the long term;
- b) The redesignation would not represent an intrusion into an industrial area which is likely to foster similar redesignation applications on adjacent lands; and
- c) The remaining industrial land in the vicinity can still function as a viable industrial area."

Three major industrial landowners sought referral of these industrial policies. They argued that the official plan policies proposing the continuation of industrial uses on their lands were "obsolete", "do not reflect current realities", and accordingly, were in need of review and revision. All landowners expressed a preference for an alternative use or range of uses. In fact, the lands were no

longer occupied or used for industrial purposes as many industries had relocated and demolished their former industrial buildings. The properties were therefore deemed surplus to their industrial needs.

Following the referrals, the (former) City of Etobicoke, upon the request of the three property owners, re-examined its industrial policy direction and adopted an amendment to its Official Plan (No. 53) which proposed a redesignation from "Industrial" to "Medium Density Residential" of some of the subject properties.

The subject lands were located in an area of the City referred to as the "industrial heartland". The area is the home of many traditional labour intensive industries. Industries are attracted to this district because of excellent rail access and road system as well as an available labour supply in close proximity or within easy commuting distance.

With this background in mind, the Board was asked to determine whether sufficient justification was provided to meet the conversion test. At one end of the spectrum were the industrial proponents urging the Board to permit the conversion while at the other end was a group of industries attempting to contain the erosion of the industrial strength of the area and to oppose the intrusion of incompatible land uses, particularly residential uses, which was perceived as potentially destabilizing to existing industrial operators.

### Thumbs down on conversion

The Board rejected the land conversion. Some notable conclusions follow:

1. Considerable weight was given to the City's "conversion policies", which the Board interpreted as establishing a "priority" for the retention of former industrial lands for employment use;

2. The application represented an "intrusion" into this industrial area. In the result, it also concluded that the application could not meet the City policy aimed at avoiding "... destabilizing influence on, and land use conflict with, the remaining industrial designations." The Board came to this conclusion notwithstanding its belief that the viability of the remaining industrial district would not likely be compromised by this single application;

3. In considering the issues of noise, dust and odour, the Board made this interesting comment: "These factors operate in two ways. New residential uses are required to meet criteria of compliance for exposure to these impacts. Having done so, industry may not inflict any environmental impacts in excess of established Provincial Guidelines. Inevitably then, having once permitted residential uses to encroach on industry, the options for industrial expansion, operational modifications or redevelopment are accordingly reduced. In this way, Arrowhead at least would be affected resulting in a more restricted range of future uses within the by-law permissions.";

4. The Board refused to treat the Ministry of the Environment's D-1 and D-6 Guidelines as "advisory documents with no statutory or regulatory function". It concluded that: "... the principal objectives of

these initiatives is to provide a technical framework within which sound, coherent and consistent planning decisions can be made in the public interest across the Province ... these documents are prepared after exhaustive enquiry and discussion by practitioners in the field and ought to represent the most informed context for public decision making and private investments.";

5. When dealing with D-1 and D-6 issues, the Board rejected the referencing of approaches and standards used in foreign jurisdictions, except where "doubt exists" as to the appropriateness of the provincial guidelines;

6. An acceptance of the principle articulated in the D-1 guideline that buffering by separation distance should not result in a freezing of the intervening land. Nevertheless, it also seemed to suggest that where the guidelines cannot be satisfied (subject to some discretion on the part of the Board), the application might not be approved ... notwithstanding its other planning merits;

7. The Board seemed prepared to consider, to some degree, the mitigative measures that could be taken at source (by the industries) and the measures that might be ordered, or required under the Environmental Protection Act. It rejected the "rigid position" of one of the opponents

in advocating distance separations as the only solution to the problem of potential environmental impact. It criticized "uncompromising resistance to any change", and in particular, "stolid [efforts aimed at the] preservation of the status quo".

Source: Decision of the Ontario Municipal Board

Case No. PL931508

File Nos. O930038, O980020 and R970327

### STOP PRESS!

*In a decision released on February 25, board member Ronald Frum dismissed an application to redesignate an industrial site at Langstaff Road and Highway 27 for residential. At issue was the rate of employment lands take up in the market area and the relatively unattractive local conditions, which include proximity to hydro transmission towers and isolation from the critical mass of employment in the area. Even though the site constitutes less than two percent of Vaughan's employment land, the Board held that the site should stay industrial. (Thanks to GTA/905 Development News for this update.)*

*Paul Chronis, MCIP, RPP is a senior planner with Weir & Foulds in Toronto. He is the Journal's contributing editor for the OMB.*

## Urban Design

# A Proposal to Use Urban Design as Image Builder for the Planning Profession

By Alex Taranu



Urban design: natural meeting place for the design disciplines

Last fall I attended one of the workshops organized by OPPI. As we were working in groups on an alternative design to a standard suburban subdivision, I looked around at my colleagues, noticing how they were enjoying the exercise. Most were policy planners from the Greater Toronto area, and probably had not been involved in design for quite a while, but the team was actively exchanging ideas, discussing functional zones, vistas, massing. It made me think how artificial the separation between policy planners and designers really is, and how much more involvement planners should have in urban design. Most countries in the world have Planning, Architecture and Landscape Architecture in the same schools, and Urban Design is the meeting point of these disciplines.

As somebody pointed out in a recent issue of this magazine, most planners tend to see 2-dimensionally rather than having a 3-dimensional "bird's eye view". They don't have the same visualization or graphic skills as architects or landscape architects. But today's design is different than it was 50 years ago – less formal, multi-disciplinary, involving public input, and the tools we use for design are more complex today than a

pencil and some sketch paper. The idea that good design is sufficient to create liveable communities has long been abandoned, and guidelines and codes are as valuable for designers as sketches and drawings. Charettes and public meetings are setting the parameters of future developments, getting together designers with policy makers and the public.

Many of the planner's specific professional assets – teamwork, negotiating and communication skills, and coordination of different interests and professions might be as useful in the design process as graphics skills. Due to their professional obligation to protect the public interest, planners are closest to the politicians and other policy makers, and are best suited to monitor, guide and survey the results.

Today, Urban Design seems to be more and more in demand. Traditional "prescriptive" planning tools are complemented and sometimes replaced by performance-based tools. Master Plans, Urban Design Guidelines, Massing Studies, and Illustrations of Built Forms are required for almost any study. New Urbanism is becoming mainstream, as are Traditional Neighbourhood Developments. There is a renewed interest in the design of public spaces, revitalization of downtown areas, infill and intensification of the existing areas, and the creation of liveable streets and neighbourhoods.

The Great Cities! Great Expectations! events organized last fall by Urban Forum

and the CUI in Ottawa and Toronto were a huge success. We listened to speakers like Wytold Rybczynski and Allan Jacobs, we had the chance to participate in workshops. Recently, Andrew Ross, lecturing at York University about the new town of Celebration in Florida, touched on many contentious points regarding New Urbanist developments. He had good insight into what could be a model of the new towns in the 21st Century, and many issues related to private-public relationships, building communities and design, regional approach to development.

I suggest that planners interested in Urban Design should get together and organize an Interest Group with periodic meetings. This would allow us to share information, organize activities – lectures, seminars, workshops. Most importantly we should coordinate efforts with similar groups from other professions, recognizing the multi-disciplinary character of Urban Design. This Interest Group should work to raise the awareness for Urban Design inside and outside the profession, and to integrate Urban Design issues in the planning process and the planning education. I think such an activity will fit very well in the recent initiative of the Policy and Innovation Task Force, to prove that "OPPI is a Visionary Organization".

*Alex Taranu is an urban designer with the IBI Group in Toronto. The ideas outlined in this proposal are dealt with in the sidebar.*

## Professional Practice

# Bridging the River:

## Essex and Richmond County, Virginia International Countryside Stewardship Exchange Program

By Gemma Connolly

Did you ever wonder what it would be like to work with a team of international professionals in a foreign country? To go some place exotic where people believed in planners and welcomed them with open arms? To be a guest in a community who bared their souls, and anxiously awaited your solutions to their problems?

Such an experience does exist through the Glynwood Center's International Countryside Stewardship Exchange Program (ICSEP), located in Cold Spring, New York, USA. The Glynwood Center is a nonprofit organization, dedicated to advancing the field of community stewardship and grass

roots planning. The focus of the training is to integrate leadership development with personal experience through the ICSEP. The Glynwood Center draws upon its diverse range of experienced professionals from several fields and many countries including Britain, Wales, Scotland, USA, and Canada to participate in the ICSEP. The host community must compete to participate in the Exchange Program, and exchanges occur in all partnering countries. The international team then works with the host community to develop a vision for the future, to meet both their development and conservation needs.

## Call for a Contributing Editor Leads to Formation of a new Working Group

If Alex's article strikes a chord with you, read on. I am delighted to announce that five talented individuals responded to my recent request for expressions of interest in becoming the Journal's contributing editor for urban design.

**Jim Yanchula** in Windsor heads up the local downtown business association in Windsor. (jyanchula@city.windsor.on.ca)

**Robert Glover** is director of urban design at the City of Toronto (rglover@city.toronto.on.ca)

**Moiz Behar** is with the Planning Partnership in Toronto (planpart@interlog.com).

**Anne McIlroy** is with Cochrane Brook Ltd. in Toronto (amcilroy@cochrane-group.ca)

**Alex Taranu** is with the IBI Group Ltd in Toronto (taranu@interlog.com).

To make the most of this opportunity, all five have agreed to create an informal "practice" committee that will have two principal functions. The first is to ensure that an urban design article appears in every issue. The objective is to address urban design issues in smaller communities across the province as well as the large cities: in short, to place a spotlight on urban design as a key element of planning. The scope of practice of all three consultants takes them to many different parts of the province but it would be good to have representation from the north and eastern Ontario, so get in touch with them if you are interested. The group has the freedom to write articles of their own or to solicit articles from fellow practitioners (including those in sister professions). After the group has had an opportunity to communicate with each other, they will select one individual as chair whose name will appear on the Journal masthead. Look for an announcement next issue.

The second objective is to start a dialogue on urban design that finds its way not only into the Journal but - we hope - into district level programming, professional development workshops and joint events with sister professions. This task is open-ended and will obviously depend on a positive response from members for success. The focus of this group is professional practice, and is intended to complement other OPPI activities.

*Glenn Miller, MCIP, RPP is Editor of the Ontario Planning Journal. He can be reached by e-mail at ontplan@inforamp.net.*

The ICSEP provides a microscopic view of a community struggling to deal with conflicting land use planning objectives. Planning for the Exchange Program encourages all stakeholders and political decision makers to openly discuss community issues in a public forum. This process also enables the international team members to ask challenging questions, and encourages open debate and dialogue on issues that are considered politically awkward and unpopular. This forum also allows the team members to share information and new ideas from their collective experience with the host community. The main benefit of the process is that professional judgment is based on observation, open communication, consensus and promotes action.

The Exchange Program I participated on was spearheaded by Richmond and Essex County and the Chesapeake Bay Alliance. Essex and Richmond counties are located in the Coastal Plan of Northern Virginia in

the Chesapeake Bay watershed. The Exchange Program was hosted by two counties who are connected to each other by the Downing Bridge, which crosses the Rappahannock River. The event took



Heritage: an important asset

approximately two years to plan, and lasted for seven days. (Illustration 2 - group08.tif file. Caption: International Countryside Exchange Team, Hobbs Hole Golf Club, Essex County, VA)

Both counties have the same size population, with traditional economies associated with farming, fishing, and forestry. Both cherish their small town atmosphere and have maintained their rural character and way of life due in part to the counties' remoteness from large, metropolitan centres.

Due to their strategic location and small population the counties recognized the need to build partnerships and cooperate in specific areas that would collectively benefit the future of their communities. The Exchange Team was therefore asked to answer five questions that focused on building partnerships in areas that included enhancing cultural and recreational opportunities, improving transportation; promoting tourism; protecting the Rappahannock River; and managing economic development.

Once in the community we were welcomed to the "Land of Pleasant Living," where it was said that there were "more registered boats than voters." This was a



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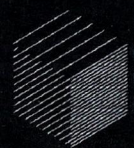
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community where family values and Christian beliefs are still the corner stones of the community. This community revealed a strong sense of patriotism where allegiance is still sworn to the flag and local history and cultural plays a significant role in defining the distinct identities of the communities.

Urbanization threatened this way of life. Richmond County's approach to these problems was to improve land use practices and to look at what types of industries and development could be sustained without impacting locally established economies. Essex County, however, embraced urbanization and wanted to entice development by providing tax incentives, and fast development approvals.

Taylor Murphy, a Member of the House of Delegates, stated that the "tragedy of the Commons is to maximize the use of a resource until it is destroyed." He appealed to local decision makers to

recognize that there is 'no free lunch,' and to act now in preserving their natural resources and maintaining their rural economy. He called upon Richmond and Essex County to provide a model for other juris-

organizations, and individuals, who had an interest in the process. From our observations, and review of the issues presented to us, we approached the questions, by using the "SWOT" analysis. This enabled us to look at the strengths, weakness, opportunities and trends for each of the questions. We switched the last two letters to ensure that the approach would end on a positive note. For each issue we were able to provide a series of recommendations on how to build partnerships that would provide more opportunities for funding, and a collective vision that would take both communities into the next millennium.

The experience gained through the ICSEP was stimulating, challenging, and provided a new perspective on the

impacts of land use planning issues, as presented by the community. This experience also enabled a diverse range of international practitioners and experts to discuss the challenges they were facing in managing significant natural heritage and cultural resources in today's rapidly changing planning environment.

You can find out more information about the ICSEP by visiting their website at:

<http://www3.glynwood.org/glynwood/stable/index.html>

*Gemma Connolly, MCIP, RPP is a Watershed Planning Technician at the Toronto Region Conservation Authority. This is her first article for the Journal.*



A typical group of project planners

dictions up and down the river to follow.

Throughout the week, the team had the opportunity to hear and meet with various levels of governments, agencies, community



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## The Signal to Noise Ratio

By Philippa Campsie

Recently I read of a study in England that measured the noise levels of popular restaurants. Apparently seven out of the 30 restaurants tested registered a noise level of more than 85 decibels. When factories reach 85 decibels, the owners are legally required to issue ear protectors to their employees. Apparently no restaurant is as yet offering such protection to its clientele.

Although I could happily spend an entire column ranting about the noise levels in restaurants, my job is to talk about planning communications. And noise is a problem there, too. I call it the signal-to-noise ratio problem.

The signal-to-noise ratio is an expression that will be familiar to audio buffs. It measures the amount of desired noise (the signal, such as a radio broadcast or the music from a CD) to undesired noise (static, interference, hiss). We need a similar ratio for communications. How much of what you read is gen-

uine information and how much is just noise?

Look at that planning report on your desk. How much are you actually going to read, and how much are you going to ignore, because you know it is just noise? How about the obligatory but unnecessary warm-up, usually labelled Introduction, which tells you what you are about to read? Or the equally obligatory, equally unnecessary Conclusion, which tells you what you have just read? Or the section labelled Background, which tells you an assortment of facts, some of which have nothing to do with the matter at hand, but all of which are included because somebody went to the trouble to find them out?

Even in a memo or a letter, noise intrudes. "It should be noted that..." "As you may or may not be aware..." "It is staff's intention to..." "We would like to draw your attention to the fact that..." "We have reviewed the above-noted application and have the following conformity comments..." "Your corre-

spondence was directed by Council to be received and filed." How many decibels is that?

We are all overworked. We do not have time to read reports and memos that are mostly noise. Yet we apparently still subscribe to some unwritten rule that documents must fill up a minimum amount of paper, that they must include bureaucratic language that takes up a lot of room.

I get nostalgic for the days when people conveyed information in telegrams. Telegrams made brevity an art form. Information was conveyed in a few terse words, in sentence fragments. All signal, no noise.

I am not seriously suggesting that planners should write 10-word reports, although occasionally circumstances might warrant that kind of brevity. I just wish planners would write as if they had to pay for every word they put on paper. The world is deafening enough as it is, without adding to the noise.

*Philippa Campsie runs own business, shortens reports, and is deputy editor of this magazine. She can be reached at [pcampsie@istar.ca](mailto:pcampsie@istar.ca).*



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**President's Message**

# Recognition and Respect for Planning and the Planning Profession Begins Within!

By Ron Shishido

I'm writing this piece on Valentine's Day. According to Hallmark, Laura Secord and FDS, this is a day to formally honour the people we hold near and dear to our hearts (with gifts of course). In my case, it's my wife and children. For many of us, our chosen profession also fits into the category of things we cherish. We are proud to be planners, we enjoy the work we do and we believe in our "heart of hearts" that our actions support our commitment to serve the public interest. There are many naysayers outside of the planning profession who describe us as "paper pushers" and "obstacles to growth."

Labels are an easy out when you are looking to direct blame rather than work towards solutions to very complex problems. OPPI Council established the Recognition Strategy Task Force to tackle head-on the problem of public perception. Unless challenged, perception becomes reality. "If people believe it, it must be true." The mandate of the Task Force, of which I am the chair, is to recommend for OPPI Council approval and implementation a blue print to achieve positive public recognition of and respect for planning and the planning profession. The Task Force will formulate a strategy and plan of action for:

- Broadening the community's understanding of planning and their recognition of the planner's role in sound decision-making;
- Building public recognition of and respect for the RPP as the symbol and standard of professional planning;
- Building more effective government relations; and

- Building effective media relations to enhance our public image.

Of critical importance to achieving our goal of more positive public recognition of planning and the planning profession is the public's perception of the "respect factor" within the profession. How do planners treat each other and the profession? In my opinion public perception of professions is influenced in a significant way by the level of respect that members of professions afford each other and their organizations in public. The public sees our profession as we see, act, treat and speak about ourselves. Certain well established professions are able to "circle the wagons" when dealing with matters of public concern. They respond to public issues through their professional organizations, relying on established procedures and mechanisms specifically designed to deal with matters of public confidence and professional conduct. There is no gratuitous "carping" or "bad mouthing" of members in the public realm. They sell "Pride in your Career and your Profession"; public denigration of either is discouraged.

Like it or not, this approach helps maintain solidarity within those professions and contributes to some degree towards enhancing public image.

The point of this commentary is that we must first respect and be proud of ourselves as planners and as a profession before we can expect the public to reciprocate. Obviously this cannot be legislated or

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mandated; it is something that you must feel and believe in. I am convinced that the majority of our members are indeed proud to be planners. We need to communicate that sense of pride in our careers and the planning profession to the outside world. To be clear, though, I am not advocating blind pride. I recognize that there is a need for a paradigm shift and skills augmentation in our profession to make us more competitively attractive in the marketplace to meet the challenges of the rapidly changing economy. As with all things today and tomorrow, we must be able to demonstrate that we add value.

I see no value in continuing to "harp" on the things that we are not and "trashing" the profession! I will leave that to our detractors, some of whom are within our profession. I call on those planners who want to be part of the solution to step forward. Our task forces need you to partici-

pate to assist us in ensuring that Council keeps the real "end goals" in mind!

The first "brainstorming" session for of the Recognition Strategy Task Force took place in late February. The Task Force comprises the following members:

- OPPI Council Members Ron Shishido (President and task force Chair), Peter Smith (Director of Public Presence), Marni Cappe (Director of Public Policy), Grace Strachan (Director of Communications and Publications).
- At-large Members Kim Warburton (Mediacom), Ann Joyner (York University), John Livey (Regional Municipality of York), Bruce Curtis (City of London), Wendy Nott (Walker Nott Dragicevic). Marilyn King, a lawyer and planning student in the Masters Program at York University, is supporting the Task Force by recording and documenting the results of the brainstorming sessions in working papers for

review by the group at subsequent meetings.

At its first meeting the Task Force began the task of establishing a consultation plan for communicating with OPPI members through such means as the Ontario Planning Journal, OPPI's website, as well as through District level activities.

For further information on this Task Force please contact me at (416) 229-4646. For further information on the two other ongoing task forces (Policy and Innovation Task Force and the Membership Task Force) as well as the Strategic Plan, please contact Susan Sobot at the OPPI office (416) 483-1873.

Participate in an OPPI Task Force initiative and help us "Turn Vision into Reality." Proud to be a planner and part of the solution!

*Ron Shishido, MCIP, RPP is OPPI President and a partner with Dillon Consulting Limited in Toronto.*

## Should OPPI Membership Include Insurance?

By Don May

Whether you are a public or private sector planner, there are times when you, as an individual, must wonder whether your employer will defend you to the same degree as they would themselves. With increased responsibilities for important matters such as brownfield re-planning or the downloading of environmental responsibility, planners are becoming increasingly involved in practices with legal ramifications such as due diligence.

Obtaining individual or corporate insurance for legal assistance and liability is very difficult given the relatively small size of the profession and the general lack of awareness concerning planning.

As a professional organization of 2400 practising members, we have received a proposal which would provide a total liability

coverage package of five million dollars annually for the Institute and its members. The cost would be approximately \$40.00 per member based on the current membership numbers.

The main question facing OPPI today is, what distinguishes a Registered Professional Planner from any other planner in Ontario? In addition to the benefits a member receives from the Institute, the greater professional challenge is that, collectively, members are recognized to provide a high level of competence and integrity. Insurance as a value included with membership will require the Institute to educate and promote high standards which may further help to distinguish our designation as Registered Professional Planners in the practice of planning in Ontario.

### Planners' Liability - the case for group insurance

Planners in the municipal sphere have always worked with a degree of exposure to liability claims. This exposure has typically been addressed by employers' errors and omissions insurance, and this insurance has conveyed some degree of comfort.

With the most recent round of reforms to the Provincial planning system, planners are now exposed to a new level of exposure, particularly in the areas of environmental protection and compliance.

In these proceedings, it becomes necessary to answer questions like

- What did you know
  - When did you know it
  - What did you do about it
  - Why did you not do something better
- all of which have been rolled into a broad need to demonstrate due diligence.

Defending a liability claim is always a gut-wrenching experience, and can drag on for a long time. Literally years can be taken out of the defendant's working and personal life.

The cost of defense can be quite high, and as a co-defendant with the municipality, individual legal representation is advisable.

In addition, in one recent conviction, prosecutors asked that the convicted municipal staff person be prohibited from receiving indemnification from the employer.

Group insurance is an excellent and inexpensive way to provide peace of mind, support, and financial assistance should anyone have the misfortune to be caught up in these proceedings.

Editor's note: Readers are encouraged to send information on liability issues to Susan Sobot at the OPPI office.

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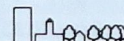
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*Don May, MCIP, RPP is a Burlington based consultant and is the Central District Representative on Council. He sits on the Committee looking into liability insurance for OPPI members.*

## Looking beyond the horizon. . .

### A "must" for students and recent graduates

**A**s Co-Chair of the Student Program Committee, I am very pleased to invite you to attend OPPI's first ever "Student Conference" on Friday September 24. This one-day program is part of OPPI's Annual Symposium held September 22-25, 1999 at Blue Mountain Resorts. This "conference within a conference" will provide students and recent graduates with an opportunity to interact with planning professionals from across Ontario. Here's what we expect will happen. Join the rest of the delegates for lunch

before breaking out into the afternoon program which offers a choice between two informative sessions and a design charette. The first session looks at opportunities for planners in the United States, while the second is an open forum on membership requirements of OPPI. Also planned for the afternoon is a design charette, offering participants an opportunity to take part in a collective problem-solving experience alongside planners, architects and local officials. After a day of informative and thought-pro-

voking sessions, come together with your peers for a reception hosted by the OPPI. This is an excellent opportunity to mingle with fellow students and practicing planners in a casual setting. Immediately following the reception is the Gala Dinner/Banquet; the culmination of the Symposium bringing together participants from both the Main Conference and the Student Program.

Whether you are interested in attending the 1-day Student Program or the entire 4-day OPPI Symposium, don't miss this exciting opportunity to exchange ideas, make new contacts and renew old acquaintances.

*For more information check out our website at or contact the Program Chairs, Gerry Melenka at (905) 895-0011 or Anthony Lanni at (905) 851-8396.*

## OPPI Reviews Institute's Strategic Plan

**I**n 1997, OPPI participated in an association survey. The opinions of OPPI members concerning the Institute were very interesting.

On the positive side....

- a) basic services and other deliverables expected from a professional association are provided
- b) services are good quality and effectively delivered
- c) the organization has a good communication network
- d) there was high overall satisfaction among members.

Things to consider...

- a) members see themselves as customers not owners of OPPI
- b) members want changes to educational programs to address access and cost. And members want to accreditation or certification that will add value to professional standing
- c) the organization needs to focus on activities that increase recognition and respect for the planning profession.



Council wanted members to participate in the review. Focus group sessions were held in all districts and additional opinions were gathered at the OPPI display during the annual conference in Kingston.

Late last year, Council adopted a new Vision Statement.

OPPI is a visionary organization being a leader in public policy, promoting innovation in the practice of planning in Ontario.

OPPI is an influential organization being the recognized voice of planners in the province.

OPPI is an effective organization providing services valued by its members.

Goals also have been developed to support the Vision Statement.

- 1. OPPI effectively represents all planners in Ontario and membership in OPPI is perceived as having obvious and practical benefits to planning professionals.

#### Visionary Organization

- 2. Provide leadership in the development of planning policy in Ontario.
- 3. Research and develop innovative policy solutions to issues affecting practicing planners.
- 4. Maintain a watching brief on government initiatives and work with CIP and others professional organizations to comment, critique and guide policy work affecting planning in Ontario.

#### Influential Organization

- 5. Broaden public awareness of planning and

the role of planners in Ontario, building positive recognition of the professional designation, RPP.

- 6. Maintain a strong government relations program.
- 7. Work closely with the media, building an understanding of planning issues and accomplishments and enhancing the public image of planners.

#### Effective Organization

- 8. Maintain a large and active membership of planners from all parts of Ontario whose participation in Institute affairs is encouraged and rewarding.
- 9. Manage itself in an effective and cost-efficient manner, continuously seeking improvements to its operations.
- 10. Provide services that are valued by its members and which will enhance their professional standing.
- 11. Maintain appropriate professional standards for the profession and ensure that the standards are met by planners in Ontario.

Now it is time to make the Vision a reality. Council has established three Task Forces with mandates to develop specific Action Plans, relating to each component of the Vision, that will implement the Goals.

#### 1. POLICY AND INNOVATION TASK FORCE

OPPI is a visionary organization being a leader in public policy, promoting innovation in the practice of planning in Ontario.

Chairperson: Don May, Director, Central Ontario Representative

#### 2. RECOGNITION TASK FORCE

OPPI is an influential organization being the recognized voice of planners in the province.

Chairperson: Ron Shishido, President

OPPI Council decided that a review of the Institute's Strategic Plan was necessary to ensure that the Institute was responding to member needs and was capable of effectively representing the planning profession in Ontario.

Council began the review early in 1998. A number of informative background documents were created which can be found on our website ([www.interlog.com/~oppi](http://www.interlog.com/~oppi)) along with the 1995 Strategic Plan.

### 3. MEMBERSHIP TASK FORCE

OPPI is an effective organization providing services valued by its members.

Chairperson: Kennedy Self, Director, Membership Services and Outreach

Task Force work is beginning now. A joint meeting of Task Forces will be held at the end

of March with reports from all on their progress in developing specific, implementable Action Plans. Fully detailed plans will be submitted to OPPI Council for review in May and will be presented to the membership at the annual conference in September with implementation underway by October.

The Chairpersons are seeking Task Force

members interested in Action Planning.

Task Force information also can be found on the OPPI website. OPPI Council urges members to participate on a Task Force or to comment on the Strategic Plan work by e-mailing us at [ssoppi@interlog.com](mailto:ssoppi@interlog.com), faxing us at 1-416-483-7830 or contacting us by telephone at 1-800-668-1448.

#### Welcome to the following New Provisional Members

Charles F. Burgess .....CD	.....Nottawasaga Valley Conservation Authority	Tyrone B.G. Lafferty .....CD	
G. David Burnett .....CD	.....Regional Municipality of Peel	Christopher B. Leitch .....CD	.....Candevcom Limited/ Transearch Group
Jennifer J. Foster .....CD		Caroline J. Marshall .....CD	.....Hough Woodland Naylor Dance Leinster
Chadwick P. Jeffery .....SD	.....Prince, Silani and Associates Ltd.	Shawn G. Nastke .....CD	.....Town of Georgina
		Mohammed Nur Nabi .....CD	
		Chandramukhi Sharma .....CD	.....Toronto and Region Conservation Authority

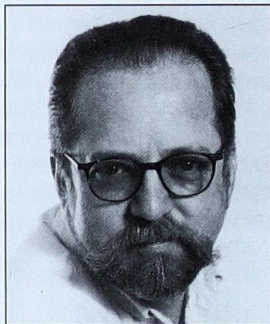
## 30 / IN PRINT

### Books to stimulate your intellect

## Content More Important Than Size

In the previous issue two rather weighty volumes of over 300 pages each were considered. As a kind of balance, the two publications reported on here are both much slimmer. The reviewers' comments, however, show that size doesn't matter.

Daniela Kiguel and Ryan Walker are both graduate students in planning at Waterloo and OPPI student members. As part of their research they have been exploring the use of visioning, a subject in which I have also invested considerable time. This work has given Ryan and Daniela a good basis on which to discuss the US National Civic



Robert Shipley

League's publication on community visioning and strategic planning. This handbook might be a useful item to planners in places considering the use of this technique.

The second volume considered in this issue has been produced by a Canadian organization with some similarities to the American National Civic League. The Canadian Urban Institute has collected summaries of presentations they have sponsored. Planner Matt Reniers gives us an insight into what is available in this small but packed offering from the Toronto based CUI.

The book reviewed by George McKibbin in the last Journal issue. Copies of *Beyond Prince and Merchant* can be obtained from ICA Canada in Toronto at Canadian Retail price of \$34.95. Readers can contact Janis Clennett: [jlennett@icacan.ca](mailto:jlennett@icacan.ca).

### The Community Visioning and Strategic Planning Handbook

Principal author and editor: Derek Okubo

Date: 1997

Publisher: National Civic League, National Civic League Press, Denver, Colorado, USA

Pages: 50

*Reviewed by Daniela Kiguel and Ryan Walker*

In planning for the future, communities are facing new realities. These new realities include fewer public dollars, the concentration of responsibility at the local and regional levels, and community diversification.

In response to these pressures, two types of communities emerge. The first prospers in the new environment because it "aggressively" practices collaborative problem solving and consensus-based decision-making. The second type does not; its progress slowed by contentious behavior as public, private, and non-profit sectors defend their own interests. That is the view presented in the National Civic League's handbook on community visioning and strategic planning. Visioning and strategic planning is presented

as the method of choice for collaborative community-based planning. It provides an excellent step-by-step sketch of the process, complete with timelines and cost estimates.

The first step in launching a community visioning project is to recruit an Initiating Committee to design the process and logistics that will bring a full range of stakeholders to the table. The handbook discusses the importance of a good community outreach process to test current thinking within the community at various stages throughout the visioning process.

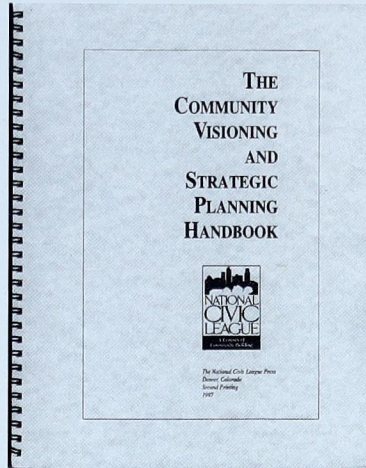
The handbook distinguishes between communities that begin by determining a desired future, and those that assess their current situation before beginning the visioning project. For those wishing to map the current trends and forces facing their community, this handbook discusses approaches called environmental scanning and community profiling.

The most interesting section of the book presents the idea of "civic infrastructure." It defines civic infrastructure as "the formal and informal processes and networks through which communities make decisions and solve problems." As one would expect, the most vital communities "recognize the interdependence of business, government, nonprofit organizations, and individual citizens." They soften the boundaries between these sectors.

Political and economic realities should not act as constraints to an effective community vision. The second last section of this handbook acknowledges this and discusses how to create a community vision and select Key Performance Areas (that is priority areas that will be the focus of specific actions). The handbook closes with a discussion of action planning and implementation strategies. This

section also proposes ways to avoid the age-old problem of the shelved and dust-ridden planning report.

Although comprehensive and concise, the handbook does have some weaknesses. It is thin in the area of trouble-shooting. All of the examples cited are success stories. They offer little advice on where barriers may arise in the process and how to overcome them. The manual is one-sided in that it does not acknowledge any of the weaknesses associated with visioning. For example, it is now recognized that not everyone is able to visualize a future that is 10 or more years distant while some stakeholders may place little value on long range plans in their daily struggle for power and resources. Bear in mind that the handbook is written for people already determined to do a visioning project.



This is an important "how-to" document for planners and community activists interested in collaborative approaches to community planning. While case histories are all from the U.S.A., the ideas are easily transferable to Canadian communities. The diagrams are excellent and the annotated bibliography of over 150 sources is a pleasant bonus. The epilogue that "the list of ailments afflicting the city today omits the chief problem; the inability to think or act as a community." Visioning and strategic planning is perhaps the best way to address this problem. Note: For further analytical reading on the subject of visioning see Shipley, R. and R. Newkirk "Vision - Did

Anybody See Where It Came From" Journal of Planning Literature. Volume 12, Number 4, 1998 and Shipley, R. and R. Newkirk "Vision and

Visioning: What Do These Terms Really Mean" Environment and Planning B, Planning and Design. Volume 26, Number 4, 1999.

*Daniela Kiguel and Ryan Walker are candidates for Masters Degrees at the School of Planning, University of Waterloo.*

## Thinking About The City: Insights Into Urban Canada

Editors: Glenn R. Miller and Patricia E. Roset  
Date: 1998  
Publisher: Canadian Urban Institute  
Pages: 69  
Price: \$30.00

*Reviewed by Matt Reniers*

The Canadian Urban Institute sponsors breakfast seminars featuring a keynote speaker who addresses a topic of current relevance to urban affairs. "Thinking About The City: Insights Into Urban Canada" gives a



### Thinking About the City: Insights Into Urban Canada

An essential reference for urban professionals, municipal officials and other stakeholders seeking to anticipate the direction of urban policy in Canada.

Renowned architect and urban designer, Eberhart Zeidler calls *Thinking About the City* "fascinating" and "worthwhile." *Thinking About the City* is "a collection of widely divergent concepts (that) lets the reader make their own judgements," he says.

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brief summary of 30 of these monthly breakfast seminars that took place between September 1995 and June 1998.

The summaries present the main ideas brought forward by each of the speakers as well as key points of discussion. There is no attempt to reproduce any of the presentations in full or to include any of the slides or graphics that may have accompanied the original seminar. Each of the seminars is limited to a two page synopsis. As a result of this format, no discussion is dealt with in any depth.

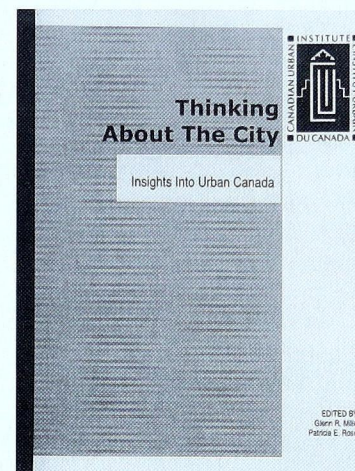
Despite these limitations, I was quite impressed with "Thinking About The City" for several reasons. The following represents only a partial listing of the breakfast seminar

speakers: Bob Rae, David Crombie, Jane Pepino, John Sewell, Milt Farrow, David Collenette, Dennis DesRosiers, Peter Maurice, and Helen Cooper. All were very distinguished and leaders in their field or in important positions of influence. Their backgrounds, expertise and political philosophies are as diverse as the topics discussed.

I was also impressed with the scope of the seminar topics. The seminars were grouped under five general areas: Organizing to Compete; Building Better Communities; Cities by Design; Signposts on the Information Highway; and Understanding the New Urban Economy. Subjects dealt with include: the privatization of public ser-

vices, co-operative marketing, national urban policy, municipal re-organization, investing in cities, new urbanism, billboards, telecommunications, the digital revolution, retailing, adjusting to the global economy, demographic and economic trends, social policy, and urban transportation. This is only a partial list.

Although there was definitely a GTA focus in many of the seminars, the topics are presented in a manner that should be of broad interest to planners, particularly since the focus is not on details but on the ideas presented. "Thinking About The City" is not a book to consult for research on a current urban problem. Basically what is presented is a smorgasbord of ideas on a wide range of issues that affect the urban community. This is the essential strength of "Thinking About



The City". It certainly provoked thought on my part and also helped me to appreciate the inter-connectedness of many of the subjects, their impact on urban communities and why as a planner I should be concerned.

Not having had the opportunity to attend the seminars, I found it beneficial to have the highlights made available in "Thinking About The City." I would have enjoyed a more in depth forward or a concluding analysis by the Canadian Urban Institute staff summarizing what they have learned from these breakfast seminars, drawing out common themes, trends and issues. However, this is a minor complaint.

If you are interested in attending a breakfast seminar, you can obtain a schedule by visiting the Canadian Urban Institute web site at [www.canurb.com](http://www.canurb.com).

*Matt Reniers, MCIP, RPP is a senior planner with the City of Brantford working on heritage and policy matters.*

*Robert Shipley, MCIP, RPP is the Journal's contributing editor for In Print. He can be reached at [rshipley@fes.uwaterloo.ca](mailto:rshipley@fes.uwaterloo.ca)*

**Letters** (Cont. from pg. 12)

to go. Rather than conducting task forces we should have a symposium or brainstorming session in advance of the AGM. This would be an effective way of increasing participation by the membership and generating suggestions.

Here are some suggestions of my own:

1. Monitor media articles and letters and take a stand, responding in timely fashion to those having an impact on OPPI. A recent Toronto Star article with an anti suburban bias is an example. A factual letter could have pointed out that planners try to fairly represent all interests and that "sprawl" means different things to different people. Not all suburban development is bad and that planning seeks a balance between redevelopment and greenfields. This might have resulted in another article with input from OPPI.
2. We should consider bringing forward to the OPPI Act requiring mandatory registration of all individuals who refer to themselves as community planners or land use planners. This would be similar to the situation in Saskatchewan.

3. Consider hiring a full time research officer to deal with media, monitor legislation and policy initiatives. AMO, UDI, GTHBA all have full time staff.
4. Take a stand on major broad issues such as provincial downloading.
5. Establish effective liaison with other associations.
6. Monitor government studies and try to secure OPPI representation.
7. Consider a role for OPPI as a general advisor to the public on broad matters.
8. Publish more material for public consumption on issues or research.
9. Develop a role and presence for planners in other major issues of current public concern such as school closures.
10. Recommend changes to the Planning Act, Municipal Act etc. to incorporate tools available in other jurisdictions.
11. Remember that "lobby" is not a dirty word.

Planners of Ontario unite! We have nothing to lose but our magic markers, low profile and lack of public recognition.

*Michael Otis, MCIP, RPP. Michael is a Toronto-based planning consultant.*

