

# ONTARIO PLANNING

## JOURNAL

ONTARIO PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS INSTITUTE

MARCH/APRIL

2000

VOLUME 15

NUMBER 2

## The GTA as an Agricultural Community

**A year-long study reveals  
the economic benefits of the  
agricultural sector, and  
identifies serious threats**

**By Margaret Walton**

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## ONTARIO PLANNING JOURNAL

Volume 15, Number 2, 2000

### ONTARIO PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS INSTITUTE

The Ontario Affiliate of the Canadian Institute of Planners

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#### Subscription Rates

Canada \$35 per year (6 issues); Single copies \$6.95; Members \$11.00 per year (6 issues); Postage paid at Gateway Post Office, Mississauga

#### Advertising rates

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



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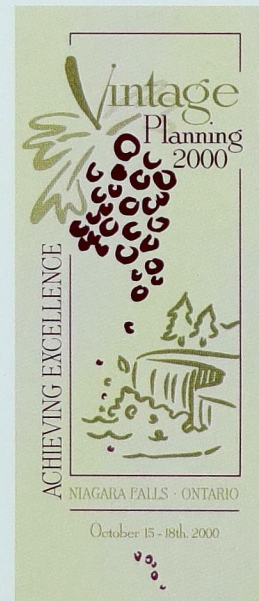
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# Agriculture The GTA's Hidden Resource

By Margaret Walton

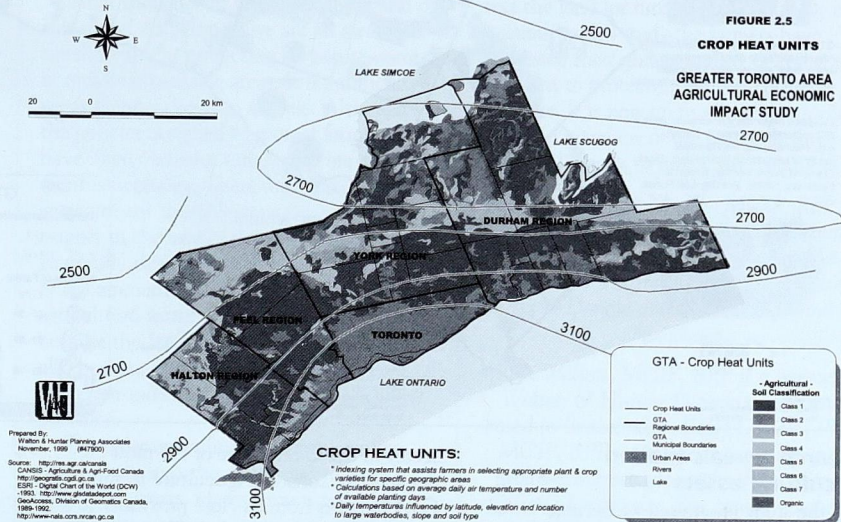
Concerned that agriculture was the forgotten sector in the GTA, in 1998 the farming community decided to conduct an agricultural economic impact study. Its purpose was to "identify the benefits that agriculture provides to the urban population of the GTA and the circumstances required to ensure that agriculture has the opportunity to continue to exist in the GTA."

Rapid urbanization and development pressures were making the job of farming increasingly difficult. Traditional land use controls did not seem to be effective in protecting the land base. Huron County had conducted an economic impact assessment of agriculture in that County which had underscored the importance of agriculture to the regional economy. The four Federations of Agriculture in the GTA felt that by quantifying the economic contribution of agriculture to the GTA economy, a similar boost in profile would be achieved. This in turn would strengthen the case for preserving the agricultural land base. Walton & Hunter Planning Associates, Betsy J. Donald and J. Ross Raymond and Associates were retained to do the study.

The first step taken by the Federations was to establish a steering committee to oversee the study. The committee was initially comprised of two members from each of the Federations of Agriculture in the Regional Municipalities of Durham, Halton, Peel and York. As the process evolved, representatives of various funding partners joined the Steering Committee. However, throughout the process the core group of farmers remained as the only voting members of the Committee. From start to finish, the study was driven by the farming community.

Although the original impetus for the project was to undertake an input/output analysis of the economic impact of agriculture in the GTA, the Committee realized that the study was an opportunity to complete a comprehensive review. Consequently, the terms of reference were broadened to include the following components:

- geographic and development profiles;
- economic profile by agricultural sector;
- assessment of the economic impact of the agricultural sector on the economy of the GTA;
- municipal agricultural property tax base system; and
- social, cultural and environmental impacts of agriculture.



A major element of the study was a survey of farmers and farm related businesses in the GTA.

From the beginning, the study generated a great deal of interest. Funding was obtained from Human Resources Development Canada, the four Regional governments and the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance. Ongoing assistance was provided by the Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs and input was generously provided by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, the Countryside and Environment Working Group of the Greater Toronto Services Board and all of the GTA area municipalities.

## Wrestling with an octopus

It took a full year to complete this study. Throughout that time we often felt that we had taken on the task of wrestling with an octopus. Every time we thought we had a subject nailed down, it would take off in a different direction. Although a great deal of information was available it was remarkably unorganized and much of the historical data had never been collated for the GTA.

Each team member was given responsibility for specific study components. Margaret Walton was study coordinator and was responsible for the geographic and development profile and analysis of the social, cultural and environmental impacts. Rick Hunter dealt with the property tax issues and Betsy Donald did the economic analysis and economic innovation component. Ross Raymond provided the historical context. Judy Coward and Joel Bagg of OMAFRA kept us on track. We were blessed to have Cathy Boddington, the computer wizard with a passion for farming who prepared all of our graphics. Our staff took on the project as a cause and spent countless hours interviewing farmers, talking to ARBs (agriculturally related business operators), collating data, researching issues and producing the report.

## DAIRY IS BIG BUSINESS IN ONTARIO...

1996 - Ontario dairy farms sent 2.3 billion litres of milk to market (\$1.4 billion).

Proximity to the Pearson International Airport and to University of Guelph's world renowned research and educational agricultural programs results in several of Canada's top dairy genetic exporters locating in the GTA and others are located nearby.

GTA is home to some of the top Holstein herds in the world.

GTA dairy farms are models of efficiency and technological innovation. In 1997, 363 dairy farms produced 107 million litres worth of milk for gross farm receipts totalling \$67.71 million (17.65% of total gross farm receipts in the GTA).

GTA dairy farmers and farmers from the surrounding regions donate 25,000 litres of milk to Toronto area food banks on a monthly basis.



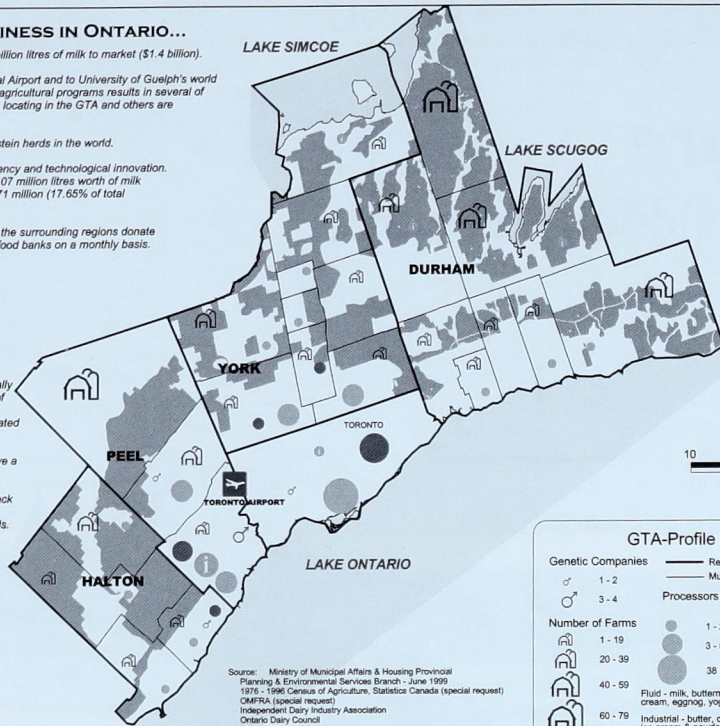
GTA dairy producers are fundamentally interconnected to dairy processors, of which there are currently 59 located across the GTA, employing an estimated 4900 persons.

Canada's major dairy processors have a HQ corporate presence in Toronto e.g. Parmalat and the Parmalat family of companies (Schneiders, Black Diamond, Astro, Parkay, Beatrice, Lactantia), Natrel, and Gay Lee Foods.



← GUELPH

Prepared By:  
Walton & Hunter Planning Associates  
November, 1999 (H47190)

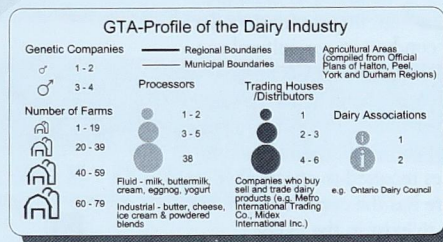


Source: Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing Provincial Planning & Environmental Services Branch - June 1999  
1976 - 1996 Census of Agriculture, Statistics Canada (special request)  
OMFRA (special request)  
Independent Dairy Industry Association  
Ontario Dairy Council  
Dairy Farmers of Ontario  
Holstein Canada  
Dairy Plant Information, Scott's Directories, 1999.  
Global Opportunities, Source Guide, 1999.

FIGURE 3.12

## PROFILE OF THE DAIRY INDUSTRY

### GREATER TORONTO AREA AGRICULTURAL ECONOMIC IMPACT STUDY



## Research reveals hidden agricultural assets

As the study progressed we became increasingly excited about our findings. Agriculture in the GTA is a vibrant, world-class industry of great diversity. The economic analysis confirmed that agriculture in the GTA generates an estimated \$1.3 billion dollars per year in annual gross sales. Approximately 35,000 jobs are supported by GTA agriculture. Despite development pressures, there were still 4621 census farms in the GTA in 1996.

Some of the best agricultural land in Canada is found in the GTA. The physiography, soil capability and heat units that characterize the GTA combine to qualify it as part of the very limited five percent of the Canadian land mass that is classified as prime agricultural land. The quality of the land is reflected in the fact that GTA farms have a higher productivity than farms in other parts of Ontario. Measured in terms of total farm gate sales per acre, GTA farms average \$770.00 as compared to the provincial average of \$560.00. Agribusiness in the GTA produces more dollar value than the County of Huron or the provinces of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick or Prince Edward Island.

Agriculture in the GTA is diverse. Major farm types include dairy, cattle, field crop, fruit and vegetable and specialty. The equine

sector in the GTA is one of the most dynamic in Canada. Agriculture in the GTA benefits from its close proximity to a sophisticated urban market. The sophistication of the market is reflected in the diversity and quality of crops produced by GTA farms. GTA residents benefit from the proximity to agricultural operations through access to farmers markets, pick your own operations and the availability of high quality local products.

## Land base being depleted at alarming rate

Despite its strength, the future viability of agriculture in the GTA is threatened by the rapid loss of prime agricultural land to urbanization. Between 1976 and 1996, largely as a result of rapid urbanization and inefficient development patterns, 150,024 acres of prime farm land was lost to production. According to a report issued by the Greater Toronto Co-ordinating Committee, Vision for the Countryside, "if the rate of loss of farmland continues at 7500 acres annually, an additional 165,000 acres of land will be lost to production by 2021".

Raw numbers alone do not accurately reflect the extent of the pressure on the prime farmland. Of the land currently under production, 47 percent of it is rented, not owned by the farmer. We were amazed to

discover the number of farmers who do not own any of the land they farm. Because they do not own it, farmers are not willing to make the long-term investments required to manage the resource. The insecure tenure makes long term planning difficult. The amount of rented land also raises the question of what the actual ownership pattern is and why the land is being held.

The parcels farmed in the GTA are fragmented and thus the need to move equipment between properties is essential. This leads to conflicts on the roads, the nature of which is extremely stressful for the farmer. We were told horrendous tales of harassment experienced by farmers as they move from field to field. Other conflicts arise when urban forms of development are allowed in agricultural areas, leading to conflicts over odours, dust and hours of operation.

In addition to the straight forward relationship between the land available and production, there is a growing understanding that to be successful, there is a critical mass of related business that must exist for an economic sector to be successful. The network of farms, supporting industries, research facilities and markets located in the GTA creates a critical mass or cluster, which allows agriculture to flourish. When components of the network disappear, the entire cluster is adversely affected.

## Study findings add context to sprawl debate in GTA

The study was finally completed and released in November last year at the Ontario Federation of Agriculture Annual Convention. The response to it has been gratifying. The timing could not have been better. The discussions related to the Oak Ridges Moraine and the need to better manage urban sprawl presented us the opportunity to remind the politicians and residents of the GTA that agricultural land must also be protected as a non-renewable resource. The land base is finite and once developed, cannot be replaced.

Since its release, we have been asked to present the study findings to a wide variety of forums. The study was initially presented to the Mayors and Chairs Committee of the GTA. We have appeared before both the Planning Committee and full Regional Councils in Durham and Halton, the Committee of the Whole for the Region of Peel and the Countryside and Environment Working Group of the Greater Toronto Services Board. A working lunch was held with the Minister of Agriculture, Ernie Hardiman, to discuss the report. The Town of Caledon asked for and received a presentation and we are scheduled to appear at the Town of Clarington in March. Each presentation has resulted in extensive and spirited discussion. Finally it seems agriculture is getting the attention it deserves.

The response of the press to the report has been positive. Interestingly, the main response from reporters is astonishment that there is so much agricultural activity in the GTA. From that perspective we are achieving our goal of educating people about the presence and importance of agriculture in the GTA.

## Where do we go from here?

The Steering Committee is pleased with the initial impact of its report. Various levels of government in the GTA have established or are establishing working groups that include members of the agricultural community. We have introduced a number of important issues that need further study. We hope that other groups and agencies will run with these recommendations. We are hopeful that we have reestablished agriculture as a significant and critical component of the GTA.

What thoughts do we have coming out of this study? As planners we are all aware of the difficulty in protecting certain resources in rapidly urbanizing areas. It is a difficulty we as planners need to address. Although the policies designed to protect farmland have improved over time, more improvement is necessary. There must also be strong commitment to implement the policies rigorously in the face of development pressures. Hopefully this report will give planners some of the ammunition they need to protect the agricultural sector in the GTA not just because the land is a limited resource but also because of the economic, social, cultural and environmental benefits that agriculture provides.

The most rewarding part of this entire process has been the opportunity to work with the farmers. Many farmers today are under extreme duress, which can result in additional pressure to give up and sell their land. Farmers farm because they want to, not to get rich. However they do need to be able to make a decent living and in the face of uncertain commodity prices and global trade issues this is difficult. Canadians are used to buying cheap food and are often not pre-

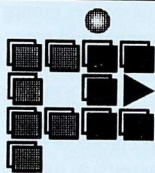
pared to pay the price for local produce and higher quality. Food is something we take for granted. In the face of this it is difficult for a farmer when offered millions of dollars for his farm, to say no.

When faced with conflicts associated with urbanization, rising land prices and falling commodity prices, why would any farmer be willing to assume responsibility for preserving land for the future good of Canadians? This is an issue that is totally outside the study. However it is one that must be addressed. There is a need to protect the land for future generations. By commissioning this study the farmers have expressed their understanding of and commitment to protecting the agricultural resource. It is now up to government, planners and members of the public to show their willingness to make this commitment.

Margaret Walton M. PL. MCIP, RPP is a Partner in Walton & Hunter Planning Associates. The study was carried out by Walton & Hunter Planning Associates. Betsy J. Donald and J. Ross Raymond and Associates.

Rick Walton, MCIP, RPP is a partner in Walton & Hunter Planning Associates, based in Bracebridge. Betsy Donald, Ph.D. MCIP, RPP is Assistant professor in the urban-economic geography department at Queen's University. She can be reached at 613-533-6040. Ross Raymond, FCIP, RPP is a principal of J. Ross Raymond and Associates.

A full copy of the report is available for Walton & Hunter Planning Associates for \$50.00 and it is posted on the Ontario Federation of Agriculture Web Page address: [www.ontarioagriculture.com/](http://www.ontarioagriculture.com/)



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## Words of Welcome

## Future Professionals Take Note of Planning Principles

By Mark Dorfman

This is our 80th year as a recognized and active profession in Canada. This is the 25th year of the "new" Canadian Institute of Planners and the 14th year of the Ontario Professional Planners Institute.

Our traditions are entrenched in the settlements of the great Canadian cities, towns and neighbourhoods. Such eminent people as Thomas Adams, Humphrey Carver, Stan Nash, Jack Allston, Hans Blumenfeld, Horace Seymour, Eric Thrift, Benoit Begin, led Canadian communities through the 1930s to the 1960s. In the post-war period, educators such as Len Gertler, Bob Dorney, Ralph Kreuger, Gerry Carruthers, John Dakin, Brahm Weisman, George Rich, and Peter Oberlander, gave us inspiration and wisdom at Waterloo, British Columbia and Toronto. In the past 30 years, many planners have become leaders in both the public and private sectors throughout Canada.

The Planning Profession has made a difference in Canada. Over 4,700 people are members of the Canadian Institute of Planners. More than half live in Ontario.

In Ontario, we are over 1,400 Registered Professional Planners plus other categories of membership including planning students, totalling nearly 3,000. On December 9, 1994, the Lieutenant Governor gave Royal Assent to the Ontario Professional Planners Institute Act. This was the Ontario public's confirmation of our responsibility to uphold the public interest. On that wonderful day five years ago, we achieved "adulthood" as a profession along with the responsibility to be accountable for our practice. It took us 20 years to reach that goal.

It takes time to mature. It takes time and a measured response to form opinions and to make decisions.

**Planning is About Time**

There is no instant gratification or quick fix when we are considering the complexity of urban and rural issues. Planning is not only about approving a plan of subdivision or passing a zoning by-law. Remember that our practice is within

the political, legal and social culture that is always changing and that is always under stress.

**Planning is About Space**

Our focus is on property and on the use of land. We care about the space where people live and our houses where we make our homes. We care about the places where we work, where we recreate, where we have our social, cultural and religious institutions. We make room for our favourite cultural activities such as entertainment and shopping.

We are also concerned about how land uses are organized in space and traffic, contamination and public services.

We are equally concerned about the aquatic and animal species that are always endangered in urban and rural environments. We care about the homes of the species in the natural heritage habitat within woodlands, wetlands and watercourses.

We are concerned about how we use these natural resources for human activities.

We should always remember that we are concerned about the welfare of the people who live within our communities at the local and regional scales.

We also need thinkers who can cohesively assemble information and experience and communicate ideas to the profession and to the world.

If Planning is about Time and Space, it is also about Balance and finding the right Balance between Economic Prosperity, Environmental Protection and Human Well-being.

Our mission has always been innovation and our focus is always the future. We are agents of growth and change who believe that government is an instrument to stabilize our way of life rather than intervening in the way of life of our communities. We try to balance the public interest and private rights.

Our Professional Code states:

*Planning includes the scientific, aesthetic and orderly disposition of land, resources, facilities and services, with a view of securing physical, economic and social efficiency, a sound environment, health and well-being.*

As a basic objective of planning is the promotion of the general welfare, the member will respect this paramount consideration in the member's work, even in cases where it may be in conflict with the apparent interest of smaller groups or of individuals. The member will recognize that resources are the property of the nation as well the property of some individual or group; therefore the member will seek to protect and promote both public and private interests, as may be appropriate to the situation, always acknowledging the primacy of the public interest.

These are the objects of OPPI:

- To promote, maintain and regulate high standards of professional planning practice and ethical behaviour;
- To further the recognition of the planning profession in Ontario;
- To promote the value, use and methods of planning;



Students everywhere need to understand where profession has come from

Cont. on page 7

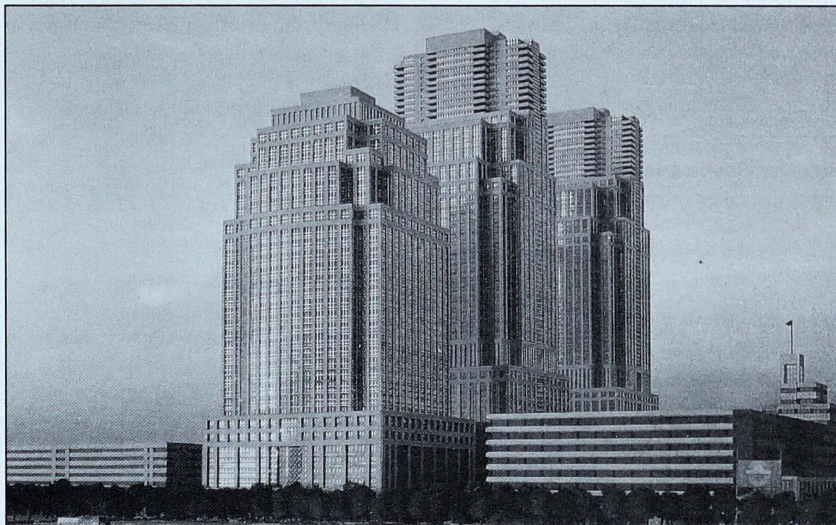
## Five Key Factors for Developing as an Intelligent City

By John Jung

In surveying North American cities, we found that five key factors appear to be necessary for a successful approach toward developing as an intelligent city. Do they characterize your community?

Is there a sense of urgency? If there is a community issue or it is easier to focus attention, set goals and galvanize support quickly. Is there a community champion or coalition of leaders who will take ownership, act as the lightning rod for community action, and provide leadership for others? Have specific community needs been clearly identified and is the level of awareness of these issues throughout the community sufficiently high? Have best practices and priorities been investigated? Intelligent communities must set achievable targets, benchmark and evaluate achievements. Is there a single project that unites the interests of all those involved in championing the cause? This could be missing infrastructure needed in the community, an information technology centre of excellence, or an awareness-building exercise such as a conference.

The intelligent community has more to do with community strategy and attitude than with technology. It is about the creation of an environment that stimulates discussion, allows the sharing of information among people and organizations. The issue is easy, affordable and convenient access to informa-



Skylines a sign cities get smarter

tion to permit the conversion of information to knowledge.

The ability to access, manipulate and distribute new information requires vast bandwidth. Creating opportunities for and through bandwidth, both wireless and land-based, can create new forms of wealth, and as a result, whole new forms of community. Likewise, through application in an intelligent community, increased opportunities for generating broadband demand will benefit the service providers and vendor community.

In "silicon economics" a service provider must rapidly decrease unit cost and unit price while increasing unit demand. This process has led to increased bandwidth demand,

including electronic commerce, software distribution, music distribution, video on demand and videoconferencing. For every percentage point that the price of computing drops, demand grows by 2.5 percent. As a result communications will likely become increasingly sophisticated, approaching the quality of physical presence, or tele-presence, which requires huge amounts of bandwidth.

The Internet has changed the way people and organizations do business. The Web puts big and small enterprises (or communities) on a level playing field. It allows small businesses and small towns and communities to look big and to interact globally, getting their message out. The evolution of Amazon.com, eBay and

*Cont. from page 6*

- To improve the quality of Ontario environments and communities by the application of planning principles;
- To encourage participation and cooperation among those persons, associations and groups concerned with improving the quality of Ontario environments and communities;
- To stimulate the generation, development, dissemination and discussion of ideas on planning.

Remember these words and adhere to these principles.

*Mark L. Dorfman, F.C.I.P., R.P.P. gave this talk to a group of students at Waterloo.*

*Mark is President of Mark Dorfman, Planner Inc. and a professor at the University of Waterloo.*

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ING Bank are good examples. So are communities such as diverse as Charlotte, Toronto and Sunderland.

The Internet's universal connectivity makes possible information partnerships among suppliers, customers and sometimes intermediaries. Using the Internet, they have formed collaborative pathways to improved efficiency and consequently share in its benefits. Multiply this potential across an entire community and it is not difficult

to see how an intelligent city might emerge. This process holds promise for former rust-belt communities and smaller communities once thought to be off the beaten track. Pennsylvania is a leader in this area.

Intelligent communities create opportunities for businesses and communities. With intelligent infrastructure and technologies in place, our task will be to focus on intelligent people, creativity and innovation. These factors will separate communities in a glob-

ally competitive world: those who have them will be able to flaunt confidence, capability and competence. This will attract global interests and generate economic development in new ways.

*John Jung, MCIP, RPP is Vice President of the Greater Toronto Marketing Alliance and on the Board of Directors of the World Teleport Association. This was the second in a two part series.*

## Are service levels up or down?

*This is the first of a series of articles about and around the state of the profession. Planning staff levels, budgets, salaries, development activity and related matters will be the subject matter.*

We know almost intuitively that when the economy is rolling planners and planning departments are busy. We have also learned the hard way through the recession of the early 1990s, combined with severe cutbacks in Provincial funding, that budgets don't always increase and staff positions are not forever. To date however, there is still no base line of information that we can use to compare and understand the size and nature of public sector planning activity. Is planning activity increasing in Ontario? Is it growing in big cities, or in small municipalities? How important is the health of the construction industry to the planning industry? Can we expect the planning industry to expand or contract in the years to come?

In September of 1999, I sent a questionnaire to all municipalities in Ontario with a population larger than 10,000, a total of 108. The questionnaire asked for information on a number of aspects of planning activities in order to get a general picture of how the level

of planning activity had changed over the past decade. The information was requested for the 1988-1998 period in two five-year segments. In addition, I had similar information for a number of municipalities extending back to 1983 from work that our firm carried out for the Commission on New Planning.

Thirty-three municipalities responded to the survey. The municipalities responding ranged in size from the Township of Tay with a population of 9,500 to the City of Ottawa with a population of 323,000. It is interesting to note that all of the respondent municipalities grew between 1988 and 1998 with the exception of Tay, which declined marginally due to restructuring. More than half of the respondent municipalities increased in population by over 25 percent during this period. Household sizes dropped in some municipalities but increased in quite a number of others, particularly in those which had experienced high population growth rates.

In the respondent municipalities the total number of planners went from 167 in 1988 to 198.5 in 1993 (I guess with all the changes somebody was only a fraction of their former self), then dropped to 187 in 1998. In order to provide a more meaningful and comparative statistic I also calculated the ratio of the number of planners to the number of households in each municipality.

There was a very broad range in the rate of households per planner, and no apparent pattern or variable that seemed to explain the difference. The average for all the respondents was one planner for every 4,170 households in 1998, a sizable increase from 1988, when there was on average one planner for every 3,763. In Ottawa in 1998 there was one planner for every 5,921 households, a dramatic decrease in service from 1988 when there was approximately one planner for every 2,796 households in the City. The reverse was true in Kanata, where in 1988 there was one planner for every 3,669 households but one for every 2,519 in 1998. One can only hope that the planners who are no longer in Ottawa have now found employment in Kanata.

In total, of the municipalities who provided information for both 1988 and 1998 14 decreased the level of service; that is, they showed an increase in the number of households served per planner. The average change in the numbers of households per planner was an increase of 11 percent. This could be either an actual reduction in the number of planners, which occurred in four municipalities, or the number of planners not keeping pace with the population growth. Ten of the surveyed municipalities improved their level of service (had fewer households being served by each planner).

*Bob Lehman, MCIP, RPP is a planner with 30 years experience since his graduation from the first class in the MES program at York University. After stints at the City of Toronto, KPMG and the IBI Group he established a consulting firm in Barrie. Twenty years later the firm, with a variety of partners, is called the Planning Partnership. In more recent years Bob's work has broadened to include local government and communications projects but his bread and butter continues to be OP/ZBL/OMB retainers. Bob is also the author of the Zoning Trilogy which has been on the bestseller list of the American Planning Association Library for the past four years.*

## Ontario Planning by the Numbers

By Bob Lehman



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## Revitalizing Windsor's Downtown Waterfront: A Tale of Two Planning Philosophies

By Bruce Singbush

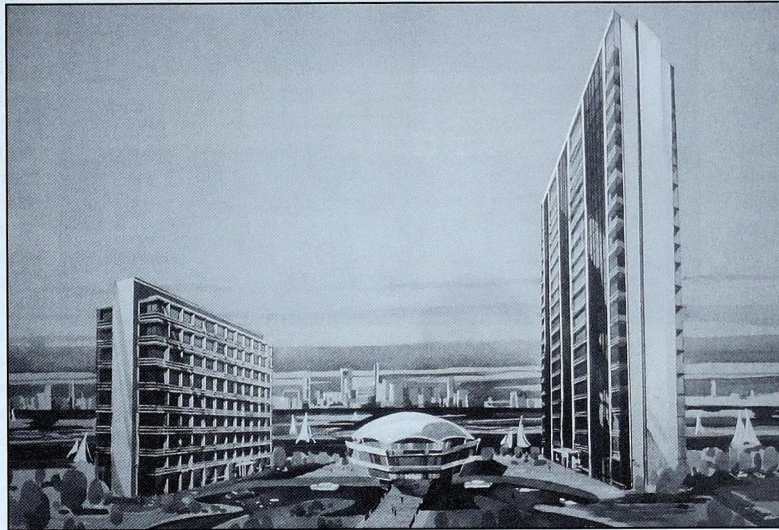
In one night, the revitalization of Windsor's downtown waterfront took a giant step forward. Through a series of interconnected business transactions, the community realized its long-held dream of a publicly owned and accessible waterfront across the heart of the city, and in the process improved the downtown's "twin anchor" revitalization strategy. From a planning perspective, March 8, 1999 marked death of one urban renewal concept and the affirmation of another.

Since 1947, Windsor has had a policy to assemble all waterfront lands along an eight kilometre stretch of the Detroit River from the Ambassador Bridge to the Hiram Walker distillery for a shoreline park. At the time, these railway and derelict wharf and industrial lands cut the community off from the river.

The City was fortunate to acquire and clear land around Ouellette Avenue, the main street of downtown, for park purposes between 1948 and 1963. However, by the early 1960s the intentions for the downtown waterfront lands began to change.

### Planning Philosophy #1— the 1960s

In 1963, Council accepted the concept of allowing commercial uses at limited locations along the waterfront to spur development elsewhere in the core. The plan was to construct a hotel complex on the shore of the Detroit River immediately west of the downtown's primary waterfront park, Dieppe Gardens, to act as a focal point of activity and to define the edge of the city centre on the waterfront. The complex also held the promise of becoming a cornerstone for civic pride, offsetting the attractive Detroit skyline (which was often shown on postcards as



Original artist's conception of riverfront development

supposedly representative of Windsor).

The process of approving and developing the hotel complex was controversial. The by-law to establish the redevelopment area for the hotel was appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board by three parties, including two councillors. These councillors vehemently argued against the whole waterfront commercial program, but to no avail. The OMB ruled in favour of the plan, and the redevelopment scheme for commercial uses on this downtown waterfront site was approved.

In 1965, Council approved a nine-storey

hotel tower and 20-storey apartment/hotel tower, separated by a restaurant, to be built on the site. The terms of the agreement stipulated that the land would be leased to the developer for a 99-year period, at an annual rental of five percent of its market value. Only six months after this agreement was reached the deal began to unravel.

The developer announced that both the soil conditions on the site and its own financial capabilities, coupled with rising construction costs in

Windsor, made the construction of the hotel, as approved, an impossibility.

In its place, the developer suggested a phased development. Phase one involved a four-storey hotel, offices, movie theatre and parking lot. Phase two would include a 20-storey apartment/hotel tower on the east side of the hotel.

The change in development plans was hotly debated by a disappointed Council and the public. In one corner, the councillors who originally opposed the waterfront commercial concept in the first place and some members of the public argued the proposal

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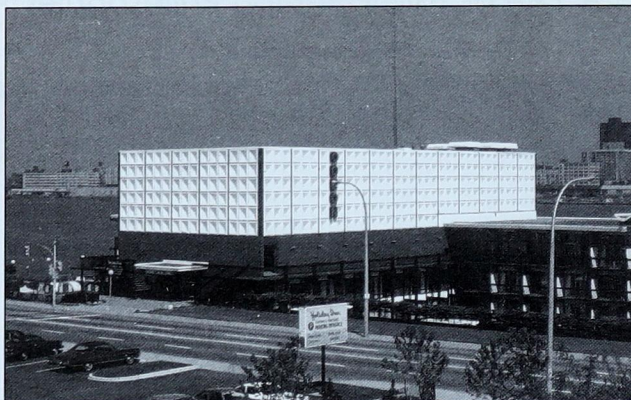
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should be rejected outright and, at a minimum, a new proposal call should be issued. In the other corner, other members of Council and the development industry argued that an about face on the developer and the waterfront commercial planning concept in general would seriously harm future developer interest in the core. After two votes on the issue, Council ultimately agreed to forge ahead with the scaled back waterfront hotel complex.

In hindsight, Council's decision to proceed with the revised hotel complex on the downtown waterfront site would be viewed by the public and media as a mistake. However, at the time Windsor's downtown needed revitalization, and Council hoped that the waterfront hotel complex would advance the city's image both as a progressive municipality and to development interests.

The final built product, however, bore little resemblance to the original downtown waterfront revitalization concept. Only the four-storey hotel, office, theatre and parking

lot were built. Public access, which was to be provided on a narrow boardwalk extended out over the Detroit River, was closed shortly after the hotel opened.



Actual riverfront development resulting from re-negotiations

The downtown revitalization spin-offs from the waterfront hotel complex never materialized. The cornerstone of civic pride was now commonly referred to as the "plywood palace."

## Planning Philosophy #2—the 1990s

The fall-out from the waterfront hotel complex dramatically changed the community's philosophy toward waterfront development and downtown revitalization. Over the succeeding 30 years, all the lands acquired by the City along the Detroit River were put to recreational uses, including a sculpture garden and a planned recreational marina.

During the 1990s the community reiterated their long-term desire to have the waterfront open and accessible for recreational purposes through a series of planning processes (for example City Centre Revitalization Study, Community Strategic Plan and on going Official Plan review).

Over the same period, the revitalization of downtown became tied to the "twin anchor" concept of establishing two major attractions on either side of Ouellette Avenue; Casino Windsor (the eastern super anchor) and a proposed multi-use family

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entertainment complex (the western super anchor).

The "plywood palace" remained, however, as a monument to the city's failed downtown revitalization efforts.

Then beginning in 1997, a series of transactions provided the community with an opportunity to correct this waterfront mistake, and in the process strengthen the downtown's twin anchors.

The out-of-town developer of the now dilapidated hotel complex offered it to the city for \$5.25 million in 1997. Council turned down the offer, citing financial reasons, and the complex was sold to a local developer.

However, all was not lost. The City Centre Revitalization Task Force pressed Council to pursue a property swap or other transaction to return the waterfront hotel complex back to the control of the City for public purposes.

In 1999, a revised deal for the waterfront hotel lands emerged in conjunction with two other deals to enhance the twin anchors. The deals began with the City buying-out the remaining 66-year lease on the hotel property. Next, the City agreed to sell its interest in the former market property adjacent to Casino Windsor to the Ontario Casino Corporation for the expansion of the western super anchor. Finally, the City would purchase and, through an arrangement with the Ontario Casino Corporation, move the Art Gallery of Windsor to allow for the creation of a public esplanade from the waterfront to the western super anchor.

One of the former councillors who had so vehemently argued against the hotel complex in the first place, in conjunction with the media and the public, urged Council to accept the deals. This time they did accept.

The City of Windsor now owns one of the longest stretches of prime waterfront land in North America. The City's Commissioner of Parks & Recreation Lloyd Burrige captured the community's feelings for the downtown waterfront park, calling it "the crown jewel of our 2,000 acre and over 180 park system on our greatest physical attribute, the Detroit River."

As if to underscore the years of fiery debate on the downtown waterfront commercial plan, the vacant and slated to be demolished "plywood palace" burned to the ground on April 8, 1999, one week before the City was to begin tearing it down.

Unfavourable planning concepts do go down in flames after all.

*Bruce Singbush, MCIP, RPP is a planner with Marshall Macklin Monaghan in Markham. This article was written when he was still with the City of Windsor.*

## 11 / DISTRICTS & PEOPLE

### Central

## Toronto's chief planner speaks to OPPI

By David Mackay

The GTA Program Committee was pleased to hold a session on the City of Toronto's Official Plan with Paul Bedford, Executive Director and Chief Planner. Over 100 members were in attendance. Mr. Bedford described the challenges and opportunities facing the City, as well as the goals to be achieved by the new Official Plan. Background studies and reports are underway, with a draft Official Plan expected in the spring of next year, allowing time for a newly elected Council to have input.

## Moving the Economy: Job Creation and Attracting Investment through Sustainable Transportation

In January, the GTA Program Committee organized a session with Sue Zielinski on the City of Toronto's Sector Development Strategy for Sustainable Transportation. Sue is director of Moving the Economy. Over 50 members were in attendance. Based on local and international best cases gathered at the

recent Moving the Economy conference and a recent World Bank study linking the wealth of cities with sustainable transportation infrastructure, the strategy sets out a framework for attracting investment and creating jobs in Toronto's sustainable transportation sector. Ms. Zielinski described the challenges and opportunities facing the development and fulfillment of the strategy.

## Canada's Wonderland Trip II

It was a great time last year, with a beautiful summer day, and over 100 members/family attending the first annual OPPI Family Wonderland Picnic. Let's make it a success again this year. Scheduled for Sunday June 11th, 2000. Prices for entry and lunches are as follows:

Ticket price for children 3-6 =	\$22.50
Ticket price for children 7-12 =	\$26.50
Ticket price for children/adults (12+) =	\$29.00
Lunch price for children/adults (12+) =	\$ 9.25
Lunch price for children 3-12 =	\$ 6.90

Lunch includes either a vegetarian meal (pasta, salad, roll, soft drink) or a 1/4 lb. roast chicken dinner (chicken, baked potato, salad, roll, soft drink). Children may also choose a hamburger or hotdog meal (corn on the cob, potato salad, coleslaw, soft drink and ice cream sundae).

Please contact Hope Russell for more information at 416-451-0705 or by email at:

hrussell@paracom.on.ca.

We look forward to seeing you all there!

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.

## OPPI's Second Annual Ski Day

By Jeff Kratky

Members and friends gathered for the second year in a row at Devil's Glen Ski Club on what I believe was perhaps the best day for skiing this season. The sun was out, the temperature was moderate, and the conditions were packed powder—truly the



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stuff of which skier's dreams are made. Both downhill and cross-country ski conditions were at their best.

CB Richard Ellis sponsored this year's fun race. The results are as follows.

**MEN'S**

Skier	Time
Craig Fowler	28.73 seconds
Geoff Todd	31.41 seconds
Clive Kessel	31.96 seconds

**WOMEN'S**

Lisa Christie	37.12 seconds
Toni Paolasini	38.52 seconds
Linda Warth	48.60 seconds

The OPPI GTA and Simcoe-Muskoka Sub-District Program Committees wish to thank everyone who participated in this event that provides planners with opportunities to better know one another and reward clients and colleagues. Let us know if there should be a 3rd annual ski day.

*Jeff Kratky, MCIP, RPP is the organizer of the ski day. He is an economic development officer with the City of Kitchener.*

**Eastern**

**Recent Events in the Eastern District**

*By Barb McMullen*

More than 50 members of the Eastern District held a half-day workshop in February to explore ways to deliver municipal planning and development services in the new restructured City of Ottawa. The goal of the workshop was to prepare a submission to the newly formed transition board on behalf of OPPI Eastern District membership.

Before the workshop, Bryan Tuckey, MCIP, RPP, former Planning Commissioner of the City of North York, discussed the principles of restructuring municipal planning and development services. Another follow-up workshop will be held to pursue suggestions related to organization, business process streamlining, community-based services and official plans and by-laws.

The February Urban Forum lecture, "Shaping Our Cities by Design," focused

ways to improve the quality of communities by integrating urban design in land development decision-making. Robert Glover, director of urban design at the City of Toronto, Steve Diamond, chair of McCarthy Tetrault's municipal and environmental law group, and Mark Hewitt, senior vice-president of Concord Adex Developments, discussed Toronto's new approach to urban design. About 75 planners, architects, landscape architects and citizens attended the lecture, a timely discussion in light of restructuring in the Ottawa-Carleton region.

Also in February, more than 30 planners shared an enjoyable evening skating on the Rideau Canal at an event called "Planners on Ice," held as part of an initiative to bring together planners from the Eastern District of OPPI and the Ordre des urbanistes du Québec (OUQ).

**An Update on Restructuring in Ottawa-Carleton**

*By Barbara McMullen*

Ottawa-Carleton's transition board was appointed by the Province in January to ensure an effective transition during the amalgamation of regional municipalities to form the new City of Ottawa. The board, which held its first public meeting in February 2000, is chaired by the former Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, Claude Bennett. The other board members are Albert Bouwers, former mayor of Osgoode Township; Camille Guilbault, former member of the Citizen's Panel on Restructuring in Ottawa-Carleton; David Muir, chartered accountant; Edward Mulkins, former member of Ottawa city and regional councils; Kathy Reiner, chair of the Nepean Hydro Commission; and Pierre Tessier, city manager of the City of Gloucester.

The transition board will oversee the financial decisions of existing municipalities in the Ottawa-Carleton region before the new City of Ottawa structure comes into effect in January 2001. It will also develop business plans for the new municipality, put in place basic structures for new municipalities, and hire key municipal officers and executive staff.

The appointment of the transition board followed the completion of the report by special restructuring adviser Glen Shortliffe in November 1999. The report recommended a one-city, one-tier city government with community satellite offices, governed by a mayor and 18 ward councillors.

The transition board has appointed



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Shane Kennedy, MCIP, RPP, as chief electoral officer for the upcoming November City of Ottawa election. Kennedy was seconded to the position by the Region of Ottawa-Carleton, where he is manager of the Clerk's Department. Gardner Church, former municipal affairs deputy minister, is the board's policy consultant.

The transition board has also approved a bilingual election by-law which ensures the use of French on municipal election documents in November across the region. The board set up a panel to study and make recommendations on French-language services in the new City of Ottawa. The panel's recommendations will be considered by the board in May and presented to the new Council for consideration in January 2000.

Queen's Park also gave residents in Fitzroy and Torbolton, two historic townships in West Carleton, the right to decide in a March 6 plebiscite whether they wish to remain in the new city, or join either Lanark or Renfrew counties. If residents of the townships vote to leave the new City of Ottawa, they must submit a restructuring proposal to the Province by March 17 for the approval of the minister.

*Barb McMullen, MCIP, RPP is a principal of MCM Planning and the Ontario Planning Journal's editorial coordinator for the Eastern District.*

## People

### Dan Burns Takes On Health

**D**an Burns, one of the highest ranking DOPPI members in the provincial government bureaucracy, has moved from Economic Development and Trade to Health where he has taken over the difficult job of Deputy Minister.

Before joining MEDT, Dan was Deputy at Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Before that, he was with the former City of Toronto.

**Brian Tuckey** has been appointed Acting Assistant Deputy Minister at Municipal Affairs.

Also at Municipal Affairs, **Tero Kontinen** has joined the Office for the Greater



Dan Burns

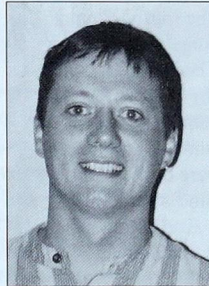
Toronto Area on a research contract. A graduate of Ryerson, Tero recently returned from Finland where he completed a planning program at the University of Technology in Helsinki.

Walker Nott Dragicevic Associates Limited is pleased to welcome another new partner: nine-year WND veteran, **Gary Gregoris**. Other recent staff additions include: **Mark**

**Bales, Mark Bradley, Vince Cornacchia and Bill Dalton** as senior planners, **Kerrie Bremner, Daniel Cuduzio and Gerry Melenka** as junior planners, and **Chris Hardwicke and Marian Prejel** as designers.

**Jodi Melnick**, a graduate of the University of Toronto's program in planning, has joined Weston Consulting Group as a junior planner. Jodi's been a part time researcher for the Japan Local Government Office in Toronto for the past year and spent last summer working for CIPREC. She wrote about her research there in a recent issue of the Ontario Planning Journal.

**Mario Buszynski and Andrew Ritchie** have left Beak International, along with a dozen other environmental professionals, to form Phoenix.mg Incorporated. Phoenix.mg, the newest of the MacDonnell Group of companies, is located in Toronto and provides environmental science and engineering solutions to energy, mining, forest products, manufacturing and development sectors. Other MacDonnell Group offices are in British Columbia and Atlantic Canada. Mario will serve as one of the



Gerry Melenka

Phoenix's three principals and Andrew will be Project Manager/Senior Environmental Planner. Mario and Andrew welcome calls from prospective clients and can be reached at (416) 798-0808, ext. 226 and 231 respectively.

**Betsy Donald** (see cover story) has been awarded the most prestigious award available to students in Canada—the Governor General's Academic Gold Medal. According to the University of Toronto committee, Betsy was awarded the medal not only for her geography and planning doctoral dissertation on "Economic Change and City-Region Governance: the case of Toronto", but also her "significant practical planning experience while completing her dissertation." Her thesis advisor was Professor **Meric Gertler**, MCIP, RPP, Director of Planning at the University of Toronto. Last fall, she started as an assistant professor in urban-economic geography at Queen's. Betsy Donald, Ph.D., MCIP, RPP can be reached by e-mail [bd5@qsilver.queensu.ca](mailto:bd5@qsilver.queensu.ca)

**Laurie Moulton** is moving to Edmonton! Laurie's last day with Sault Ste Marie was January 21st. She was aiming to drive out west and start with the Planning Department, City of Edmonton on January 31st. In her parting note, she said, "Thank you for the Journal experience (as editorial coordinator for the North). It has been an interesting way to talk to people all over Northern Ontario. It is a shame there isn't more happening up this way though." Best wishes, Laurie. We're sorry the extra pay from being Northern Coordinator for the Journal wasn't enough to keep you in Ontario!

*The two contributing editors for the People section are Lorelei Jones, MCIP, RPP and Thomas Hardacre, MCIP, RPP. Lorelei can be reached at [lja@home.com](mailto:lja@home.com). Thomas can be reached at [thardacre@peinitatives.on.ca](mailto:thardacre@peinitatives.on.ca).*

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## Editorial

## Time to learn some lessons from the past

If official plans had been around before Confederation, what would the priorities have been? For cities located on Lake Ontario, would there have been policies specifying the nature of defenses against attack from our neighbours to the south? Would there have been restrictions that limited the discharge of pollutants into rivers? More tellingly, would there have been a clear demarcation between urban and rural land to ensure that there was sufficient land available to grow the produce required to keep city dwellers fed? Maybe not. But one thing is for sure: 200 years ago, residents of Ontario would have been very aware of their dependency on the land around them. The prices and availability of food of all kinds fluctuated wildly in those days. And common folk only tasted certain produce when supply peaked and prices dropped.

This issue's cover story takes a hard look at agricultural land around the GTA and places us on notice that time is running out if we are to protect one of our most valuable but least appreciated assets. Ironically, the very qualities that helped make the GTA into

Ontario's largest urban region are the ones that place a strain on agriculture today. This presents an impossible challenge for the farmers that produce the crops and produce we consume. There are tools available such as transfer of development rights to deal with the issue of tenure described in the article. But it is hard to imagine a city region like the GTA having the courage to tackle a complex issue such as protecting agricultural land when we are seemingly incapable of reaching agreement on protecting more visible resources such as the Oak Ridges Moraine.

This issue of the Ontario Planning Journal contains at least half a dozen articles capable of provoking a debate among planners. The future of agricultural land? The Moraine? Investment in Light Rail Transit? New ways to think about affordable housing? The message that student planners receive? Which subject will you respond to?

*Glenn Miller, MCIP, RPP is editor of Ontario Planning Journal and director of applied research with the Canadian Urban Institute in Toronto. He can be reached at ontarioplanning@home.com.*

## Opinion

## Government Charges Drive Up the Cost of Development

By Paula Tenuta

To complement a 1996/1997 study, UDI/Ontario has completed a review of the 1998/1999 government charges associated with new residential construction. The study titled "Government Charges that Drive up the Costs of Development—A Study of Taxes, Fees and Charges in the Greater Toronto Area" reviews Municipal, Regional, Provincial and Federal charges for the Regions of Halton, Peel, Durham and York and compares them to 1997 figures. City of Toronto figures for 1999 are also included.

This region by region breakdown compares all building costs, taking into account development charges, building permits, planning fees and a host of other charges. It compares the cumulative impact of taxes, fees and charges on a townhouse, commonly a first time homebuyer product. The results are staggering. The study clearly illustrates the huge burden of taxes, fees and charges that drive up the cost of residential development. Consistently,



"New townhouses like these in York Region carry a burden of taxes, fees and charges amounting to over \$40,000 included in its price!"

almost 25 percent of the purchase price is due to taxes, fees and charges from three levels of government. In real terms, a \$160,000 townhouse in York Region carries a burden of charges amounting to over \$40,000! This myriad of charges often causes the dream of home ownership to remain just that.

The study illustrates that:

- Excluding City of Toronto figures, the total taxes, fees and charges paid by a first time homebuyer represents at least 22 percent of the cost of a new home; equating to not less than \$33,000 for a home in each 905 region.
- The combination of Regional and Municipal charges for new residential construction do not seem to fall below \$16,000 in any of the four 905 regions reviewed; cumulatively most often representing the highest percentage of as high as 14 percent of the total house price.
- Local and Regional development charges make up the highest charge in these categories for all 905 areas studied.

With the exception of Toronto, development charges make up at least 58 percent of the total Regional charges shown. Municipal development charges equate to at least 45 percent of the total local charges for 905 areas; reaching as high as almost 58 percent of the total municipal charges in Mississauga.

- With the lack of a Regional development

## A Summary of Total Taxes, Fees and Charges Associated with New Residential Construction

	Local Charges	Regional Charges	Provincial Charges	Federal Charges	Total	Percentage of House Price
YORK (\$160,000*)	\$11,981	\$10,831	\$5,286	\$12,650	\$40,748	25%
PEEL (\$149,000*)	\$12,307	\$8,520	\$5,088	\$11,763	\$37,678	25%
HALTON (\$150,000*)	\$10,182	\$6,250	\$5,072	\$11,844	\$33,348	22%
DURHAM (\$129,000*)	\$6,485	\$10,273	\$4,578	\$10,151	\$31,486	24%
TORONTO (\$225,000*)	\$11,088	\$65	\$6,268	\$17,891	\$35,330	16%

\*Price used in Analysis

charge component, higher Land Transfer Tax and CMHC Mortgage costs, Federal and Provincial charges associated to residential construction in the City of Toronto appear to be the highest in comparison to all areas studied.

- PST on construction materials proves to be the highest provincial charge of each 905 Region studied; representing at least 40 percent of the total provincial charge. PST on construction materials also proves to be the highest charge provincial component for the City of Toronto, representing almost 40 percent.
- On the federal level, the Goods and Services Tax makes up the highest component of this category charge; representing 55 percent of the total federal charge in each area studied.

York Region has the highest total government charges rate for new residential construction, adding up to just over \$40,000; which is 25 percent of the total house price. Out of all the 905 areas studied, the highest Regional, Provincial and Federal charges were seen in York Region. The total Regional taxes, fees and charges component

of a new home in York Region reaches over \$10,000; where development charges represents more than 70 percent. The total Provincial charge in York Region is also the highest when comparing all 905 Regions, amounting to over \$5,200. The Provincial Sales Tax on construction materials is representative of greater than 40 percent of this charge. Federal charges reach over \$12,000; contributed to highly by the Goods and Services Tax, which represents more than 50 percent of the total federal component.

Unfortunately, this current scenario will likely get worse. Over the years, there has been an increase in the list of fees from all three levels of government that contribute to the price of a new home. What's next? More Provincial downloading? New charges? Higher charges? Unfortunately, we've seen a pattern of increased charges through Provincial downloading and the forecast of possible new charges (that is, GO Transit). Government must realize the fragility of the economy and the ability of the consumer to absorb additional charges.

UDI/Ontario continues to advocate better services delivered more efficiently, as a

means to streamline costs. This illustration of government charges that drive up the cost of development is part of UDI/Ontario's effort to ensure that taxes, fees and charges do not become so excessive that housing often becomes out of reach!

To order your copy of the publication, please contact the Urban Development Institute/Ontario at (416) 498-9121.

*Paula J. Tenuta is a provisional member of OPPI. She is Planning Coordinator at the Urban Development Institute/Ontario. She can be reached at [udiont@total.net](mailto:udiont@total.net).*



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### Letters

## Clear But Unwelcome Trend to Centralization

I read Alan Demb's article "The Coming End of Local Democracy in Ontario" and was reassured and yet refueled with anger. I was reassured that I was not the only one who sees this trend towards centralized power. The NDP had also been moving in this direction, especially in the school testing issue as run by David Cooke. I agree with the potential dangers pointed out by Alan Demb. I feel that these concerns are being made more clear over the issue of the Oak Ridges Moraine.

My anger stems from my perception that the two most powerful people in this government, Mike Harris and Tony Clement, are misleading the public about the changes they have made that they claim give more control to the local level. The latest misinformation is the statement that municipal governments have all the power they need to control land use decision making at the local level (Globe and Mail, Sat Feb 26). As planners we might be able to say, "Ya, but that's just the politicians making statements." But it is plainly false, and damaging to our democracy.

All the changes made to legislation and the Provincial Policy Statements since 1995 have been to water down the power of all levels of government to control land use

planning. Provincial politicians seem to say one thing but do the opposite. People have a false expectation of where decisions are really made, and get so frustrated by the confusion and conflicting reports, that they often give up participating in this very important and basic institution, the town hall meeting. (The exception being the great turnout in Richmond Hill on Jan 17 and Feb 23). Meanwhile, or so it seems, the provincial politicians are smiling at the hoax they have perpetrated: they having the power (through appointments to the OMB) while the local politicians get the heat.

Is there a group of planners already existing, or individuals willing to come together, to publicly repudiate the statements made by various government officials regarding land

use planning being totally in the jurisdiction of locally elected officials? Is there a group within the OPPI that can speak on behalf of this organization to help clarify the rules and procedures? I would think that it could take the form of news releases or letters to the editor.

If anyone feels the same as I do, that professional planners need to speak out, please contact me at (416) 235-5548.

*George Ivanoff, Toronto*

## North Bay Quote Spoils Appetite

I recently took my Ontario Planning Journal as a luncheon companion and was

looking forward to reading the article on the resurgence in North Bay's Downtown. Unfortunately, as soon as I saw the quote under the major heading that said, "Like the Premier, North Bay prides itself in taking a business-like approach to life," I started to feel queasy. Well, it was either the article or my lunch, so I decided to forego the Journal and focus on the food.

Hope this type of thing doesn't happen too often as I do find the Journal interesting, entertaining and informative (nothing to do with my being a contributing editor, of course). Let's save our accolades for those who are more supportive of planning.

*Linda Lapointe,  
MCIP, RPP*



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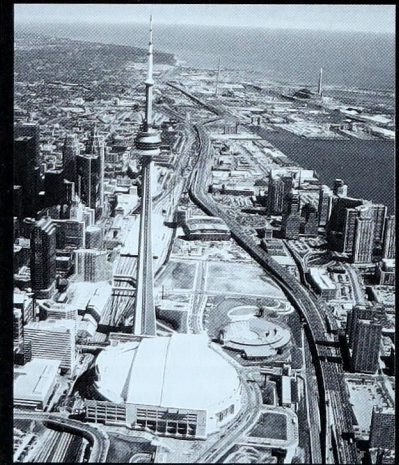
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## More Planner-trocities

I agree in full with your article in the Ontario Planning Journal on planner-ese. There are more serious offences. Consider the following: "people place"—what exactly is a people place? "caucus"—as in "We need to caucus about this issue." And here is a dangerous trend. The article by John Jung in the Journal talks about an "Intelligent" city. If I'm not mistaken, cities are generally inanimate objects. How about anything with the word "sustainable" preceding a noun (that is, sustainable development)? Nothing is sustainable. Even the old-growth (another silly descriptor) forests experience natural degradation now and again.

But then again, what do I know?

Neil Garbe, MCIP, RPP,  
Manager, Corporate Policy  
Regional Municipality of York

## No Money Down, Hold Interest Until Next Year

As I do every issue, I enjoyed your most recent "Communications" column.

I laughed when I read your wish regarding the phrase, "issuance of a building permit." Just that day, I had reworded a letter of mine to fix that exact phrase. Just as you hoped, your "Plain Language for Planners" course did

### LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

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the trick for one of your students—me.

May I suggest another word I would like to see banished forever? COUCHED. As in, "Our request for an inventory must be couched in the methodology." Ugh! Not only is it always used in the passive tense, so no one has to actually claim responsibility for the action of "couching" (whatever the heck that activity requires), it makes me feel like I'm in a bad Leon's Furniture commercial!

Please, please, please ask planners everywhere to stop "couching" their requests, and just come straight out and ask for them. Clarify, define, or request—but please, get off the "couch."

Matt Ferguson, Bruce County Planning  
& Economic Development  
[bcplferguson@brucecounty.on.ca](mailto:bcplferguson@brucecounty.on.ca)

## Passive Aggressive Or Just Passive?

One expression that gave me pause when I first heard it several years ago is "pre-zoning." I've now heard it used several times since. If I understand why Ontario planners thought they needed such a word, its use reveals a lot about how passive and ad hoc the administration of zoning has become. Isn't the essential origin of zoning the anticipation and regulation of future land-use changes? So what's the difference between zoning and pre-zoning?

Norman Ragetlie  
Community Economic Development Unit  
OMAFRA, Guelph

## Article Has Significant Impact

No, you're not alone.

Unfortunately I missed the "As It Happens" program you mention in your

January/February OPJ piece, but I did read Warren Clements on the same subject in the Globe. He even published some of my suggestions. Here are a couple of my own special hates. Neither, of course, is confined to planners, but both are all too common in planning documents.

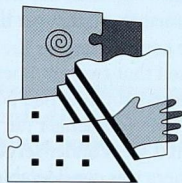
First, the gross over-use of "significant" as a sort of one-size-fits-all adjective covering anything beyond unimportant or trivial. I have seldom encountered "significant" where another word would not have been more suitable; yet I once counted a total of six "significants" on two successive pages of a report, and I doubt if this is exceptional.

I suggest several reasons for this practice. The writer may lack sufficient command of the English language, or simply be too lazy, to find a more precise and accurate term; or may wish to disguise the fact that he or she really doesn't know the magnitude or importance of the matter in question; or may prefer to use a deliberately vague word to avoid the risk of being challenged. None of these reasons, of course, is terribly creditable.

What seems to me particularly regrettable is that "significant" really does mean something, and now and then is actually used accordingly; but it's usually hard or impossible to tell. So, as in the almost universal substitution of "impact" for both "affect" and "effect", we effectively sacrifice a useful word for no good reason.

My second hate is the term "negatively impact", which is hideous. Even "adversely affect" is somewhat less ugly. It also has the merit of bearing some resemblance to English. But is there some rule, unknown to me, about avoiding "harm", "damage", "impair", or, in extreme cases, "destroy"? Well, I suppose there is: such words simply fall outside the lexicon of the Bureaucratically acceptable.

Nigel Richardson, F.C.I.P., R.P.P.,  
Toronto



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Transportation

Ottawa-Carleton's Light Rail Project the Product of Persistence

By Nick Tunnacliffe

Ottawa-Carleton's first Official Plan in 1974 contained the phrase "Council shall give priority to public transit" and a commitment to introduce "rapid transit" to the urban area. At that time no one knew how that could be delivered.

Between 1975 and 1979, the Region undertook a Rapid Transit Development Program, which entailed a review of the types of rapid transit suitable for a city of half a million people growing to one million over 40 years and an analysis of potential routes. The conclusion of the study, was that:

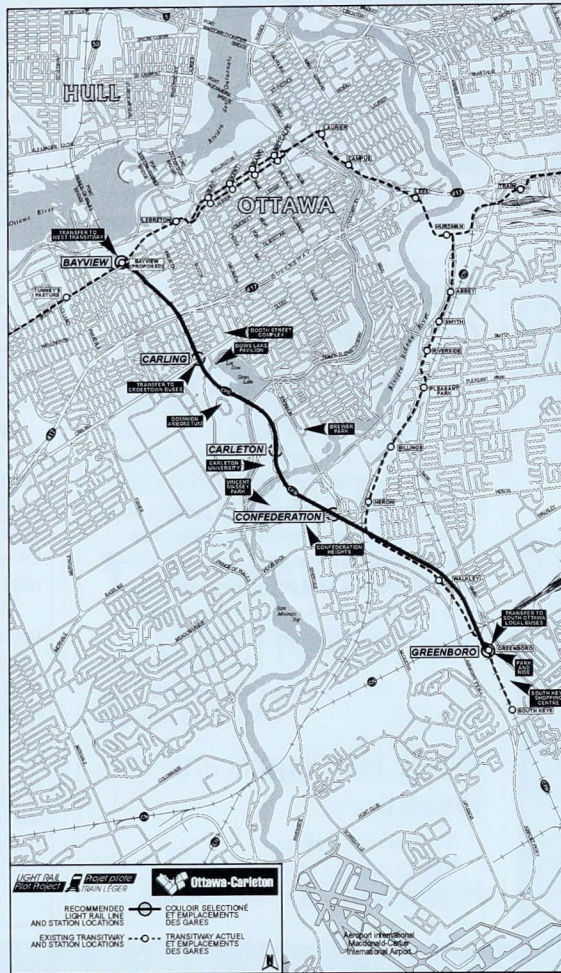
A grade separated bus based rapid transit system would best serve the needs of Ottawa-Carleton. It came to be known as the 'transitway'.

A bus based system would serve Ottawa-Carleton best for many years.

Ultimately a five legged rapid transit system should be developed, to the west, south-west, south-east and east within the urban part of Ottawa-Carleton, with a fifth leg across the Ottawa river to the Outaouais.

That the initial phase should consist of a 31 km system running east, south-east, west and south-west within the Greenbelt, which encircles the main urban area of Ottawa-Carleton.

That construction should begin using an outside-in approach. That is, new construction should take place from the suburbs leading to the cen-



tral area, leaving the more costly and potentially more difficult section within the central area until later.

The design parameters of the 'transitway' should allow for its conversion to a rail based system in the future.

Construction began immediately. The first section to the west was opened in 1983 and the total 31 km of the first phase was completed in 1995.

Council's commitment to transit continued in the 1988 Official Plan. In this Plan, Council committed itself to extending all four transitways inside the urban area to the communities developing outside the Greenbelt.

Transit Ridership Goals Fall Short

During the work which culminated in the 1997 Official Plan, it was clear that Ottawa-Carleton was not meeting the goals it had set itself with regard to transit ridership. Part of this can be explained by a slow down in the economy but a more fundamental part is that work trips (the largest part of the business) had become much more dispersed with many more suburb to suburb trips. Trips by automobile were increasing, but the analysis also showed that transit ridership was higher closer to the transitway. Over 200,000 people ride the transitway each day with

peak loads of approximately 10,000 per direction approaching the central area.

The analysis showed that two rail lines, existing under-used infrastructure, had potential for the introduction of passenger rail service. They also covered areas under-served by the transitway. There was considerable interest in the possibility of reintroducing passenger rail service to Ottawa-Carleton on the part of the public and these lines were designated in the Official Plan for such potential use.

Immediately after the adoption of the Official Plan in July 1997, Council committed funds for an evaluation of the potential routes,

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with a view to introducing rail service as soon as possible. These studies concluded that the introduction of passenger rail service in the CPR Ellwood subdivision which links the south-east transitway at the Greenboro Station to the west transitway, at a new station to be built at Bayview and picks up Carleton University and Confederation Heights (a Federal government office complex), would have the best chance of attracting the most riders initially. The study recommended the following service concepts:

- Use of the eight km CPR Ellwood subdivision between Bayview and Greenboro with five stations
- Simple stations that provide safe, comfortable, accessible and attractive facilities for passengers that can be upgraded if the light rail service is made permanent.
- Two way rapid transit service with 15 minute frequency using diesel powered, low floor accessible light rail vehicles.
- Full integration with other OC Transpo services, particularly at the existing Greenboro transitway station and the new Bayview transitway station.
- An initial two year pilot phase to be cancelled, rendered permanent or extended by two years at the discretion of Council. This was approved in September 1998. At

the same time Council directed staff to undertake the Environmental Assessment necessary for the introduction of any new rapid transit service and to begin negotiations with CPR for the use of the line.

#### Pilot Project Authorized

At this time Council's concept was that the project was to be a pilot project and that Council wanted a way of extricating itself from the project, should it not prove viable in any way.

During fall of 1998, negotiations took place with CPR and in December the two sides signed a Memorandum of Understanding which provided for a framework for a final legal agreement to implement the project. The basis of the Memorandum of Understanding was that CPR would provide a turnkey project for a fixed fee (to be negotiated) with a point in time when the agreement could be terminated, should the project not be viable, or made permanent.

At that time Council wished to see implementation of the project by fall 2000. The Environmental Assessment proceeded without

problems. It was submitted to the Minister of Environment in September 1999 and assuming no problems will be finalised in April 2000.

However, the same could not be said for the negotiations with CP for the delivery of the service.

Some things went well, for example: three makes of vehicle were potentially available, made by Bombardier, Siemens and Adtranz. CP found that only Bombardier could deliver to meet the fall 2000 start date. They negotiated with Bombardier for the lease of the vehicles. The evolution of the service concept and the location and design of stations, which was part of the Environmental Assessment, also went well. However, from the municipal perspective,

CPR was slow to deliver a specific proposal within the cost parameters set by Council.

Council determined that it was prepared to invest 16 million dollars in capital costs initially and pay three million dollars a year operating costs. These figures were derived from the costs OC Transpo would have incurred to move the projected ridership on buses. (A fundamental premise of the project is that it



Bombardier electric vehicle

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should cost no more to move the same number of passengers by light rail than it does by bus.)

In order to meet the fall 2000 opening, Bombardier required a firm order by the end of July 1999. The three vehicles were to be part of a larger order for the German railways and would be added to the production run at the front end of that order. This required approval by Regional Council, which in turn required staff reports to Committee and public consultation around the final recommendation.

#### Private Sector Bails

Shortly before the report was to be submitted, CP rail advised regional staff that they could not meet the terms of the Memorandum of Understanding. The main problem appeared to be their inability to meet both the capital and operating costs parameters established by Council.

During summer 1999, Regional and OC Transpo staff examined alternatives and in September 1999 brought forward a report recommending that the project go ahead with OC Transpo as the operator, with the Region renting the line from CPR and the use of CPR as project manager for the construction of the stations and upgrading the track.

Using this approach, capital costs of 16

million dollars can be met. However, the operating costs will be 3.9 million dollars rather than the three million dollars established originally by Council. The main difference in costs between the original turnkey approach and municipal delivery of service included:

Vehicle Operators—OC Transpo will have to be certified as a short line railway which would then allow the use of OC Transpo operators, which will result in savings of approximately \$500,000 per year in operating costs and \$500,000 in a reduction of one time training costs.

The Region re-negotiated the arrangement that Bombardier had entered into with CPR. CPR's costs were based on leasing the vehicles. The Region could save approximately \$500,000 by entering into a purchase and buy back arrangement with Bombardier.

CPR proposed a comprehensive and therefore expensive Centralised Train Control (CTC) system which would replace the CTC that was extensively damaged in the Ice Storm of 1998 and not replaced at that time. CPR maintained that it was only able to manage the project if it was integrated with the railway's existing operations, controlled from a 24 hour dispatch desk in

Montreal. The Region's consultants recommended a more simple signal and rail traffic control system which will yield savings of approximately two million dollars in one time costs and \$300,000 for rail traffic control services and maintenance.

Because the vehicles are to be made in Germany, they are subject to an eight percent duty and seven percent GST by the Federal government. The Region has an opinion from KPMG that these moneys can certainly be deferred over the period of the pilot phase, until it is decided whether or not the project is made permanent. The Region is more likely to be successful in obtaining this tax and duty relief than would CPR, a private company. The total deferrals would be approximately two million dollars.

Council approved the above proposals last September. However, the resultant delay meant that the Ottawa-Carleton order for vehicles will be at the end of the order for the German railways, which means a delay of approximately six months. The vehicles are expected to be delivered to Canada in winter 2000. They will require some modification to meet Transport Canada standards and the service should begin in early summer 2001.

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## Achievements to be proud of

Ottawa-Carleton's experience in developing rapid transit suggests the need for continuous improvement to transit services if communities are to meet transportation goals.

Light Rail occupies a unique niche which complements the existing and proposed transitway system, but will be integrated in the overall transit service.

The private sector is not yet attuned or

responsive to the needs of potential passenger rail needs in urban regions.

Ottawa will be uniquely positioned among cities in Canada with two firsts in public transit, the grade separated transitway and in 2001 the first Light Rail Project in Canada.

I will keep Ontario Planning Journal readers up to date with our progress as we undergo jurisdictional changes.

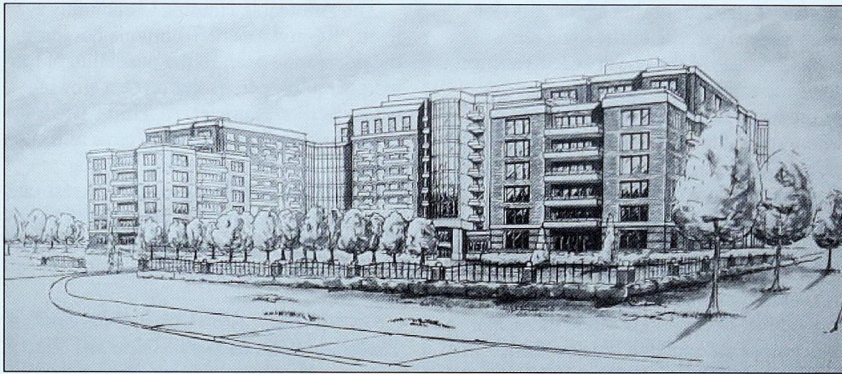
*Nick Tunnacliffe, MCIP, RPP is Commissioner of Planning and Development with the Region of Ottawa-Carleton. The municipalities in this area are currently being amalgamated into a single city.*

*Dave Kriger, MCIP, RPP is a partner with Delcan in Ottawa and the Ontario Planning Journal's contributing editor on transportation.*

## Housing

# Options For Homes and the Community Equity Reinvestment Technique

By Michel Labbé



Courtesy: Options for Homes

Shermount Co-operative Condominium, 650 Lawrence Ave. W.  
Redevelopment of former CMHC Toronto Office

The issue of affordable housing has been getting a large amount of media coverage over the last two years. Canada is the only Western country without a subsidized government program for providing new affordable housing. The federal government has provided some funding, targeted at the homeless, but precious little help for affordable housing in general for the thousands of households on waiting lists across the country.

The predominant view to date is that you must have government subsidies to provide affordable housing. This view is absolutely correct if you limit your thinking to rental solutions. Housing activists have been arguing for a long time that government policy favours ownership over rental housing and that the playing field is not level. One of the most obvious advantages that owners have over tenants is that owners pay no capital gains on their appreciating asset. But there are also a number of other financial advantages related to the construction and financing of ownership compared to the rental solutions.

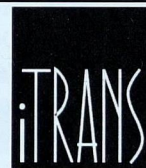
## Why Rental Housing is More Expensive to Provide Than Ownership Housing

It costs about 25 to 30 percent less to provide ownership housing that is comparable to rental housing. These lower costs are due to the following factors

- Property taxes are lower on ownership condominiums compared to rental multi-unit buildings. When this operating difference is translated into capital value it represents a cost reduction of more than 10 percent
- An owner-occupied suite pays 2.52 percent less on GST than is paid on a rental suite.
- The mortgage insurance on interim financing for a rental project is as much as five percent

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- more than an ownership development.
  - Soft costs (carrying costs) during construction are about two percent more for rental housing than ownership housing.
  - Owners put a minimum downpayment of five percent towards the cost of the development.
  - Owners maintain the inside of their suites saving another two percent.
  - Owners qualify to own at 32 percent of their gross income while 25-30 percent is used as the acceptable income level for renters.
- Since all upfront costs affect the capital costs and these are carried forward into operating costs (mortgage plus utilities and taxes), any way of lowering upfront costs lowers the carrying costs to the resident.

## Options for Homes and the Community Equity Reinvestment Technique

Options For Homes Non-profit Corporation (Options) has taken this information seriously and, by using a 'join them rather than fight them' philosophy, has developed the Affordable Housing and Community Equity Reinvestment Technique (AHCERT). Using this approach, Options For Homes has produced nearly 500 units of affordable housing to date in Toronto and have another 600 units under development in both Toronto and Kitchener.

The Affordable Housing Community Equity Reinvestment Technique goes back to

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the late 1950s for its model, a time when there were no government programs. Building on this experience, Options organizes potential homeowners into non-profit Co-operative Development Corporations that sell condominium units to its members. When there are sufficient members/purchasers to cover 80 percent of the suites, they are able to obtain the financing to build the condominium developments. Recently CMHC has provided mortgage insurance on this financing, through their Canadian Centre for Public-Private Partnerships, significantly reducing the financing costs.

To discourage speculation, the AHCERT provides for a second mortgage to be registered on title representing the difference between a unit's market value and the cost of producing the unit. This mortgage shares in the appreciation of the unit and is repayable when the unit is resold. Since there is no payment on the second mortgage until resale, the owner can carry the unit at the lower cost price.

To date, the AHCERT has produced homes whose average carrying costs, with a five percent down payment, are below the average rent levels in the communities they are working in. The Shermount Co-operative is building a condominium at 650 Lawrence Avenue West adjacent to the Spadina subway line on

the former site of Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation's Toronto office. Carrying costs for a bachelor suite in this development will be \$560 a month and \$1,065 a month for a two-bedroom apartment inclusive of condominium fees, utilities and property taxes. The development will be available for occupancy at the beginning of 2002.

### **Second Mortgages Offer a Pool of Money for Other Developments and Downpayment Assistance**

The second mortgages for developments built by Options For Homes is held by an independent non-profit corporation that is required to use any proceeds from the mortgages to start another similar development somewhere else in the same municipality. Because of the power of reinvesting equity, it appears that four new units can be produced for every one that is sold or whose second mortgage is paid off. The Home Ownership Alternatives Non-Profit Corporation currently holds five million dollars in mortgages and has \$300,000 in equity.

The second mortgage has also proven to be useful in helping serve very low-income individuals. In situations where municipal concessions are available for affordable housing—such as waiving or reducing development charges—or where there are large differences between market value and cost, the savings can be used to provide extra help with the down payment for some households so that they can own at any income level without any down payment. For example, if the City of Toronto defers the development charges on the 650 Lawrence Avenue development, there would be about two million dollars available to apply to selected lower-income households who could then become condominium owners or tenants (by increasing

the 2nd mortgages on their suites to reduce the carrying costs sufficiently). This approach provides a healthy mixed-income environment in the development.

In situations where municipalities are reluctant to provide financial incentives to affordable housing providers, the AHCERT can provide an opportunity to invest in affordable housing instead. This is done by deferring payment of the development charges by the owner and adding these savings to the second mortgage. When the home sells, the development charges are repaid with an increase in value equal to the increase in home values over that same period of time.

### **Affordable Housing—Affordable Solution**

The Affordable Housing Community Equity Re-investment Technique has flung the doors wide open to the possibility of providing a subsidy-free solution to a growing housing crisis. However, AHCERT needs government policy support to grow as it should. Like other ownership housing options, it works better in a low interest rate environment; however, it can succeed in any economic environment where new construction housing is being built and sold.

*Michel Labbé, BES Urban & Regional Planning, MCIP, RPP is President and CEO of Options For Homes. He has 20 years experience working on over \$900 million of affordable housing developments. Phone: (416) 867-1501.*

*Fax: (416) 867-1743 E-mail: options@icomm.ca.*

*Linda Lapointe, MCIP, RPP is principal of Lapointe Consulting, a private firm that specializes in housing, demographic and residential planning matters. She is the Ontario Planning Journal's contributing editor on housing. She can be reached at (416) 323-0807 or e-mail 311markham@sympatico.ca*



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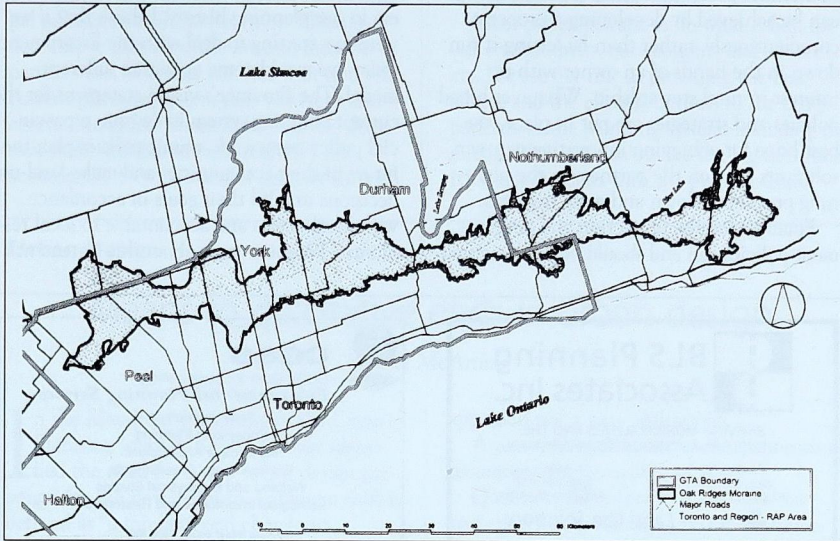
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# A Planner Looks at the Oak Ridges Moraine

By Tony Usher



The Oak Ridges Moraine

I don't have a long history of involvement with the Oak Ridges Moraine. The only project I ever worked on was an estate residential subdivision 15 years ago. In those days, if you knew what the Oak Ridges Moraine was, it was usually because you remembered it from reading Chapman and Putnam's classic Physiography of Southern Ontario.

I can, however, offer independence and ignorance, which can be a useful combination. But I also bring a sense of the philosophy and perspectives that the mainstream of the planning profession has towards the vital issues of protecting and developing the Oak Ridges Moraine.

The Ontario Professional Planners

Institute has never taken a policy position on the Oak Ridges Moraine. When the Moraine guidelines were being developed, the Institute was focusing all its limited resources on the provincial planning reform process begun by the Sewell commission. Over the last five years, there have been no major Moraine policy initiatives for OPPI to react to, and we are only this year starting to channel our resources into leadership on policy issues.

So, what kinds of things would OPPI be saying if we expressed a policy position on the Moraine, as we may in the future? I think there are at least five important points to be made.

First, the Moraine is an extremely important resource that we must protect for all time. It has significant natural features-but we

have the planning capability to protect these features where they occur, on or off the Moraine. It is a key ground and surface water recharge area-but we have the technical and regulatory capability to protect vital water resources, on or off the Moraine.

What makes the Moraine different is its long-recognized importance as a strategic landform that includes these significant resources, and provides the best opportunity, along with the Niagara Escarpment, for a greenland belt in south-central Ontario. The highest and best use of the Moraine is as a regional natural character corridor. We can apply all our regular planning policies to ensure that individual developments do not adversely affect natural heritage and water quality, and still nickel-and-dime the Moraine to death. This is why it was appropriate for the Province to declare a provincial interest in the Moraine back in 1990.

Second, there needs to be a clear and simple planning strategy for the Moraine that has the sanction of the Province under the Planning Act. The strategy must be flexible enough to accommodate the philosophies and perspectives of individual municipalities, and allow for specific situations where various types of development and resource extraction are appropriate, while still maintaining the overall integrity of the Moraine. Most important, it must encourage innovation and creativity. York, Peel and Durham Regions in particular have shown leadership in recognizing the Moraine's importance and developing planning guidelines for it. But without a clear statement of provincial policy to back them up, these guidelines, and any initiatives to set higher standards for protection and development on the Moraine, remain vulnerable to challenge at the Ontario Municipal Board.

So, the mainstream of the planning profession does not believe that the Moraine is just another piece of land. But, if we are going to

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say that development on the Moraine has to jump over a higher bar, then there is a price to be paid, which brings me to my third point. There is already considerable growth north of the Moraine, especially in York Region. If there is going to be less development on the Moraine, then you can bet there will be even more development north of the Moraine. This will mean more roads and other infrastructure crossing the Moraine. We need to ensure that these crossings are located and designed in a way that minimizes their impact on the Moraine while still serving the public.

Fourth, we know that the bulk of the Moraine is and will remain privately owned. There will be more development and more resource extraction on the Moraine. There

will be many situations in which we will need to harness and direct the energies of the development industry if we want to protect the Moraine. Protection takes money. Development creates money, more money than any other land use on the Moraine. Sometimes protection and public enjoyment can be achieved by developing a property conscientiously, rather than by letting it run down in the hands of an owner with no interest in rural stewardship. Whatever broad policies and strategies are put in place, the best hope for achieving innovative win-win solutions is when the partners in the planning process sit down and work together.

Finally, Moraine protection and development policies can and should be implemented

by the Moraine's municipalities. David Lewis Stein of the Star, who should be applauded for shining such a bright spotlight on the Moraine, recommends establishing an Oak Ridges Moraine Commission. Most planners strongly disagree. The Niagara Escarpment Commission originated during a very different era in our planning history. I think that if we were just starting to deal with the Escarpment today, we would come up with a different model. The Province's vision statement for the current planning system is: "within a provincial policy framework, municipalities plan the future of their communities and make land-use decisions to fulfil their goals in accordance with local values and accountable to local residents." Planners argue about this statement's

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sincerity and feasibility, but most of us strongly support its essence.

I would like to offer a message to the interest group representatives and individual citizens concerned about the Moraine. You may believe that planning is a game in which the only players are planners, developers, municipal politicians and the Province. Planners don't see it that way. You are and must be partners too. Whether you like it or not, our current planning system puts you front and centre. Municipal councils are the key decision-makers in our system, and they are accountable to you, whether directly through

municipal politics or indirectly through the Ontario Municipal Board. You may have preferred the old top-down system, where the Province knew best, or said it did, and maybe stuck up for you, or at least pretended to. This system ain't coming back, no matter who sits at Queen's Park in the future.

Most planners want to do what is best for our environment, our economy and our society. We see our role as providing the best advice and the clearest options to the other partners in the planning system, including the public. Planners don't make the big decisions. It's the politicians with the public behind

them who do that; that's why we have Rouge Park today. Planners know that we need to do something special and different with the Oak Ridges Moraine so that we don't choke on our future. But it's the other partners in the planning system who will make this happen.

*This article is based on Tony Usher's presentation to the Clean Waters Summit.*

*Markham, November 20, 1999. Tony Usher, MCIP, RPP is principal of his own planning firm and a former president of OPPI. He also was the Ontario Planning Journal's contributing editor on environment.*

## Urban Design

# Means to qualitative ends in urban design

By Liz McArthur

In the May-June 1999 issue of the Ontario Planning Journal, Robert Glover identified the need for a new urban design paradigm for the new Toronto. Paradigm shift is defined as "a fundamental change in approach or philosophy" (Oxford Dictionary, 1995). Given the fact that the ultimate goal of both planning and urban design is the enhancement of quality of life, it would seem that what is needed is a new

approach not a new philosophy.

A new approach to urban design means a recommitment to quality of life

Quality of life refers to the conditions and experiences citizens enjoy (or suffer as the case may be) as a by-product of the locales in which they live, work and play. This requires several things:

- formalization of the conditions which underpin livability—safety, physical and psychological comfort, pedestrian scale, beauty, greenness, sense of place and community, healthy ecosystems.

- recognition of the issues which affect liveability—physical structures, open spaces, activities, and externalities such as noise and air pollution
- recognition of the experiential implications of large urban centres—the effect of form, texture, and spatial configuration and character on behaviour, community-building, sense of ownership, pride and civic responsibility.

Toronto's chief planner, Paul Bedford, wants to move the City's new Official Plan towards high-level visions, statements describing what stakeholders want their city "to be about." This will undoubtedly help to focus develop-

ment proponents on the qualitative aspects of the environment.

A new approach to urban design involves recognition of the net effect of development activities on social structures.

A neighbourhood can be erected in fairly short order, but a community, a body of people with a fellowship of interests, takes years to evolve. Research suggests the benefits of community membership (sense of belonging, attachments and mutual aid) can be significant in terms of psychological and physical well-being. The same research suggests that mutual aid can result in substantial reductions in the demand for and cost of social services delivery.

In my opinion, this points to the need for master/site planning which protects existing communities and the qualities of life people enjoy. It also points to the need to design new residential developments with a view to improving the sense of community and factors that affect quality of life. This involves issues such as street patterns, block length, and neighbourhood size and layout which are key determinants with respect to the formation and strengthening of sense of community.

A new approach involves entrenching sense of place as a major goal of municipal corporations.

The frequency with which sense of place is cited in vision statements and business strategies, and its increasing use as an argument in OMB hearings suggests it is recognized as an important aspect of urban identity, liveability and individual rights. The frequency with which it has been cited, but not defined, in official documents suggests there is a need to explore its meaning and implications.

*Liz MacArthur is a consultant and educator based in Guelph. This is the first of three articles on urban design.*



Photo: Dennis Kar

Quality of locales is where we live, work and play

## GIS managers may now use AOLS designation

By Carl Rooth

Geographic Information Managers are now able to achieve, on a voluntary basis, professional status through membership in the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors (A.O.L.S.). Professional status assures the public that the work being carried out on their behalf meets the highest technical standards.

A Geographic Information Manager (G.I.M.) directs the activities of Geographic Information System (G.I.S.) specialists and technicians engaged in creat-

ing and editing geographic data bases, and generating computer displays and related statistical reports. The professional G.I.M. and geographic information systems have become vital assets to municipalities, public agencies and industry. The demand for such professionals is outstripping the ability to supply qualified people. The need for regulation of this fast-growing economic sector through professional designation is clear, considering the huge financial investment made by the public in creating data bases for G.I.S., and the impact on public safety.

Most major urban centres are already using the G.I.S. developed by Geographic Information Managers. When people dial 911 for an ambulance, emergency response team, or police assistance, for example, they trigger a G.I.S. that directs equipment and people to the source of the call through the shortest route available. This information has been generated from a

G.I.S. database and presented on a map and charts on an on-board computer terminal.

Ontario Regulation 509/99 made under the Surveyors Act came into force on December 27, 1999. The regulation was required to accommodate Geographic Information Management as a profession under the Surveyors Act. Geographic Information Managers who meet the requirements of the A.O.L.S., and achieve professional status through the A.O.L.S., will be eligible to use the Ontario Land Information Professional (O.L.I.P.) designation.

For more information, contact Carl J. Rooth, O.L.S., Executive Director, Association of Ontario Land Surveyors  
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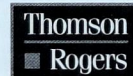


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## Membership Initiatives Build Volunteerism

By Kennedy Self, Director, Membership Services and Outreach

Strategically, a strong participating roster of OPPI members will ensure the continued implementation of our Strategic Plan, and the continued success of OPPI's membership services and programs.

Operationally, OPPI's membership processes and services have significantly improved over the past five years. We now have over 2800 members representing an excellent cross-section of specializations and disciplines operating within the planning profession: land use, transportation, environmental, social, facilities, urban design, landscape and architecture.

The Membership Action Plan incorporated in the new Strategic Plan establishes a vehicle to tackle a number of membership concerns: instilling the value of the RPP designation and membership to students; resolving provisional membership concerns; maintaining professional standards; providing a well regarded accreditation program.

Evidence of this commitment is the launch of the Executive Practitioners Outreach Program on March 31, 2000 in Toronto. This weekend course has been specifically designed to meet the objectives of the Membership Process. It is hoped that this program will reach out to a number of high profile individuals and encourage their participation in Institute affairs.

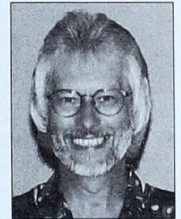
The course is designed for those practitioners with a minimum of 20 years experience in the planning

profession to attend a one-weekend event to meet the requirements of the membership process. The Institute is committed to complete the Exam A (oral interview) for those practitioners completing the Membership course weekend as expeditiously and conveniently as possible to ensure the outreach initiative is a success.

If all goes well, a second course weekend will be offered this fall. Watch this space in an upcoming issue for feedback from a course participant and further particulars.

Other membership initiatives priorities include:

- Undertake, if appropriate, changes to the definition of planning in the OPPI By-law (for example, emphasis of planning methods, processes and skills) and membership process to recognize full range of planning practice. Explore definition with audiences to determine their perceptions of "professional planner".
- Reach out to students in the planning school setting to demonstrate the value of achieving the RPP designation.
- Take action to move long-standing provisional members to full membership by:
  - offering members a membership process that supports accreditation and recognizes broad planning experience
  - adding an annual membership processing fee for provisional status
  - withdrawing membership if provisional status extends beyond six years
- Continuously review and adjust package of membership services in response to member needs and demands. The services are important and valued by OPPI members. We will continue to focus on activities that enhance the professional development and standing of our members. Generally, this includes professional development workshops, district events, insurance, mentoring, conferences.



Kennedy Self

Watch for details on these initiatives in the months ahead or better yet, contact Mary Ann Rangam, Executive Director to find out how you can assist Council.

### Oak Ridges Moraine...Ontario Planners Prepare to Join the Debate

OPPI is preparing to enter the debate on the policy issues arising from the Oak Ridges Moraine. OPPI's Policy Development Committee has struck a sub-committee to prepare a position paper on the protection and management of significant natural resources in Ontario. Chaired by Anne Joyner, MCIP, RPP, the sub-committee has a mandate to report to Council by the end of April. Anne is a partner with Dillon Consulting and teaches at York University. She is a member of OPPI's environmental sub-committee and contributed to the Institute's recognition strategy, as well as public policy initiatives.



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# OPPI Awards Get Noticed

## City of Kitchener Bikeway Study

Over the past 20 years, bicycle trails and paths have developed piecemeal throughout the City of Kitchener. The City decided it was time to knit these fragments together into a multi-season integrated system, connected to the Trans Canada Trail and the neighbouring municipalities of Waterloo and Cambridge.

In creating a plan, the City involved cyclists and other community groups, and brought together five City departments: Traffic, Parks and Recreation, Transit, Regional Transportation, and Planning. The study began with an inventory of the existing trail segments and facilities, as well as highways and parkways that act as obstacles. The study then identified connections and estimated the costs for completing each new segment, so that the city can make additions to the network each year as its budget allows. The plan even includes projections for implementing the complete system over 15, 20, 30 or 40 years.

The jury admired the flexibility of the plan, and the clarity of the report.

## Unionville Heritage Conservation District Plan

In creating a plan for the historic Unionville area in Markham, the Town asked the question, "What's the use of heritage district guidelines if no one uses them?" To avoid this problem, the Town made a special effort to create a document that was understandable and useful. It was designed to be accessible to people who have no background in planning, because the Town realized that the primary users would be the residents of the district. The plan also contained an implementation section providing for simple, efficient and fair reviews, public awareness, and amendments to the plan to ensure that it continues to respond to the community's needs and priorities.

The plan, which was written in a clear, concise style with well-designed graphics, sells for \$10, so it is accessible to property owners in Unionville. The jury noted that it leaves "little room for misunderstanding" and "clearly enunciates why and how it wishes to protect the heritage values in the planning area."

# OPPI Business PLAN 2000 Gets the Nod

Council met on March 3rd to continue their work regarding the implementation of the OPPI "millennium strategic plan". A Business Plan, describing a path to implement the OPPI strategic plan has been developed and approved by Council. It is intended to be a "living document" and it addresses the priorities for action for the year 2000. With each budget year, the PLAN will evolve and continue to address the priorities identified in the strategic plan. The following priorities for action will be implemented in the year 2000:

## Launch a public awareness campaign

A Recognition Committee will be struck to launch the following key activities outlined in OPPI's Communications Strategy: Develop a marketing slogan for OPPI (Branding); Develop an OPPI position statement on a topical planning issue(s); Redesign OPPI's web site as a major vehicle to reach the public, stakeholders and members, and; Conduct a public opinion poll question/survey focused on planning and quality of life issues. Watch for more information on this launch in the May/June issue of the Journal.

## Initiate a new policy development program

The Policy Development Committee is currently working to implement a proposal call for discussion paper(s) that focus on innovative public policy issues. A new policy and communications staff function will be added to the complement of OPPI staff, to support the policy and innovation action plan and communication strategy as identified in the recognition action plan.

## Make improvements to the membership process

A Membership Services Committee will be struck to: Establish an outreach strategy for future planners/students; Launch the Executive Practitioner Outreach program; Identify actions to move long-standing provisional members to full membership status and; Establish a program to train and maintain OPPI examiners.

## Maintain a dynamic package of membership services

The current complement of member service will be reviewed. A plan will be developed to identify professional training and education workshops that will support members. On-line continuing education programs will be investigated. The OPPI Ethics workshop will be launched.

For further information on the PLAN contact  
Mary Ann Rangam at OPPI.



Kitchener's Bikeway Study won support

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# OPPI Private Sector Advisory Committee (PSAC) Update

By Peter Smith

The PSAC committee has been active in a number of areas of interest to those in the private sector over the last year. These have included the new OPPI CONSULTANTS DIRECTORY 2000, Guidelines for Hiring Planning Consultants, an OPPI Conference 2000 workshop for the private sector planner [we are open to ideas and participation] and input on the insurance liability proposal that OPPI Council has brought forward through the efforts Don May, Andrea Gabor and others.

The new 2000 Consultants Directory has now been completed, thanks to Robert Fraser

for his drive in pulling it together. We have the largest number of listings ever with more than 140 entries. It will be distributed in early March to a wide range of organisations, municipalities, public agencies and professional groups, and development/builder associations.

Liz Howson and Bob Lehmann put a lot of effort into preparing guidelines for hiring Planning Consultants. We thank them for their contribution and commitment. The Committee has had a general review of the Guidelines and is recommending them to OPPI Council for adoption and distribution to municipalities,

other professional organisations, provincial government and federal government, financial institutions, development, builder and construction organisations and associations. Both documents will also be placed on the Institute's web-site at <http://www.interlog.com/~oppi>.

PSAC is always looking to have new ideas or concerns addressed through its committee members, and welcomes new members in that process of participation and inquiry. Since our last column we have added several new members from around the Province, including Paul Puopolo from Kitchener, Peter Peyton from Barrie, Daryl Tighe from Peterborough and Michael Manett from Thornhill.

*Peter Smith, MCIP, RPP is Chair of the Private Sector Advisory Committee. He is an associate with Weston Consulting Group Ltd in Toronto.*

## Welcome to these new Provisional Members

Margaritha V. Birl.....SD	.....K. Smart Associates Ltd.
Martin T.J. Czarski.....ED	.....South Nation Conservation Authority
Ray E. Davies.....CD	.....City of Pickering
Tim J. De Jong.....CD	.....PMA Brethour
Glenn J. Genge.....CD	.....D.G. Biddle & Associates Ltd.
Antonio Gomez-Palacio.....CD	.....Urban Strategies Inc.
Randy J. Grochowski.....CD	.....Sun Life Real Estate
Mohammed K.R. Hassan.....CD	
Kevin G. Jones.....ED	.....National Capital Commission
Marie A. Leroux.....CD	.....Township of Clearview

My T. Luong.....SD	.....Lakeshore Planning Group
Hugh A. Lynch.....ED	.....County of Prince Edward
Melanie Melnyk.....CD	.....City of Toronto
Ryan O. Mounsey.....SD	.....Green Scheels Pidgeon Planning Consultants Ltd.
Marsha L. Paley.....CD	.....Town of Halton Hills
Soonya P. Quon.....ED	.....Nunavut Ecosystems Secretariat, Parks Canada
Jonathan N. Rodgers.....CD	.....Clayton Research
Barry P. Short.....CD	
John P. Sorrell.....CD	.....Tellus Group Consulting
Marcia L. Wallace.....CD	.....York University

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## Walt's World Under a Microscope

## Two tales of one city (sic)

By Robert Shipley

In this issue, along with two reviews on neo-traditional design, we introduce our new "Book Pix" feature. Every second issue we intend to highlight ten of the latest engaging titles on planning and urban topics.

To assist us in selecting the most interesting current books we have turned to three of the most knowledgeable and experienced observers of planning literature in the province. Margaret Aquan-Yuen has been Planning Liaison Librarian at the University of Waterloo for 22 years. She orders books requested by the School of Planning faculty and scans dozens of catalogues every month looking for relevant material to add to the collection. Suzette Giles holds a similar position at Ryerson University. Suzette has 20 years library experience and has been responsible for the geography collection for nine years and the planning collection for three. She manages an annual acquisition budget of over \$20,000. Sarah Holden oversees the 10,000 item collection of books, videos and reports held by the Intergovernmental Committee on Urban and Regional Research (ICURR) in Toronto.

Each of our three panelists has submitted a list of recent works that they believe are of significance and of potential interest to planners. From their lists we have picked ten books. In making the selection we have given preference to Ontario-specific items, to Canadian works, to books that have not already been reviewed and to the most recent publications.

We hope our "Book Pix" will be useful. We also invite your suggestions.

### The Celebration Chronicles: Life, Liberty, and the Pursuit of Property Value in Disney's New Town

Author: Andrew Ross  
Date: 1999  
Publisher: Ballantine Books, New York  
Pages: 340  
\$38.95

Reviewed by Martin Rendl

"New Urbanism" emerged in the 1990s as one response to suburban sprawl. New Urbanist towns have become popular places of pilgrimage for planners seeking to experience and understand this new yet old

way of building communities.

The town of Celebration in central Florida is one of these new planning celebrities. The Disney Corporation's involvement in its planning and development ensured Celebration a level of notoriety beyond its New Urbanist siblings.

Andrew Ross' book recounts the year he spent living in Celebration. The book is based on his personal experiences as well as interviews with other residents, employees and local officials. His book is the first in-depth assessment of Celebration from the resident's perspective, and is in the tradition of Herbert Gans' landmark 1950's study of Levittown. The Celebration Chronicles is an excellent real world counter balance to the pretty pictures approach so favoured by today's design and planning publications.

Ross traces Celebration's lineage to Walt Disney's unfulfilled 1966 dream of a utopian community in EPCOT. In the 1980s, Michael Eisner resurrected Disney's idea of a new community. Celebration promised its 20,000 residents a combination of what made small towns great along with modern technology and a vision of the future.

Disney marketed a community dream to future residents as only the world's leading dream company could. Residents paid 35 percent above comparable housing elsewhere in Orlando to buy into Celebration's promise of a progressive local school, a high tech community infrastructure, and state of the art health care facilities. The Disney brand name gave residents an implicit assurance on their expectations about the town and property values.

Celebration's subsequent reality often diverged from the dream. Parents considered the school too progressive. Under their pressure, it reverted to a traditional curriculum and teaching methods. Poor quality construction delayed house completions and poor builder follow-up produced widespread homeowner discontent. The high tech infrastructure was not cutting edge. Frustration grew among disappointed residents and merchants when Disney's customer service didn't solve their complaints. The irony in the phrase "Mickey Mouse town" was not lost on residents.

Despite these problems, Celebration's public realm, streetscapes, and building facades guaranteed a Kodak moment on every corner. This is expected from Disney but critic's dismissed Celebration as a theme park-like extension of

## BOOK PIX

**Planning Beyond 2000.**

Editors: Allmendinger, Philip and Chapman, Mike  
Publisher: New York: J. Wiley.  
Date: 1999.  
Description: 309 pages.

**Once there were Greenfields: How Urban Sprawl is Undermining America's Environment, Economy, and Social Fabric.**

Author: Benfield, F. Kaid; Chen, Donald D. T. and Matthew D. Raimi.  
Publisher: Natural Resource Defense.  
Date: 1999  
Description: 215 pages  
ISBN: 1893340171

**Greenprint for Toronto's waterfront development.**

Author: Campbell, Karen  
Publisher: Toronto: Toronto Bay Initiative  
Date: 1999  
Description: 62 leaves; illustrations, maps. includes bibliographical references.

**The Deliberative Practitioner: Encouraging Participatory Planning Processes.**

Author: Forester, John.  
Publisher: Cambridge, Mass.; London: MIT Press.  
Date: 1999  
Description: 303 pages.

**Sustaining cities: environmental planning and management in urban design.**

Author: Leitmann, Joseph  
Publisher: New York: McGraw-Hill.  
Date: 1999.  
Description: 412 pages, illustrations, index.  
ISBN: 0070383162

**E-topia : "urban life, Jim—but not as we know it."**

Author: Mitchell, William J. (William John).  
Publisher: Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press.  
Date: 1999.  
Description: 192 pages, includes bibliographical references and index.  
ISBN: 0-262-1355-5

**The changing commercial structure of non-metropolitan urban centres.**

Author: Montgomery, Dan and Maurice Yeates.  
Publisher: Toronto: Centre for the study of commercial activity.  
Description: 26 pages, illustrations, maps and tables.  
ISBN: 0919351611

**Youth Participation in Community Planning.**

Author: Mullahey, Romana K.; Sussking, Yve and Barry Checkoway.  
Publisher: American Planning Association, Planning Advisory Service Report No. 486  
Date: 1999  
Description: 70  
ISBN: 1884829325

**Special Places: The Changing Ecosystems of the Toronto Region.**

Editors: Roots, Betty I.; Chant, Donald A. and Heidenreich, Conrad.  
Publisher: Toronto: UBC Press  
Date: 1999

**Community Participation Methods in Design and Planning.**

Author: Sanoff, Henry.  
Publisher: New York: John Wiley.  
Date: 2000.  
Description: 306 pages  
Reviews: Two Views on Celebration



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The residents tried their best too, buying the \$300,000 houses and hosting block parties and bake-offs, and speaking of the challenges of being modern day pioneers.

But there were some failings of this physical environment. The authors' garage ended up being built over the property line, onto their neighbour's lot. The free computer and high-tech links were pulled within the first year. The town never got a library, a newspaper, or a hardware store. And there were endless delays in getting the homes constructed.

But this wasn't the real problem. It was, of course, those all too idiosyncratic humans who mess up this, and most previous other grand designs. The experimental school, initially a major attraction for almost all residents, was a well-publicized disaster. In theory the unstructured environment of mixed grades would work, but in practice children, teachers and parents alike found confusion and hostility as students, when asked what grade they were in, answered "I am in continuum purple." People had to undertake

long commutes to jobs far away, while others lost their employment, and still others found that they had to take up second jobs.

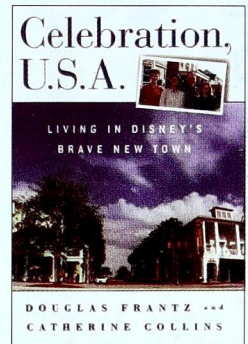
But at the end of the day, nearly all the residents were happy. What made the town a success to its residents were the

houses. "People loved their houses. They were drawn to the town partly because of the reassuring, traditional designs. In short, the houses were the essential building blocks of Celebration's sense of place."

So where does that leave community and those famous porches? The porches are invariably empty. Beautiful wicker rockers sit idle. "Porch props," quipped Mick McDonough, a neighbour and architect. Someone would be sitting on a porch at maybe one house in 20 on a cool evening. But from almost every family room visible from the street or the alley came the glow of a television set.

*Jim Helik, MCIP, RPP is a senior planner, policy and research, City of Toronto. Look for his new column, Planning Principals, in the next issue of Ontario Planning Journal.*

*Robert Shipley, MCIP, RPP is contributing editor for In Print. He is a consultant, teaches at the University of Waterloo and can be reached at rshipley@cousteau.uwaterloo.ca*



the Magic Kingdom. Teenagers had fun with this image, miming animatronic robots on their porches for passing tourists and their cameras.

Planners will recognize the behind-the-scenes decisions and organizational dynamics that Ross describes. He also gives good coverage to Celebration's planning nitty-gritty. The book answered many of the how and why questions I had after visiting Celebration in 1997.

The best parts of the book are Ross' interviews with the original Celebration planning team, Disney staff and personalities like Andres Duany and Robert Stern. Duany's informal comments to Ross about communities like Celebration can only be found in this type of book.

Ross is neither a planner nor architect. He uses a popular culture context to deliver a refreshing perspective on Celebration. He looks beyond the urban design scenery that mesmerizes so many in the profession and provides an excellent social commentary on modern communities and New Urbanism.

I expect this book will not meet the muster of planning academics, but many planners will still find *The Celebration Chronicles* informative. Ross' first hand account gives us timely insights into how real people live in a town with the most impeccably correct planning intentions and design credentials. Andrew Ross' book does the hard work planners all too frequently neglect: assessing how a community actually functions after the planners and their promises have left. After the pixie dust wears off, it turns out to be a small world after all.

*Martin Rendl, MCIP, RPP is a Toronto planning consultant, living happily in a planned community with a dead worm road pattern.*

## Celebration U.S.A.: Living in Disney's Brave New Town

*Author:* Douglas Frantz and Catherine Collins  
*Date:* 1999  
*Publisher:* Henry Holt and Company  
*Pages:* 342

*By Jim Helik*

Sometimes truth is stranger than fiction. While browsing in a local big box book retailer, I noted something both curious and in many ways appropriate to the debate about the role of cities in affecting human life.

*Celebration U.S.A.*, an in-the-trenches account of a year spent living in Disney's new urbanist town written by two newspaper reporters, was not shelved in the American history, the social studies, or even the travel section. Instead, it was in the fringe New Age section, sharing shelf space with *A Daybook of Addiction* and

*Recovery*, *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*, and *Meditations on Comfort and Joy*.

Well, perhaps new towns may be able to bring such transcendence to their residence, but as the authors note, Disney's attempt falls a little short. Not that everybody didn't try. Michael Eisner, Disney's CEO and a man with an otherwise magic touch, stated that the town would, set up a system of how to develop communities. I hope in 50 years they say, "Thank God for Celebration."

Philip Johnson designed the Town Hall, Michael Graves the post office, Robert Venturi did the bank, while the movie house was left to Cesar Pelli. And despite some minor differences, the town was a new urbanist picture of children riding to schools on bicycles, passing by picket fences as neighbours talked to each other on their porches in the warm Florida air.

