

ONTARIO PLANNING JOURNAL

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Port Huron

**Where public consultation
leads to successful reintegration
of the waterfront with
the rest of the community**



Features/5

- What John Robarts might say about the GTA .. p.5
- Downtown bombs of the retail kind p.6
- GTA agricultural issues on the table p.7
- Development styles for the future p.9
- Vision meets reality with Toronto's new OP p.10
- Suzuki makes his mark in London p.12

Districts & People/15

- Eastern p.15
- Northern p.15
- Simcoe-Muskoka p.15
- Obituary:
Hans Hosse p.17

OPPI Notebook/18

- President's Report p.18
- Excellence in Planning Awards p.19
- Treasurer's report p.23
- The Straight Stats on OPPI p.24
- New Members p.24

Commentary/26

- Editorial: Sgro fighting uphill battle for recognition p.26
- Opinion: Planners and their future p.26
- Letters p.28

Departments/29

- Housing pp.29, 30
- Environment ... pp.32, 34
- Provincial News p.35
- Urban Design p.36
- OMB p.38

In Print/39

- High and Mighty SUVs p.39

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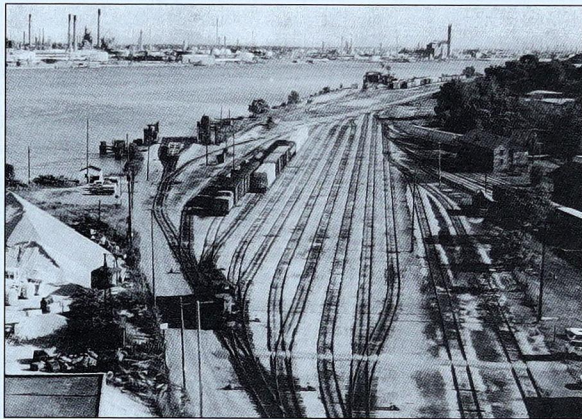
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The Role of Public Consultation in the Revitalization of Port Huron

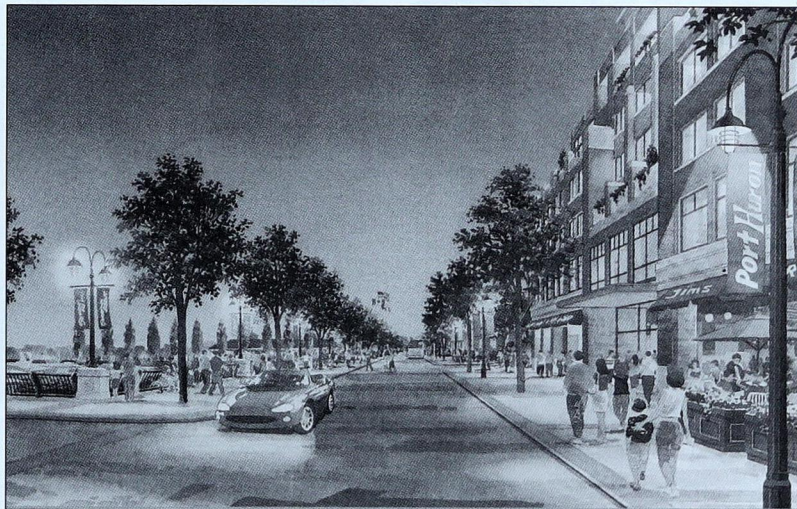
By Leah Andrews

Port Huron is a small city located where the Lake Huron funnels into the St. Clair River and where the twin Blue Water Bridges link Michigan and Ontario. It was once a bustling city, benefiting from its location and the resources of the region: forestry, shipbuilding, shipping and rail transportation.

Port Huron's industrial success in the early 20th century was partly founded on its connection with Thomas Edison, who lived there as a boy. Edward Acheson of Port Huron developed a graphite coating called Aquadag that enabled Thomas Edison to produce the first durable incandescent light bulb in 1907. Acheson founded the Acheson Oildag Company in Port Huron in 1908, and the city became an important manufacturing centre.



Before ...



... How Port Huron could look years from now

Port Huron was once called the "All-American City," but suffered years of decline from the late 1960s through the 1990s. The future of Port Huron, particularly the waterfront area south of the Black River, which runs east-west through the city, has become a challenge for the government, business and the public.



A homegrown initiati

In the 1990s, the descendants of Edward Acheson decided to help revitalize the city. They formed Acheson Ventures, a development company, and acquired a large area of the Southside waterfront lands, previously owned by Canadian National Railroad.

Acheson Ventures hired Development Concepts, a Toronto-based development consulting firm, to create a St. Clair River waterfront plan using information from city officials and from public meetings.

The public consultation process in Port Huron represents an unusual alliance between private and public interests. Government officials often hold meetings to demonstrate their accountability to the public. However, private-sector companies seldom find themselves under the same obligations.

The Southside Summit

Rather than presenting its own vision of the waterfront's future to Port Huron residents, Acheson Ventures asked the people who would be most affected by redevelopment what they wanted to see happen.

In November 1998, the City of Port Huron held the Southside Summit, a unique event that provided a forum for the public to share information, concerns, and visions for the city's Southside neighbourhoods. The participants discussed how to regulate development, minimize negative impacts on existing neighbourhoods and create new neighbourhoods while improving existing parks and green spaces for recreational use and improving public access to the waterfront. The Summit resulted in the development of an initial land use plan, which was approved by the Port Huron City Council in 2000. The consultants also reviewed planning studies prepared by the State of Michigan, St. Clair County and the City of Port Huron to understand the directions the public sector was taking in allocating resources in the area.

In spring 2001, a series of in-depth public meetings with ten Southside community

groups led to a detailed set of 72 goals for the site that were ranked and allocated to categories such as water, quality of life, tourism, development/redevelopment, economic development, community planning, infrastructure, and education and institutions.

The Seaway Terminal

Additional public meetings were held to discuss Acheson Ventures' proposal to develop the Seaway Terminal, which the company hoped to acquire. These meetings gave Acheson Ventures enough information to draw up plans for a final proposal to City Council. The development plan was approved, then taken to the voters for feedback.

The sale of the Seaway Terminal Company property to Acheson Ventures was placed on the May 2002 ballot for approval, as required by Port Huron's City Charter. The public was overwhelmingly in favour of the sale or long-term lease to Acheson Ventures.

From concept to plan

In creating a development framework, the consultants expressed the city's financial and market plans in a series of nine alternative redevelopment scenarios. Each of the nine concept plans was analyzed for compliance with community planning goals, public policy and require-

The principals behind the principles

The Port Huron project is the work of Don Mitchell, Development Concepts Ltd., and Stephen McLaughlin (former chief planner for Toronto) on behalf of Acheson Ventures LLC., a company based in Port Huron.

The framework for redevelopment of these railway lands is the product of research and consultation with the community, focusing on goals such as the importance of water, tourism, and improved quality of life. As with Port McNicholl (see Vol. 13 no. 1), Mitchell is building the case for development (the business plan) on a market plan, a financial plan and a physical plan. He first used

this approach when working for Marathon Realty, developer of the Toronto Railway Lands. Mitchell acknowledges that waterfronts are complex, involving many people, neighbourhood organizations and government jurisdictions. Success lies in "finding the point at which the physical, financial and market planning components come together." Phases 1 and 2 of the physical plan are finished. More work is still needed on the other components. A key goal of the overall plan is to successfully reintegrate Port Huron's waterfront with the rest of the community.

ments, engineering feasibility and cost, and appropriateness to the Port Huron context. The final plan brings together the best of each concept.

Development Concepts President, Don Mitchell, believes that successful redevelopment hinges on finding the point at which the physical, financial and market components work together as part of a realistic business plan. The redevelopment plan marks the beginning of a long-term strategy to improve the way people live,

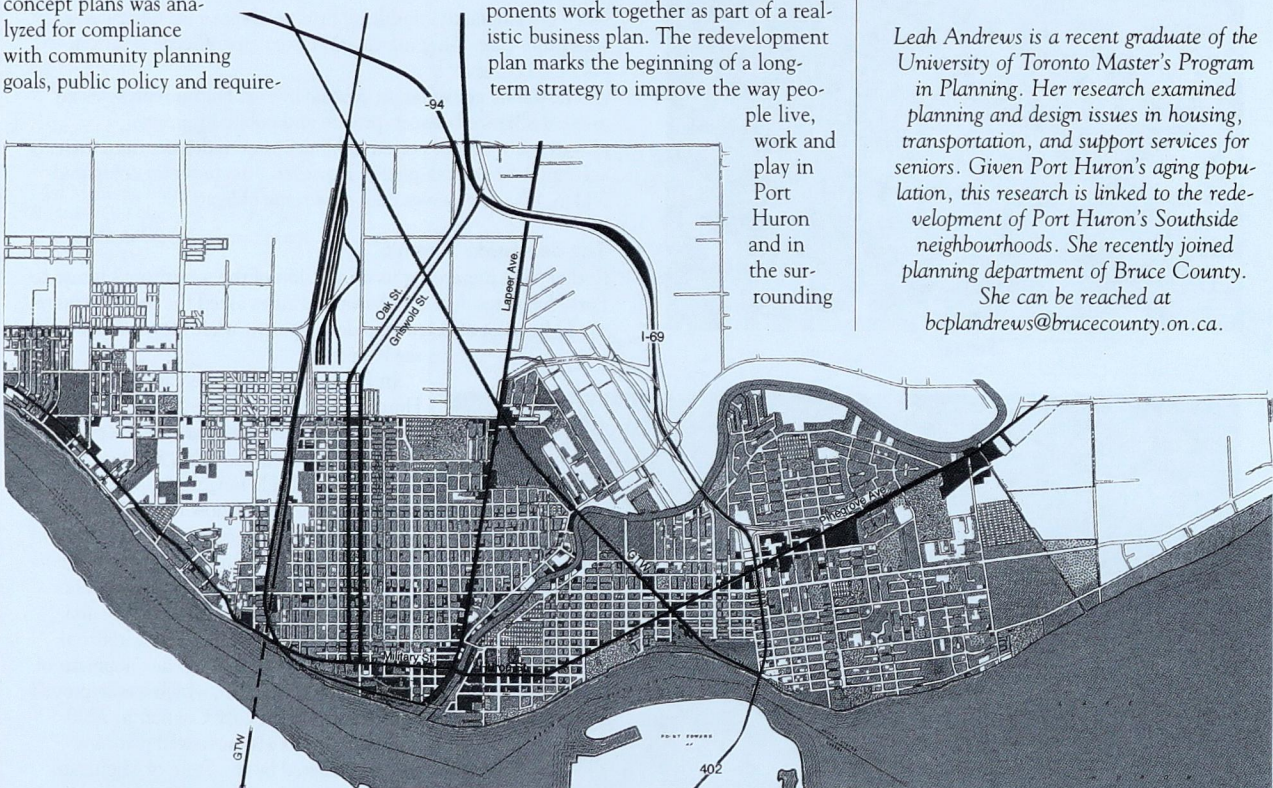
work and play in Port Huron and in the surrounding

region. Acheson Ventures is making every effort to ensure that the business plan is financially feasible and supports public objectives.

The public forums represent a new step in the area's revival. The meetings recognize the vital contribution of community groups and residents in redeveloping a city centre.

Leah Andrews is a recent graduate of the University of Toronto Master's Program in Planning. Her research examined planning and design issues in housing, transportation, and support services for seniors. Given Port Huron's aging population, this research is linked to the redevelopment of Port Huron's Southside neighbourhoods. She recently joined planning department of Bruce County.

She can be reached at bcplandrews@brucecounty.on.ca.



Waterfront development should make use of the water!

If the challenge of managing urban growth were a medal contest, how would Ontario fare?

The future of the GTA: What Others Might Say

By Ed Sajecki

This is the second of two articles looking at the legacy and prospects for Ontario.

If John Robarts were to reappear and give us a report card on the last 30 years, what would he say? "The province's economy is strong, which is good, and within Toronto in the short span of three decades, an entirely new city has emerged, sharply different from most others on the continent. The once sleepy provincial town has been transformed into a throbbing metropolis of international significance."

"You did a good job of elevating the Golden Horseshoe's prominence as the economic engine of Canada and employment hub for Ontario...and the high-tech Ottawa was particularly well done."

"You protected the Niagara Escarpment and the Oak Ridges Moraine and succeeded in leaving these green legacies for our children."

"But," he might say, "I'm disappointed that we've been unable to come to grips with

many of the same growth and development trends we foresaw 30 years ago such as traffic congestion, and inefficiencies in the provision of transportation and water and sewer infrastructure. I'm disappointed that the southern one-tenth of the

province continues to face the challenges of coping with rapid urbanization, while the northern nine-tenths struggles to keep their youth at home."

Today's Initiatives

So, what's being done? Would our performance rate a gold medal?

This is indeed an exciting time for land use planning and for those who work in the municipal world. Within provincial ministries, there is a new attitude and a new way of thinking about growth. Under the umbrella of Smart Growth, ministries are looking at the big picture and coordinating decisions today on public investment, infrastructure, trans-

portation and land use planning. To make sure decisions on growth-related issues are coordinated government-wide, the Smart Growth secretariat works closely with many ministries, especially Smart Growth ministries:

- Agriculture and Food
- Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation
- Environment
- Energy
- Finance
- Natural Resources
- Northern Development & Mines
- Tourism and Recreation
- Training, Colleges and Universities
- Transportation
- Ontario SuperBuild Corporation.

Initiatives within the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MAH) over the past year include:

- A new Municipal Act that is the cornerstone of a stronger provincial-municipal relationship for the 21st century. The Act—the first comprehensive overhaul of Ontario's municipal legislation in 150 years—gives local governments much greater flexibility to address local circumstances, while promoting even stronger accountability to taxpayers.
- The signing of an historic memorandum of understanding between the province and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario that heralds an unprecedented era of cooperation.
- Passage of legislation that will protect 100 percent of the Oak Ridges Moraine's significant natural and water resource features, while preserving agricultural land and focusing development in approved settlement areas.
- Spearheading Ontario's Smart Growth initiative, conducting extensive regional consultations, establishing a Smart Growth Secretariat to coordinate efforts, and creating regional Smart Growth panels to

address regional circumstances.

- An extensive review of provincial land use policies, including public consultation.
- Passage of Brownfields legislation that will remove obstacles to cleaning up former brownfield sites in communities of all sizes.
- Signing an important housing agreement with the federal government that will increase the supply of affordable housing in Ontario.
- Passage of legislation to improve public safety, enhance the accountability of building practitioners and streamline the building inspections and approvals process.

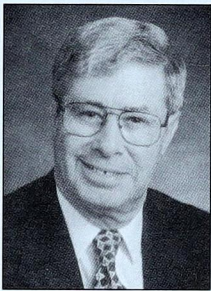
Additionally, MAH has recently taken on responsibility for rural affairs. Minister Chris Hodgson will be working with two new associate ministers, the Honourable Brian Coburn (rural affairs) and the Honourable Tina Molinari (urban affairs) in carrying out the Ministry mandate.

My ministry's mission, and the objective we all share as planners, is to build better communities. Just as each one of us is a living memorial to those who came before us, what is put in place today can have far-reaching effects on those who will follow us.

So, is a gold medal achievable? Perhaps. But just in case, does anyone know the French judge?

Ed Sajecki, MCIP, RPP, is Assistant Deputy Minister, Planning and Development Division, with the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Editor's note: Owing to an editing error in part 1 of this piece, the annual growth rate of the GTA was incorrectly stated. The annual growth rate of the GTA is 110,000 people per year. L.A. is growing at 152,000 p.a.



Brian Coburn



Tina Molinari



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 **Better Land Use Solutions**

Unintended Consequences for Well-Intentioned Plans

By John Winter

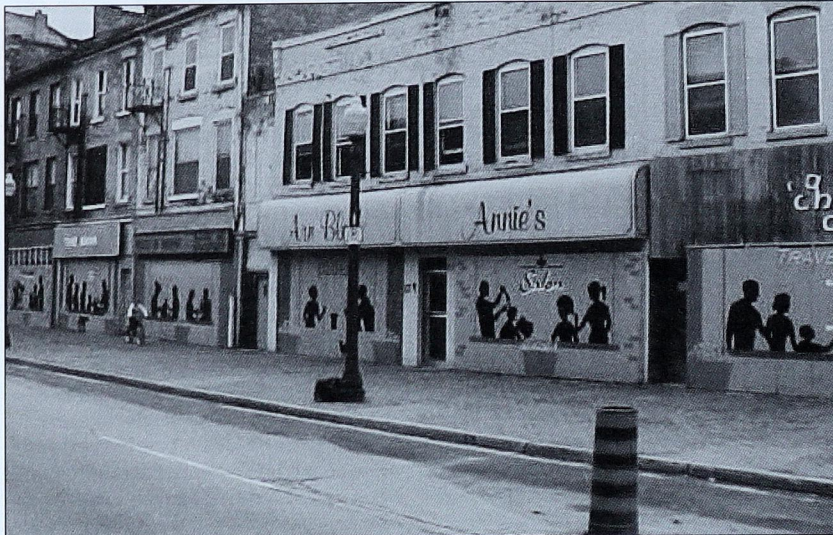


Photo: John Winter

Brantford's legacy

In 1976, with great fanfare, the Ontario Government launched its Downtown Revitalization Program. The Premier had dialled his old buddy Mr. Eaton and, based on a verbal agreement, a program was launched for chain department stores to retake the small Ontario downtown.

Unfortunately, in a kind of reverse of the Midas touch, virtually everywhere the government money went turned bad. The program also helped to bankrupt Eaton's.

Prior to the mid 1970s, there had only been three examples of major downtown retail renovation: the first enclosed downtown mall in North America, in the City of London (in the early 1960s, with practically no competition from the suburbs); downtown Sudbury and downtown Port Arthur (the latter two were based on buoyant "hockey stick" population projections).

In 1976, there was also one other downtown mall redevelopment in the works (also without any market research, for its department store was built far too large). This downtown Toronto project was beside a subway and was achieved without any government subsidy.

When the (Robert) McCabe municipal guidelines on shopping centre development came out in the same year, there was a warning about these "hockey stick projec-

tions." Too late for Sudbury and Port Arthur. (And too late for Fort William: if Port Arthur had one, we've gotta have one too!) There were no warnings about the absurd factors that might be advanced to secure consensus on building one of these new facilities.

The downtown programs had incentives for the developer and for the key anchor(s). Frequently, the municipality contributed the land, and operated the paid parking.

While couched in "motherhood" terminology (and who could be against resuscitating the heart of the city?), here is what actually happened:

Uncompelling Proposition. The downtown centres asked the consumer to drive further, to an inferior mall and pay for parking, whereas most consumers by then were able to drive shorter distances to larger, more diverse suburban malls, with "free" parking. After contributing to the investment, the municipalities wanted to get a return on their parking revenues. Only when it was too late, and anchors collapsed, did the spaces become free. The program might have had more longevity (and might even have prevented the evaporation of property values), if the parking price had been on a par with the suburbs.

"Big Project, Little Downtown." The economics of shopping centre development require that the area of specialty stores should be roughly equal to that of the anchor(s); the department store anchors were "large," some 100,000 square feet or more. An unfortunate consequence was that whatever the market was downtown, these new projects swamped it. If you had wanted benefits to spread through a downtown, you would have to under-build the potential, so as to leave lots of spending for the many other businesses there, to profit from any improved magnet. Of course, this did not happen.

"Stealing" was OK downtown. The wrath of municipalities was raised when Multi Malls located in the rural fringe of various towns and tried to steal tenants. But it was all right for the downtown project to steal all the good tenants off Main Street and put them into a structure that was fundamentally unsound. Another unintended consequence of the downtown overbuilding was the "vacuum cleaner effect." This sucked the good independents off the streets and into the unstable mall.

Secret Agreements. Municipalities and their downtown developers protected their poor investments through secret agreements, that for a specified (or sometimes unlimited time) the municipality would try to block any significant retail development occurring in the suburbs, in an attempt to force people back downtown. This was, of course, implemented to the overall detriment of consumers.

No Spin Off. It is not surprising then, when the province reviewed its program a decade later, it could find no private spin-off investments connected or engendered by the new downtown malls.

As Eaton's was expiring, I was in the locked room as the prospective buyers were going over the books. I vividly remember one U.S. retail executive laughing at the performance of downtown Guelph. "Only 25 bucks a square foot!" OK, he'd translated it into US dollars. But the results published for the creditors were appalling. When an expert was asked what to do with the relatively

recent Guelph project, his advice was to "blow the sucker away," and re-open the public street.

The consuming public only got to directly express their opinions on two occasions. In Tillsonburg, 5,000 signatures were gathered against the "Eaton Centre of Oxford County" (200,000 square feet of department stores for a town of 10,000 people). The OMB listened; the historic town hall and market square beside Broadway were to be preserved. The Cabinet's Order in Council, in overturning the OMB, did not listen.

In Woodstock, another 5,000 signatures were collected against the proposed downtown mall. Local government did not listen and, even though they had no anchor interest (and thus like Tillsonburg were contrary to the program guidelines), the expropriation notices for all the independent merchants went out just a few days before Christmas 1988. But Woodstock residents were lucky: the program had run out of money.

Brantford was not so lucky. Brantford and Mr. Campeau got the last of the funds. To provide land for the new enclosed downtown mall, local government jumped at the opportunity to abandon its main streets and build a nice new City Hall elsewhere. Woolco, which was outside the project, and which did not get any taxpayer largess, immediately closed its downtown store, and the downward spiral began.

So what can work downtown? Cobourg is the shining example. While Cobourg was terribly concerned about the growth and restructuring of Northumberland Mall and vicinity (and for a while toyed with transforming its mighty waterfront into a mini-mall), the municipality boldly renovated the gorgeous Victoria Hall. It set a precedent: local government investment downtown, confidence assured, private investment followed.

The same process happened in Orangeville. The Town invested in an upgraded Town Hall and theatre. No matter how much extra space there was in the suburbs, there was renewed confidence and private investment along Broadway. New painting here, small new building there, it all added up.

Similar patterns are seen in Owen Sound, Collingwood and Woodstock. Instead of blowing away its historic structures, Woodstock, after a false start, invested in its past, and Main Street is now one of the most vital and charming in the Province.

Brantford unfortunately was hit with a triple whammy: the Eaton's anchor collapsed from lack of patronage (and became a call centre); municipal government had moved away; and the new (phenomenally successful) casino is not easy to access from the main streets. There is no worse case of blight in any Ontario downtown: forlorn consumer ghosts painted on the sides of buildings along Colborne, to

remind us of the way it used to be.

After all that effort and taxpayer contributions, a nearby municipality's *Spectator* (June 11, 2000) gloated about downtown Brantford being a "leftover war zone," "desolate" and "decayed."

Brampton realized its mistake just in time, and moved its local government back to Highway 10 to champion a revived downtown.

So what is it that works downtown? Not the mega-project, subsidized by reluctant taxpayers, and justified on hockey-stick projections or fake economic factors. What succeeds is the spark of faith in the continuance of the downtown community from municipal investment; other relatively small but feasible investments follow, from the confidence engendered.

Just look at the communities that avoided the scourge and increased confidence in their downtowns: Windsor, Burlington, Kingston, Trenton, Pembroke, St. Catharines, Leamington and Lindsay, to name just some of the "lucky" ones.

John Winter, MCIP, RPP, President of John Winter Associates Limited, is a retail planner with 30 years of experience in Ontario (plus another ten working in his uncle's grocery store). If you're interested in the utterly unobtainable factors employed to justify some of these projects, log onto his website, <http://www3.sympatico.ca/john.winter>, and read a history of retailing in Ontario over the past 50 years.

It's the economics stupid

Worlds Colliding or Collaborating? Protecting Agriculture in Halton

By Helma Geerts

This is the first of two articles about Halton's progressive program to promote agriculture.

It's easy to be negative about the future of agriculture in the GTA as rural roads fill up with commuters and non-farm residents complain about manure or the spreading of biosolids. Aging farmers also have to cope with high tax assessment, competition from international trade, as well as tough new regulations and costs, which add to the burden. The result is that many farmers are leaving the industry.

Despite these sometimes overwhelming challenges, we want to keep agriculture alive in Halton. We see farming as directly

and indirectly economically significant and vitally important to achieving Smart Growth, recognize that farms add to the quality of life in our Region, and acknowledge the contribution farmers make to retaining natural areas.

To keep farming alive will take more than protective zoning and official plans, however. Rules and plans alone will not keep farmers in business, but a respectable income will. Unless we meet this test, we don't have a hope of keeping land out of the hands of speculators and maintaining the high land stewardship standards usually associated with resident ownership. The Halton Agricultural Advisory Committee (HAAC) and a community-initiated

Agricultural Policies Task Force (with both HAAC and Halton Region Federation of Agriculture members) are providing advice along the way.

The Halton Urban Structure Plan (HUSP), passed in 1999, designated enough urban, serviced land to meet the demand for more than 20 years. This was confirmed by a recent update, which indicates that the designated urban area can accommodate all urban uses until at least 2021, our current planning horizon. This means that there are firm urban boundaries in Halton for the foreseeable future.

Halton's Five-Year Regional Official Plan Review Directions Report¹ challenges the public to contemplate what it might be

like letting agriculture go: "... what would we see in our countryside? Commercial and industrial uses taking advantage of cheap land prices? Intensive recreational uses attracting large volumes of traffic? Estate subdivision lots that are costly to provide services for and may not be sustainable on private wells and septic? Dilapidated farms and abandoned farm buildings in the hands of speculators waiting for the next phase of urban development?" These scenarios are not part of Halton's vision and certainly not in keeping with the principles of good planning.

Five Pressures Felt More Intensely in the GTA

While many of the challenges GTA farmers face are similar to those felt across Ontario, others issues such as the loss of farmers to retirement, reduced levels of farm ownership, inflated tax assessment, the impact of the new Nutrient Management Act, and traffic conflicts may be experienced with greater intensity in the GTA.

These five principal issues will be addressed in part two of this article.

Helma Geerts is a Senior Planner with the Planning & Public Works Dept., Region of Halton. She can be reached at (905) 825-6000; toll-free 1-866-442-5866 ext. 7209, or by email at GeertsH@region.halton.on.ca. See the billboard for details of a December 17 workshop addressing this subject.

1. Halton Region. 2002. *Directions Report: The Greening of Halton-Smart Growth, Smart Choices.* Oakville, Ontario.



The family farm is under pressure



The divide between rural and agricultural is sometimes difficult to detect

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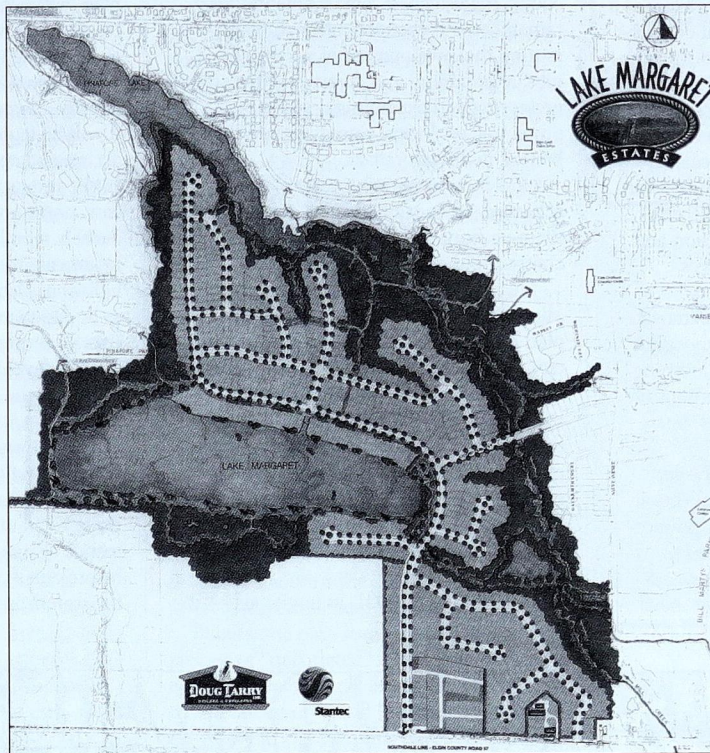
Conservation Development: Blending Development and Ecology

By Mike Sullivan and J.P. Warren

Many distinct, noteworthy and attractive development projects have taken cues from New Urbanism case-books. There are also some Ontario developers who have begun to embrace the emerging "conservation development" principles, which integrate land conservation with the development process. These people have expended much energy and time mapping resources, moving trees and reworking drawings, trying to achieve a fit between what nature has created and what they would like to add. Not only did these developers need to attract prospective home-buyers, they were required to work with some very focused consultants and partners. The Nature Conservancy, at the Lakewood project, near Owen Sound; and the award-winning Landon Bay East project near Gananoque are examples of conservation development residential developments.

Lake Margaret Estates, located in St. Thomas, is one of the newest conservation development projects. The developer recognized that the "lake" was a former gravel pit and was of ecological value as a connector to the adjacent city park and Mill Creek Ravine system. To address this and other issues, Doug Tarry Homes Ltd. hired a team of specialists and worked with the City and other agencies to form a Steering Committee that will guide development now and beyond the approvals process to ensure that the original concept is maintained. Once the development is approved, residents will replace the developers and consultants. Through extensive work, with funding provided by the developer/builder, the 32-acre former pit was naturalized into Lake Margaret.

The Kettle Creek Conservation Authority (KCCA) will be gifted about 30



percent of the parcel, including the lake and woodlots that connect to other wooded areas, which will preserve this area for open space. (In other jurisdictions, where the local CA may not be receptive to these types of gifts, condo ownership of the greenlands is another option: where each purchaser is responsible, along with their neighbours, to maintain the open areas). The only watercourse entering the lake, an open drain, posed an unknown threat to the developer, so they purchased the affected properties.

Tarry sees this project paying off when people buy here for environmental and aesthetic reasons. The KCCA's Brian Hall calls this "the future of development, blending architecture and ecology." Tarry believes that in future, all development will be ecologically-based.

Planners specializing in rural, agricultural and environmental areas will attest to the increased environmental requirements placed on their developments to gain

approval. In many of these cases, the amount of natural landscape that is lost can become a significant issue. Conservation development promotes the incorporation of these natural features within residential development. Current zoning standards tend to favour larger private spaces (that is, lots), with little common open space. Common issues are maintenance and liability. Conservation development seeks to reduce an individual's private open space in favour of increased common space. Site-specific zoning standards may be all that is required to implement this style of development. The province's current experiment with development permits may also prove beneficial in this case.

By reducing the size of the lot to the minimum required by the municipality, retaining greenspace and hazard

lands in their natural state and ultimately blending both nature and growth together, developers are able to match the forces of supply and demand in a more sustainable manner. Conservation development proponents hope to show developers and approval authorities that development can work with, rather than against nature, while continuing to make a reasonable profit, and meet acceptable planning standards. Conservation development is a viable form for residential subdivision design which can benefit both developer and the public by maintaining strong land values and increasing the public's awareness and appreciation for nature.

Mike Sullivan, MCIP, RPP, is a planner with Skelton, Brumwell & Associates in Barrie. JP Warren is President of the Conservation Development Alliance of Ontario (CDAO). For more information, please contact JP at jpwarren@interlog.com.

The Vision and Reality of Toronto's Official Plan

By Mohammad A. Qadeer

The City of Toronto recently adopted a 30-year plan for its physical development. The plan has been in the making for more than three years and there has been much discussion since its announcement. It has been reviled or praised by citizens in public meetings and was recently adopted by city council, with revisions, to make it the official policy for the city's development. It is billed as the vision and not a detailed blueprint for the city's growth.

The plan has evolved from an extensive process of public involvement, although it cannot be a consensus document; nothing can be. Yet it has met with the consent of many citizens who attended public meetings.

Toronto's plan is a document of lofty ideals that may strike some as a collection of motherhood statements such as promoting "diversity and opportunity, beauty, connectivity and leadership and stewardship." It promises to stitch together social

equity, inclusiveness, environmental sustainability and economic growth by promoting the development of variety of jobs, affordability and diversity of housing; preserving and expanding green spaces; protecting ecological resources; and celebrating multiculturalism.

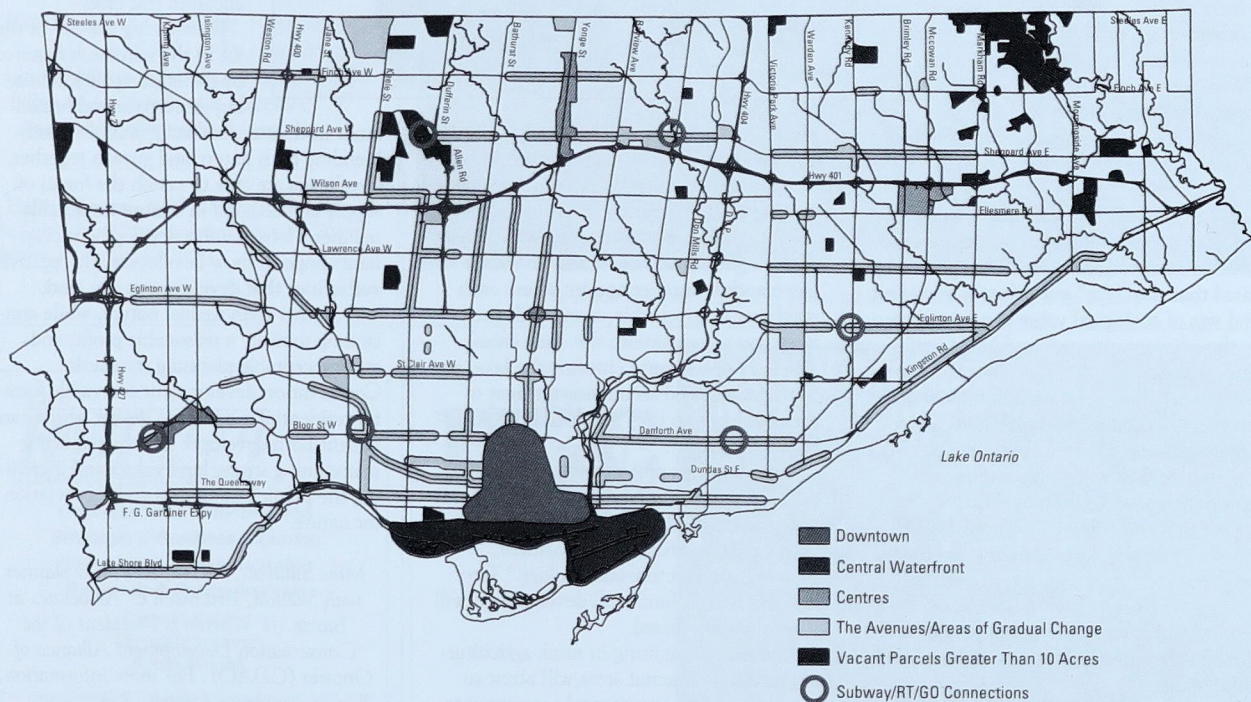
How these competing goals will be achieved may not be obvious, but keeping them up front will help structure the discourse about development decisions.

This is a policy plan, a relatively new idiom of city planning. It is essentially a plan for the physical development of the city in the very conventional sense, namely development of land and buildings, transport, infrastructure, open spaces and urban form. All the social, economic and even environmental objectives are interpreted in terms of their physical implications. In its scope and approach it stays close to the statutory mandate of Ontario's Planning Act.

The Toronto of 2031, as envisaged by the

plan, will not be unfamiliar to present-day residents. It will have about half a million more people and a similar number of additional jobs within its boundaries, which is already a largely built up area. As a result, it will be more dense, with future growth accommodated on the vacant waterfront, in the intensified suburban centres of the east, north and west, and directed to the densely rebuilt arterial corridors along major east-west avenues (Sheppard, Eglinton, Danforth, Kingston Road) as well as in designated employment districts on sites presently zoned for industrial use. Thus redevelopment, reurbanization and in-fill are the means of accommodating growth.

Downtown will be larger, dotted with "mixed prestigious office/commercial developments" (read high rise towers) and "specialty retail and entertainment establishments." River valleys and natural areas will be preserved and new regional parks along the waterfront will be developed.



Potential opportunities for growth

Put it all together and the strategy is clear: concentrate development on the underused lands in the city, while keeping the city's overall spatial structure intact. Major changes will be along the waterfront and on sites of employment and suburban centres.

The plan promises to protect residential neighbourhoods from drastic change and uncharacteristic uses. There will be no "high rises sprouting out in backyards," contrary to an apprehension voiced in community meetings. Almost 75 percent of the city's land area will be preserved in essentially the current form, including the city's residential streets and suburban subdivisions.

The plan's vision is conventional (which is no sin). It bundles together ideas from the current metaphor of Smart Growth, proposing to selectively transform the built form, particularly along strip-malled arteries, while sustaining and enriching residential neighbourhoods and intensifying downtown and the three suburban centres as axes of the city's spatial structure. The plan deepens, strengthens and systematizes the contemporary urban form of the city.

The plan's innovations, if they can be thus called, are in some of its details. It carves a new but wholesome way of categorizing and organizing land uses. Instead of single-use categories, namely commercial, residential, it views land uses as functional clusters of mixed and interrelated uses, such as Neighbourhoods, Apartment Neighbourhoods, Mixed Use Areas, Regeneration Areas, Employment Areas.

These designations are undoubtedly more relevant, but the difficulty lies in working out the criteria for their application. The planners' answer is that such criteria will come later in the secondary and community improvement plans and in the zoning and development permit regulations. One fact is obvious: city planning in Toronto will move towards the case-by-case "planning permission" mode, which has the potential of further politicizing the development process and creating regulatory logjams.

The plan has many community-spirited policy ideas. These include preserving the stock of rental housing by not allowing conversions if the vacancy rate is less than 2.5 percent, the requirement for 20 percent affordable housing in large new developments, priority on public transport, shared use of parking, multiple use of service facilities and heritage preservation.

Where the plan has a gaping hole, which may undo it, is the disconnection between

the city's social and economic dynamics and the projected built environment. For example, it has no explicit policy to address the problem of homelessness. It shows no accommodation to of ethnic, religious and cultural groups that have made Toronto such a vibrant place.

Residential neighbourhoods change all the time. Currently, they are being suffused with ethnic identities and are turning into places of distinct ambience and services. Even those that remain "mixed" are being reconfigured by the diversity of lifestyles and cultural practices. The plan may protect the physical shell of neighbourhoods, but it will be battling residents demanding new places of worship, different types of parks and playing fields and architectural adaptations of homes and yards. It needs to be in tune with the changing social composition of neighbourhoods.

Similarly, special ethnic business districts and malls have emerged all across the city, creating new retail functions and commercial districts and realigning the commercial structure. The plan does not have any commercial development policies to begin with, as the retail activities are woven into its multiple use functional districts. However, it does not address the restructuring of retail along ethnic and lifestyle lines.

Finally, the plan leans towards the process of "negotiated" rather than as of right to development. It has the potential to add uncertainty and bureaucratic/political delays in the planning approval process. The plan should not be over-regulating and should not increase costs and complexity of development.

Toronto's Official Plan aims at channeling the city's development towards a sustainable and satisfying future. It has gone only part of the way towards articulating such a strategy and has yet to come to grips with the evolving social and economic realities.

Mohammad Qadeer, F.C.I.P., now lives in Toronto. He is a Professor Emeritus of Urban Planning, Queen's University. He can be reached by e-mail at maqdeer@hotmail.com.

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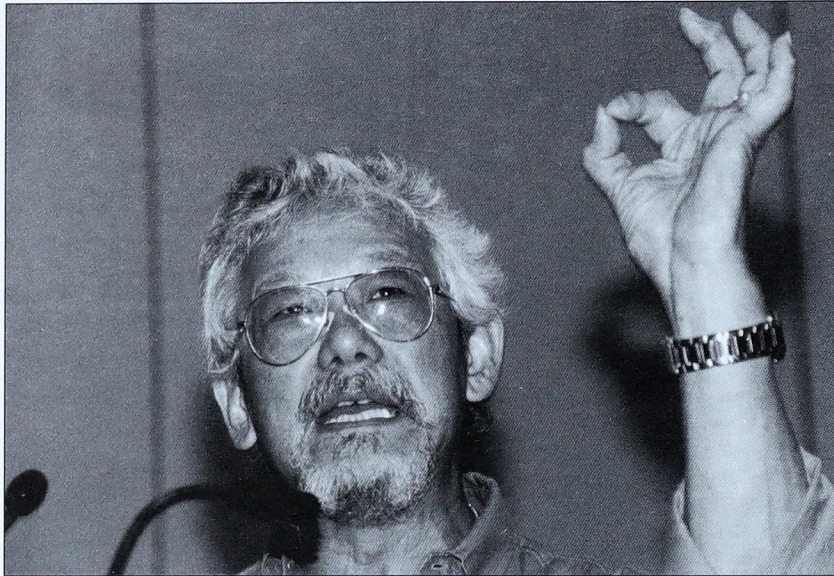
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DELSCAN

Suzuki Puts His Unique Stamp on London Conference

By Journal staff



David Suzuki

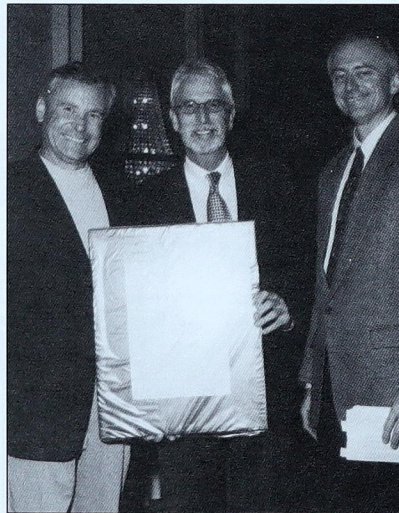
David Suzuki's contribution to the success of the London conference is hard to underplay: he launched us into a lofty intellectual orbit for the duration of the event that encouraged us to be skeptical, willing to challenge, and, most important, open to new ideas.

Few people who heard him speak can fail to have been moved by his powerful keynote presentation. Even enviro-skeptics put their quibbles aside long enough to learn from Canada's most articulate ecological spokesman. We were amused by his damning dismissal of economics as a discipline, touched by recollections from his London childhood and thrilled by his tour de force portrayal of the "web of life."

"People have been living under the dangerous presumption that they're separate from nature — as opposed to part of it. There is an ancient understanding (of the balance between humanity and nature) that we have forgotten," Suzuki explained. "Human beings are fire, we are the earth, we are the air, we are water; so does it make any sense at all to view our environment as an externality, as economists would have us do?"

Suzuki's direction as a scientist was profoundly affected early on by Rachel Carson's *Silent Spring*. Carson's book

opened his eyes to new possibilities. He came to understand that it was a dangerous practice to believe science had all the answers. Citing the examples of DDT and CFCs — harmful products originally hailed as "scientific breakthroughs"—he questioned the claim that genetically



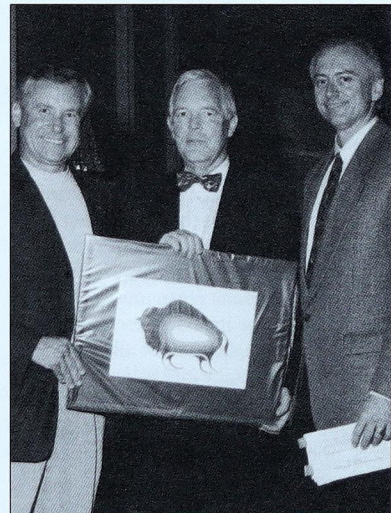
Dave Palubesi, Paul Bedford, FCIP, and Dennis Jacobs

modified foods are perfectly safe. "The truthful answer is that we simply don't know," he said.

Congratulations to the conference organizers, led by John Fleming, for attracting Suzuki to London. Suzuki's personal connection to post-war London gave legitimacy to his stinging critique of present-day London—or any city for that matter—for the loss of connection with the environment.

Rich, diverse program

The momentum from Suzuki's presentation extended through many excellent sessions and interesting mobile workshops. The material covered ranged from innovations in project management (the Region of Waterloo appoints an individual to guide special projects from planning through to implementation, acknowledging the need to maintain a corporate view across individual departments), to the role of consultants in protecting the public interest (planners acting as facilitators to help stakeholders identify community goals), to expanding the scope of professional commitment (integrating public art into the development process). We were also able to welcome the first of several groups of Chinese



Dave Palubesi, Joe Berridge, FCIP, and Dennis Jacobs

planners visiting Canada through CIP.

Two extended sessions in particular received rave reviews. The urban design workshop organized by the Urban Design Working Group brought together veterans, beginning planners and students to tackle a real-world challenge—proposing an urban design framework for the reuse of a major institutional site in London. Another popular session brought together three experts on retail in a talk show format hosted by John Fleming. “Where did the time go? I learned a lot,” one audience member said.

The Awards dinner, judged to be a success, was held on the Friday evening, presenting logistical difficulties for some who could not extend their stay over four nights. It was nevertheless a great opportunity to re-present and thus repeat the salute to Joe Berridge and Paul Bedford as Fellows of the Institute. CIP President Dave Palubeski was on hand to do the honours with Dennis Jacobs.



OALA executive director Sarah Holland receives special attention during a mobile workshop



Prepared for and undeterred by the rain



Christine Helm and CIP executive director Steve Brasier with Chinese planners



Conference organizing committee: Pam Anderson, Laverne Kirkness, Jeff Levissen, John Fleming, Zahir Karim, Greg Priamo, (front) Cathy Saunders, Nancy Pasato, Amanda Kutler

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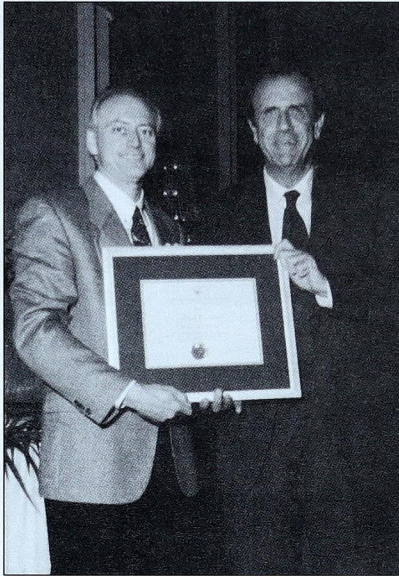
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Eastern

Member Service Award: Nigel Brereton

Nigel Brereton will be familiar to many OPPI members in the Eastern District. For 20 years, ending in fall 2000, he served as director of membership services in Eastern District. He not only encouraged many people to join the



Nigel Brereton

Institute, but guided them through the membership process, and worked hard to ensure that provisional members moved towards full membership. He was instrumental in establishing the senior practitioners' course and was always willing to act as a mentor to new provisional members, commenting on their logbook entries or providing helpful advice.

As a member of OPPI's Membership Committee, he was known as thorough, cautious and fair in his review of candidates, and determined to uphold the integrity of OPPI. His nomination cites his great sense of humour, his friendly personality, and his willingness to help others, which made other members feel comfortable in approaching him for advice and helped many current members navigate the road from provisional to full membership.

Northern

Thunder Bay's New Official Plan

After several years of research and policy development, the City of Thunder Bay has a new Official Plan.

The City of Thunder Bay's Official Plan recently underwent a comprehensive review and the revised document received Provincial approval in March. The new official plan represents a significant departure from the old one by placing far greater emphasis on the protection of the natural environment and curbing urban sprawl. The plan has new policies to promote the development of inclusive neighbourhoods and affordable housing by encouraging the development of garden suites and accessory apartments. The plan also recognizes the waterfront as one of the City's most valued amenities, and includes policies to direct its future development by supporting both recreational and industrial activities. The new official plan is intended to help to encourage a healthy local economy and a wide range of opportunities for the citizens of Thunder Bay. The plan will be available on the City's web site in the near future.

Visit www.city.thunder-bay.on.ca, or contact Leslie McEachern, Long Range Planner at (807) 625-2947 or by email at lmceachern@city.thunder-bay.on.ca.

Great Rendezvous II

More than 120 people descended on Thunder Bay in mid-November to attend the Great Rendezvous II, bringing together several key northern networks to develop action plans for the expansion and enhancement of the northwest economy. The event focused on how to "add value" to forestry and mining, tourism and the health sector. Also in attendance was Ian Bromley, Director of Urban Economic Development in the provincial ministry of Enterprise, Opportunity and Innovation, one of the founding partners of the Ontario Competitive City Regions Partnership (OCCR). OCCR helped to sponsor the Rendezvous. In his welcome to the participants, some of whom had journeyed eight hours from remote communities to attend the event, Bromley noted that although the common perception is that the North's

resources are the forests and ores below ground, the most valuable resource is "between the ears" of people committed to improving the Northern economy.

Simcoe-Muskoka

The Muskoka Centre— Redevelopment Alternatives

By Janet Amos

Have you ever wished that you could invite all the planners in your area to sit down with you and really think about a particular site and what the best use for the site would be? Well, at the Simcoe Muskoka Chapter, Ian Sugden, Chief Planner for Gravenhurst had just that opportunity. At a meeting in April, Ian mentioned to Janet Amos, Vice Chair of the Simcoe-Muskoka Chapter that he thought the Muskoka Centre site would benefit from a charette-type event. Within days, Ian, Janet and other volunteers from the chapter were working out the details. Notices for the Gravenhurst meeting were sent out and the first 2002 meeting of the chapter was under way!

The Event

In late June, the Simcoe-Muskoka Chapter of OPPI hosted a workshop on the future of the Muskoka Centre property in northern Gravenhurst. Twelve members of Simcoe Muskoka, representing a wide variety of planning backgrounds, participated in the event. This group was joined by Ken Little and Jack Young of the local citizen commit-



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tee to investigate uses for the Muskoka Centre. The event began with a sunny one-hour walking tour of the site led by Ken Little and Ian Sugden. The group then spent a busy afternoon at the historic Gravenhurst Opera House considering the alternatives for the Muskoka Centre site.

History of the Muskoka Centre

The "Muskoka Centre" property is owned by the province. The property is nearly 70 acres, and has over 6,000 feet of shoreline on Lake Muskoka, including a large natural beach and a wetland. The site is designated Institutional to reflect its historic use. The unique and sparsely developed site is located at the northernmost end of Gravenhurst's main street, about three kilometres from downtown in an area of rural homes and cottages. The abandoned institutional buildings on the site are in disrepair. The Ontario Realty Corporation will list the property for sale this fall.

In 1897, the "Muskoka Cottage Sanatorium" was opened to accommodate 35 tuberculosis patients who benefited from the clean Muskoka air. Made possible by a large donation from the Town of Gravenhurst, and many other private donations, the sanatorium was the first institution of its kind in Canada. Over the following decades, the institution was expanded, eventually accommodating 440 patients. Following the advent of antibiotics and the decline of tuberculosis, the sanatorium was closed.

In 1960, the province re-opened the facility as a home for the developmentally handicapped. The new facility was known as the "Muskoka Centre." At its peak, it housed 350 residents, and employed over 300 people. As part of its program of deinstitutionalization, the province closed the Muskoka Centre in 1992. Most residents were placed in group homes. A large employment gap was created in Gravenhurst. Since that time, no continuous institutional use has been made of the Centre. The only users have been the OPP and other groups for outdoor training.

The debate about this site has filled the local newspapers and council agendas for a decade. Recently, the Town asked the Ontario Realty Corporation to defer the sale of the lands until a group of local residents could report to the Town on the preferred use. Issues of public ownership, land stewardship and environmental protection have all played a large part in this sophisticated debate. The planners, it was felt, could add some tried and true experience to the discussion and, in some ways, having

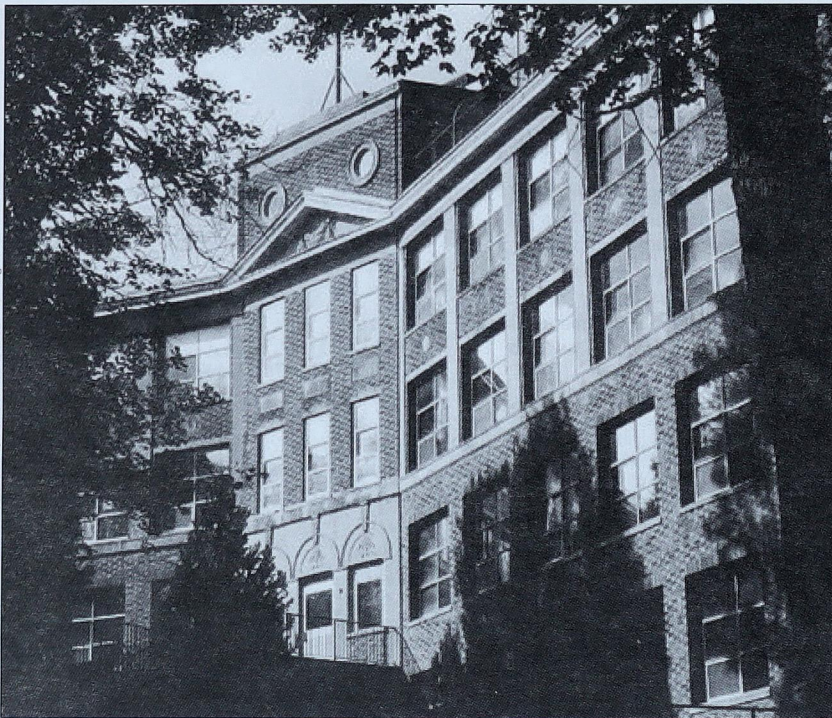


Photo: Ben McMullen, The Muskokan, provided by Amos Environment + Planning

Muskoka Centre

the planners look at the site provides another means to ensure that nothing is missed.

The Workshop

The goal was to develop a consensus on a land use concept for the Muskoka Centre site that could be recommended to the Town of Gravenhurst. Janet Amos led the group in a series of brainstorming exercises to develop alternative uses of all kinds. Through a series of thought-provoking steps, the participants examined and then eliminated a range of uses.

The group identified the key criteria upon which they would make their decisions. The extensive list included:

- community benefits;
- environmental friendliness;
- little shoreline disruption;
- financial viability.

In small groups, the planners assessed nine options. Presentations were made to the group on all nine by the inventors and then the planners took the opportunity to offer feedback and comments on the options.

Three options for redevelopment emerged. These were:

- college or university campus;
- retirement community;
- movie-arts productions campus.

In the final round, the planners

expressed their preference for the college or university campus option as the one that most closely met the goal of finding a use to recommend to the Town.

Positive Press Coverage and a Great Endorsement

Within three days of the event, the local newspaper had picked up on the planners' meeting in Gravenhurst. An editorial in the *Muskoka Advance* noted that, "Thursday's gathering of planners will give Muskoka Centre proponents a practical take on what's possible on this unique waterfront site. With their experience in dealing with municipal councils, private developers and the public, municipal planners know what's possible and what's not when balancing demands for growth with conservation and public policy."

We hope the Town can benefit from the ideas generated by our event. The notes created were passed directly onto the Town for their use. The participants had a good time and in the follow-up survey, participants overwhelmingly agreed that they would come to this type of event next year.

Have you ever wanted to accomplish something like this for a site in your area? If you have, let us know. The Simcoe Muskoka Chapter is bursting with ideas, and we will be happy to consider your project for a workshop in 2003.

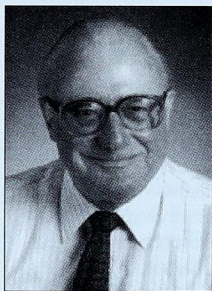
For further information, please contact:
Janet Amos, MCIP, RPP, Principal of
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Ian Sugden, MCIP, RPP, Coordinator of
Development Services and Chief Planner
for the Town of Gravenhurst at
(705) 687-3412 or via email at
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Obituary

Dr. Hans A. Hosse, MCIP, RPP (1922 -2002)

The planning and academic communities lost a great supporter earlier this year with the death of Dr. Hans Hosse on January 11, 2002. Hans was a professor of urban geography and planning in both the Departments of Geography and Political Science at the University of Western Ontario for 31 years.



Hans Hosse

Remembered by all for his sincere devotion to his students, Hans was dedicated to their academic, professional and personal development outside of his classes and beyond their graduation.

Maintaining regular

contact with his former students, he kept track of them through a well used file box containing their current business cards. Through these contacts he helped many new grads find jobs and depended on them to inform him about jobs coming available as they progressed in their careers.

Born in Essen, Germany, in 1922, Hans emigrated with his wife Anna in 1950 to Winnipeg and the University of Manitoba. After completing his BA and MA in Winnipeg in 1955 and 1956, he went to work with the City of Ottawa Planning Department and concurrently pursued his PhD, which he obtained from the University of Ottawa in 1962. After receiving his PhD he left for Washington D.C., where he assumed the position of Chief of Housing and Urban and Regional Planning for the Organization of American States. Later he took consulting positions with the

United Nations Economic Council for Asia and the Far East in Bangkok, and the World Bank.

Feeling the call to teaching, Hans joined the University of Western Ontario in 1966, becoming the first professor with cross-appointments in both the Departments of Geography and Political Science. He deeply enjoyed teaching students about urban and regional planning and always had a keen sense of the practical application of what they were learning. His retirement in 1987 did not stop his joy of teaching, as he continued to teach his planning and development course until 1997 and also maintained his world wide contact with the Urban Development Program alumni.

Hans Hosse's dedication to his students was complemented by his commitment to the planning profession. A respected and life long member of the Canadian Institute of Planners and the Ontario Professional Planners Institute, he was a tireless promoter of the Institute and encouraged his students to become members and contribute to the profession upon graduation. He served on many committees over the years, but particularly liked outreach and membership, having been a long-serving examiner of the Institute. In return Hans was recognized by the Canadian Institute of Planners in 1992 when they named their Award of Planning Excellence in his honour.

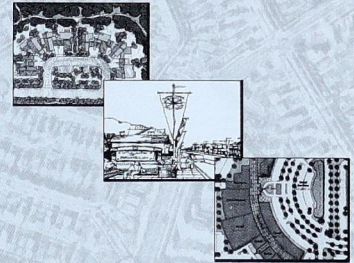
A memorial service for Hans Hosse was held at the University on January 26, 2002, and an overflowing room of friends and colleagues paid tribute to this wonderful man who truly made a difference in the lives of those he taught and counselled, and also left an indelible mark on the planning profession in Canada. He is survived by his daughter Iris Hosse, her husband Patrick Phillips, and grandchildren Willa and Graeme.

Bruce Curtis, MCIP, RPP, friend, colleague and former student. People will return next issue.

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The President's Report

By Dennis Jacobs

Even though I have now been doing this job for two years, I continue to be astounded with the breadth and depth of the Institute's membership—a membership that continues to grow. Keeping abreast of all OPPI's activities is a continuing challenge, but one that is made easier by the hard work and dedication of the members at large, those who sit on Council and committees and OPPI's staff.

Because this is a transitional period in our governance structure, I will be in office for an additional year. But I would not have missed this opportunity for the world. Council continues to make real progress on issues and initiatives that are raising the profile and credibility of the Institute. We revisited the Millennium Strategic Plan earlier this year and with only minor revisions, this document continues to serve as a foundation for the future of the Institute. The strategy is complemented by an overall Business Plan tied to our budget review and a set of detailed and measurable action plans to gauge our success in moving the Institute forward.

Here are some highlights from the past year:

Stronger leadership through the Policy Development Program. Designed to nurture creative ideas, this program funds the development of papers on topics of emerging interest—of interest not only to our membership but to the public at large. This program continues to raise the profile of the Institute and our members and attract the attention of the media, the broader public and other organizations.

For example, "Role and Function of the OMB," released early in 2002 was well received. Not only did it demonstrate our ability to take on a controversial subject, but to do it in a manner that facilitated further dialogue with the OMB. Recently, representatives of the Board met with us to establish a working committee to implement one of the recommendations.

For 2002, we launched our next paper on the topic of Community Design with a request for proposals in September. The result of this project will be showcased at the 2003 conference to what should be a very interested group of both planners and landscape architects.

Watching brief on government initiatives. While the policy papers receive the most attention, OPPI has also been very visible over the past year through its watching brief on government initiatives. This program is our finger on the pulse of issues which many of us face on a daily basis. For example, we

are active on the following fronts:

- Smart Growth and Smart Growth Councils
- Oak Ridges Moraine
- Municipal Act
- Provincial Policy Statement review
- Development Permit System
- Building Regulatory Reforms.

On our behalf, the Policy Development Committee continues to keep the Institute on the leading, and often sharp, edge of innovative thinking and public debate. Check the website and the

Ontario Planning Journal for updates and give us your views.

Broadening the recognition of planning and the role of planners. OPPI has now released its branding statement, which is intended to create instant public awareness and a basic understanding of who we are and what we do. As part of our Recognition Strategy, Diana Jardine and the Recognition Committee have worked to develop a brand statement for OPPI to help all of us bring the message home—Ontario Planners: Vision, Leadership, Great Communities.

We are not alone in this initiative—as many organizations are striving to raise their profile in a noisy world. The University of Toronto uses 'Great minds for a great future.' The Chartered Accountants of Ontario use 'CAs... provide strength beyond numbers.' Over the next year, you will see the brand molded into OPPI's identity—on the website, letterhead and in the Ontario Planning Journal.

The Recognition Committee has also streamlined our awards program. The results are now more clearly defined and will both honour the work of our members as well as bringing broader understanding of the planning profession to the general public.

The new website. Another window into our organization both for members and the public was opened this year. The new website provides a dynamic interface that continues to grow. With the framework in place, this investment in outreach will be a critical communication tool and I encourage you all to visit the site to take advantage of its features.

Membership and Member Service. We are making real progress in streamlining the administrative process. In June 2001, the Membership Services Committee met to look at what was needed to improve a process that for many has proven to be

Cont. on pg. 23



Dennis Jacobs

Recipients OPPI Excellence In Planning Awards

2002



The OPPI's Excellence in Planning Awards continue to recognize the best in planning each year, but the structure of the awards program has changed. Instead of awarding both district and provincial awards, OPPI now offers only province-wide awards. The number of categories has been reduced from five to four: (1) urban and community design, (2) planning studies and reports, (3) communications and public education, and (4) research and new directions. The last category combines what were once two separate categories. Within each category, a jury made up of five people, including one non-planner, judges the submissions. The winners received their awards at the OPPI conference in September in London, and the winning projects will also be featured on the OPPI website. Congratulations to all the winners and thanks to all those who sent in submissions.

Urban/Community Design

City of Hamilton, Planning & Development & Transportation, Operations & Environment Departments
Putting People First: The New Plans for Downtown Hamilton

"Putting People First" is about rethinking and redefining downtown Hamilton. The issues facing the City were well-known: lack of investment, outdated policy and zoning bylaws, and an overbuilt transportation network. The City, however, chose to

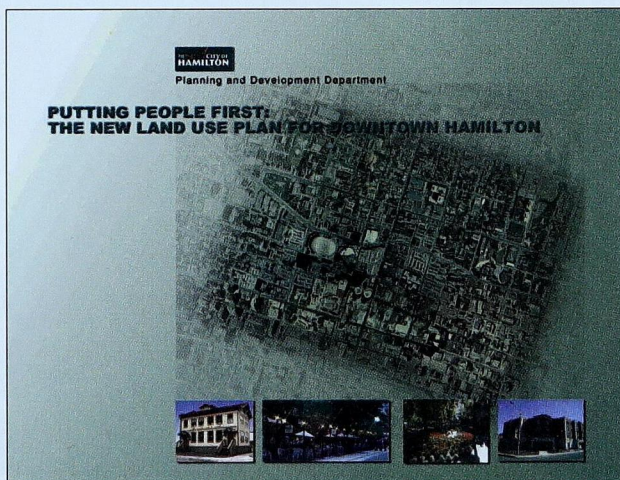
focus on urban design and city building to generate strategies and targeted actions for implementation. The consultation process (which included workshops, stakeholder meetings, and web-based consultation) asked Hamilton residents to imagine new possibilities and then decide

on ways to achieve those possibilities. The process led to the creation of a Design Strategy, which set the framework for downtown revitalization, a Transportation Master Plan, which tackled the problems posed by Hamilton's wide, one-way streets, and a Land Use Plan, which integrated transportation and built form. The OPPI jury commented: "The three-year evolutionary planning process, which highlighted an ongoing commitment to the project, built



Dennis Jacobs
& Mary Lou Tanner

strong linkages between technical considerations and design objectives. The three plans together present a clear vision for the downtown which is supported by an integrated design and development framework. The plans are bold yet practical, and demonstrate strong public and political commitment towards implementation."



The Planning Partnership (Honourable Mention Award)

*Durham College/University of Ontario Institute of Technology
Master Plan Final Report*

Durham College is located in north Oshawa, near Oshawa Creek. In 2001, the Ontario government promised to invest \$60 million to make the college a leading university and research centre. At the same time, Durham College is being merged with the University of Ontario Institute of Technology. The master plan is intended to transform the campus from a single large building surrounded by parking lots to an environ-

ment that will contribute to student life and learning, while providing new spaces for teaching and student accommodation. The plan respects the Oshawa Creek Valley, offers new pedestrian routes across campus, creates courtyards and gathering places by the careful siting of new buildings, and reduces dependence on car transportation. The jury found that the plan "has challenged the traditional thinking of what a college campus has been—a mega building—and converted it to a place to live, learn and socialize in a collection of buildings. It takes the best of design theory and applies it in one place, creating memorable outdoor areas and spaces and interesting vistas from a variety of vantage points, and is mindful of the physical relationship and future interaction of adjacent uses."

Planning Studies/Reports

City of Toronto, Urban Development Services
Making Waves: Principles for Building Toronto's Waterfront

Toronto's waterfront extends for 46 kilometres, of which about 10 kilometres make up the central waterfront near downtown. This area includes Fort York, Exhibition Place, and Ontario Place to the west, Harbourfront in the centre, and the Port Lands (the area most in need of revitalization)

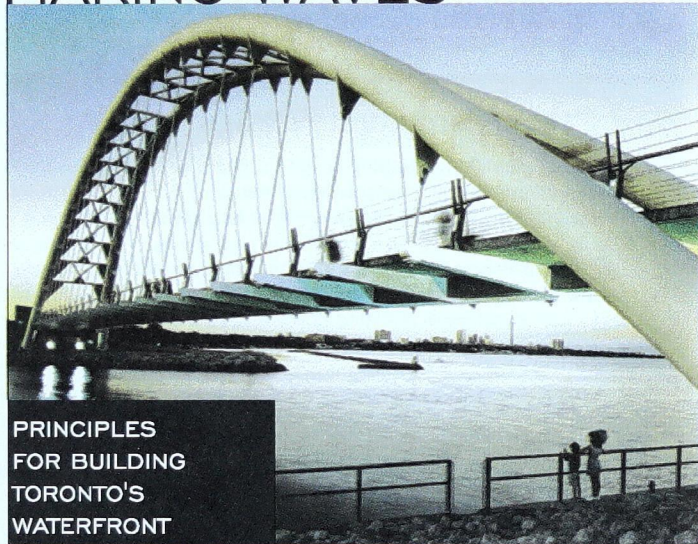


to the east. The plan for the area, created by a partnership of city staff and consultants working with Toronto residents, is structured around four principles: removing barriers/making connections; building a network of spectacular waterfront parks and public spaces; promoting a clean and green environment; and creating dynamic and diverse new communities. The most important, and most controversial part of the plan is the removal of the elevated Gardiner Expressway and its replacement with a surface road and a tunnel. The plan has received mainly positive feedback from the public, although opinions about the replacement scheme for the Gardiner are divided. The OPPI jury declared itself "impressed with the scale and boldness of the vision. While a complex and massive project, the simplicity and elegance of the plan helps to effectively communicate the plan to the residents of Toronto and neighbouring areas. The process of involving residents in the plan's development is also noteworthy. Overall, the jury found the plan innovative, visually appealing, thoughtfully developed and effective as a tool to help achieve the reinvigoration of the Toronto Waterfront."



Dennis Jacobs
 & Beate Bowron

MAKING WAVES



PRINCIPLES
 FOR BUILDING
 TORONTO'S
 WATERFRONT



Regional Municipalities of Durham, York and Peel
*Oak Ridges Moraine: Proposals for the Protection and
Management of a Unique Landscape, May and August 2001*

In May 2001, the three regions of Durham, York and Peel released a report containing proposals for protecting and managing the Oak Ridges Moraine, which incorporated recommendations for groundwater management, natural heritage data management, policy principles, and land securement strategies. The document was circulated to about 700 individuals and agencies, and discussed at six meetings across the three regions. The plan was also posted on the Web and notices were published in local newspapers to encourage input. The

final report reflects the consultation process and incorporates two new sections—a vision for the Moraine, and growth management principles—as well as recommendations for a coordinated approach among the regions to gathering and managing hydrogeological and natural heritage data. The OPPI jury commented: “The report represents a major step in the coordination and

cooperation of joint initiatives among Durham, Peel and York Regions. It builds on an innovative and ambitious process of public consultation. The jury was impressed with the integrity of the project and its ability to integrate community values. The combination of rural, urban and environmental issues and the overall cooperation of different stakeholders in the finalization of the report was particularly impressive.”



Barb Jeffrey, Chris Darling and Arvin Prasad

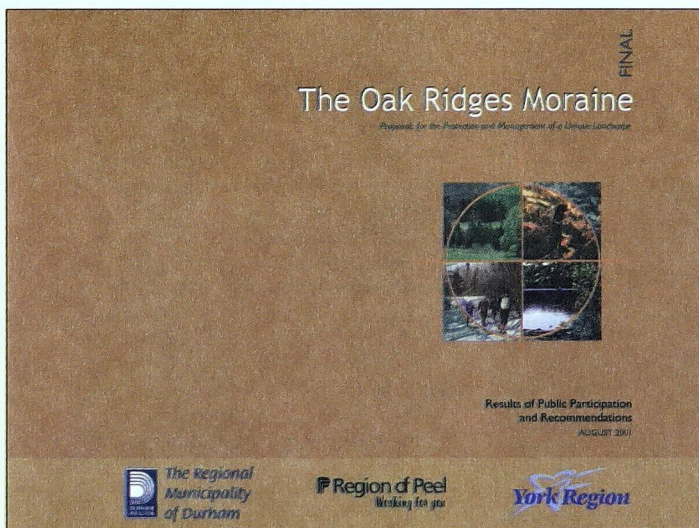
Research/New Directions

Maitland Valley Conservation Authority
Maitland Watershed Partnerships

The Maitland Valley is located near Goderich in southwestern Ontario, a predominantly rural area. The area is large, but relatively thinly populated, and program delivery is difficult, particularly at a time of funding cutbacks. The Maitland Watershed Partnerships project was launched by local agencies to identify innovative approaches to improving the long-term social, economic, and environmental health of the area. Through collaboration and community consultation, Maitland Watershed Partnerships have developed an action plan for watershed management that can be used as a model by other areas. The OPPI jury commented: “The grassroots involvement of a wide range and diverse group of stakeholders and the fresh approach to combining these groups was an excellent example of how planning can make a difference. The [Maitland Valley Conservation] Authority was able to bring together groups that do not normally work together, breaking down the ‘silos,’ and creating a forum for idea exchange. The low-cost solutions, the excellent targets and the focus on solutions were refreshing. The report and the strategies...were well written and easy to read.... The effectiveness of the program is seen through the completion of the various components of the action plans since the plan was completed.” The model is available on CD-ROM so that other areas can learn from its lessons.



Phil Beard



Communications/Public Education

The Town of Markham
The Great Transportation Debate



Ron Blake

On October 15, 2001, the Town of Markham held a public meeting to answer the question: "Light rail transit or bus rapid transit: If we build it, will you come?" Community activists, developers, government officials, businesspeople, and residents of neighbouring municipalities received tickets that resembled a bus transfer. Two debating teams, moderated by a local celebrity, argued for and against light rail or bus rapid transit. Audience members were given hand-held response units to allow them to vote on the debate; the results of the votes were tabulated immediately and shown on a large screen. The input from the meeting will be used in preparing transportation plans for the Town. As the OPPI jury noted, "We've all been there. A huge policy initiative with no one immediately impacted—how do you draw out some enthusiasm? The City of Markham put together a marketing approach that was creative and interactive: A fun evening of debate and discussion that accomplished its goal—

raising awareness and understanding of transportation issues. The Great Transportation Debate shows leadership and innovation. It allowed for an open and balanced discussion of transportation issues before getting further into the planning process. Expect to see more of this in the future!"

OPPI thanks the following people,
who sat on the jury,
particularly Peter Smith,
who coordinated the awards:

Urban/Community Design:

Carla Ladd, Maria Gatzios, Sylvie Grenier, Ian Kilgour, James Melvin.

Planning Studies/Reports:

Wayne Caldwell, Nancy Farrer, Judy Flavin, Mark Smith, John Mascarin.

Research/New Directions:

Tim Chadder, Brent Clarkson, Paul Puopolo, Bill Wierzbicki, William Walker.

Communications/ Public Education:

Mary Gracie, Don Roth, Lanny Dennis, Joanne Magee, John McHugh.

We also wish to
acknowledge and thank
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Cont. from pg. 18

a less than exhilarating experience. The result was a discussion paper entitled "Improving the Membership Process."

The report was received with some excitement by Council. Acknowledging that changes to the membership process must proceed carefully to ensure its credibility, Council directed staff to develop a three-year business plan that would address the concepts. That plan was approved by Council in February 2002 and communicated to the membership in June 2002.

I am very pleased to announce that there was a positive result to the mailed ballot on the required bylaw changes. With these changes in place, I am sure that we will see a continued growth in our numbers, particu-

larly in moving longstanding Provisional members into the fold. The changes also mean that staff time that was previously devoted to the "care and feeding" of a manual and overly complicated system can now be turned to actually serving member needs. Thank you for your support of these progressive steps.

Also on the Membership front, the first Examiner training course was held in May in Toronto and was very successful. A second was held during the conference. The goal of these courses is to establish a consistent approach to examination across the province.

I would also like to acknowledge an important milestone: The September/October issue of the Ontario Planning

Journal was a special commemorative one, marking it as the 100th issue. Our thanks go out to Glenn Miller and his largely volunteer "staff" for bringing this Journal to life and making it a key communication and recognition piece for our members.

I would also like to express my thanks to Mary Ann Rangam and the rest of the staff, to the members of Council and to the membership at large who are the ones who bring the Institute to life. Thank you all for the privilege of working with you and the honour of being your President.

Dennis Jacobs, MCIP, RPP, is president of OPPI. He can be reached at dennis.jacobs@city.ottawa.on.ca.

OPPI's Treasurer's Report for 2001

By Cheryl Shindruk

Here is a report on the financial status of OPPI for the year ending December 31, 2001, as reflected in our 2001 audited financial statements.

Council's approach to the Institute's finances was guided by the 2001 Business Plan, which identified priorities, resources and expected outcomes. At year-end, the OPPI Reserve Fund stood at \$144,403, essentially unchanged from the previous year, with policies in place to safeguard against unforeseen revenue shortfalls or significant expenses.

Even though some promised conference sponsorship dollars did not materialize, we met our revenue targets for 2001. Through careful monitoring and management, revenues of \$920,003 exceeded expenses of \$918,548.

The Institute's strong financial standing can be attributed, in part, to:

- continued growth in our membership base (revenues of \$444,979, up from \$386,279 in 2000);
- a successful joint conference with CIP in Ottawa, with over 700 delegates;
- continued interest in OPPI's job ad mailing service (over 70 job ads),
- cost-effective production and strong sales of OPPI's Consultants Directory, and
- 42 entrants to the OPPI awards for planning excellence,
- a successful Policy Symposium in October.

Other highlights for the year include:

- The OPPI scholarship fund increased from

\$6,234 in 2000 to \$10,426 as a result of fundraising efforts at the annual conference. There were also 20 submissions for the OPPI scholarships.

- OPPI's Professional Liability Insurance Program was launched in the Winter of 2001. Our members have responded very positively to this service; some of our retired members have even opted to maintain their insurance coverage.
- The media spokespersons training program was completed in spring—training for ten members and two staff—to prepare for release of policy papers to bolster our profession's "public presence."
- Work on OPPI's new website continued throughout 2001. The new site was rolled out in the spring of 2002 and continues to be updated on a monthly basis.
- A new membership database was purchased in 2001 and will be fully implemented in October 2002, enabling mem-

bers to easily and quickly update their personal membership information in the "Members Only" section of the website.

In 2002 and looking forward to 2003, Council continues to be focused on implementing our Strategic Plan in a cost-effective manner, including delivering high-quality services to members, branding and promoting the value of Ontario planners, and expanding the voice of planners in Ontario.

I would particularly like to thank Mary Ann Rangam, Executive Director and Robert Fraser, Manager of Finance and Administration, for their assistance to Council in carefully managing the financial affairs of the Institute throughout the year. A copy of OPPI's audited financial statements is available from the OPPI office.

Cheryl Shindruk, MCIP, RPP, Treasurer, is with Jones Consulting in Barrie.

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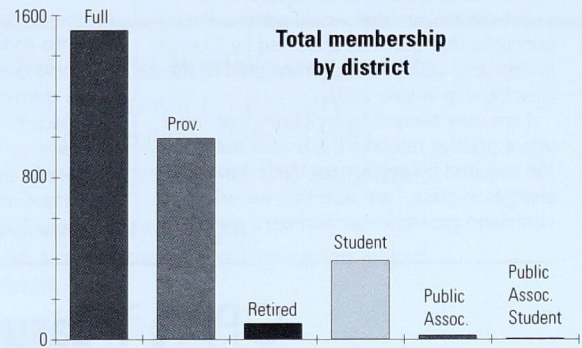
Economic Analysis

Facts and figures on OPPI

OPPI MEMBERSHIP BY DISTRICT, AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2002

TABLE 1

District	Full	Prov.	Retired	Student	Public Assoc.	Public Assoc. (Student)	TOTAL
Northern District	53	21	2	2	1	0	79
Southwest District	245	151	10	90	2	2	500
Central District	1043	713	54	247	19	3	2079
Eastern District	175	108	13	51	0	1	348
Out of Province	10	0	2	0	0	0	12
TOTAL	1526	993	81	390	22	6	3018
Total (2001)	1477	954	74	391	10	12	2918

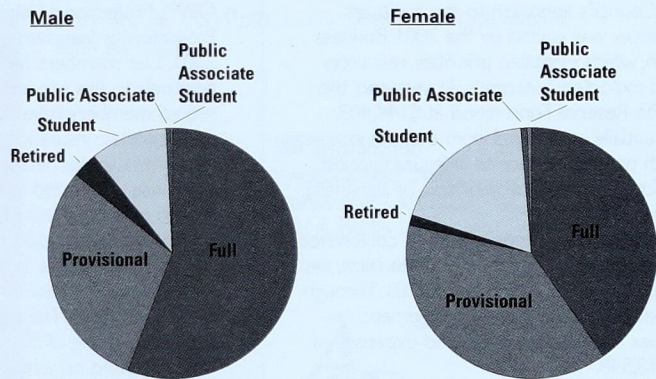


NOTE: Full Members include 18 Fellows of CIP; Retired Members include 4 Fellows of CIP.

MEMBERSHIP BY CLASS AND SEX, AS OF OCTOBER 31, 2002

TABLE 2

	Male		Female		TOTAL
	No.	%	No.	%	
Full	1106	72.5	420	27.5	1526
Provisional	592	59.6	401	40.4	993
Retired	68	84.0	13	16.0	81
Student	195	50.0	195	50.0	390
Public Assoc.	13	59.1	9	40.9	22
Public Assoc. Student	2	33.3	4	66.7	6
TOTAL	1976	65.5	1042	34.5	3018
Total (2001)	1935	66.3	983	33.7	2918



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William S. Hollo, MCIP, RPP

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 Fera, Eugene.....CD.....City of Vaughan
 Ferrigan, Jason.....CD.....Urban Strategies Inc.
 Gilbert, Liette.....CD.....York Univ., Faculty of Environmental Studies
 Istrate, Manuela.....CD.....Zeider Grinnell Partnership Architects
 Keiver, Anne.....ED.....(from API) Public Works & Government Canada
 Maciver, Donald A.....ED.....Rideau Valley Conservation Authority
 MacKenzie, John A.....CD.....Ministry of the Environment & Energy,
 Central Region Technical Support Section
 McIntyre, Jane.....CD.....(from AICP) Ministry of Natural Resources
 McRae, Rob.....ED.....Cataraqui Region Conservation Authority
 Monet, Stephen.....ND.....City of Greater Sudbury
 Morris, D. LouiseED.....Federation of Canadian Municipalities
 Musson, Leigh.....CD.....Town of Oakville
 Revell, John.....SD.....Rich and Associates, Inc.
 Thun, Robert.....CD.....Town of Oakville
 Warne, Ronald G.....Town of Ajax

New Provisional Members

AlQasem, Ala.....ED (from CIP Int'l)
 Barakengera, I. Martin.....ED
 Charnetski, Kelly.....ED
 Chaku, Rajinder.....CD (reinstated)
 Charron, Denis.....ED
 Cutler, Robert.....CD
 DeVriendt, Chris.....CD (from PIBC)
 Dilwaria, Manoj.....CD (from AACIP)
 Hibbard, Chris.....CD
 Hoel, Mark.....CD (reinstated)
 Huang, Kevin.....CD
 Kapusin, Sonya.....ED
 Khan, Muhammad.....CD (reinstated)
 Mace, Laurie.....CD (reinstated)
 Mahaney, Heather.....ED
 Manserra, Agostino.....CD
 Mercer, Jason.....CD
 Moffitt, Craig.....CD
 Munday, Grant.....CD
 Palozzi, Leonardo.....CD
 Smith, Shannon.....SD
 Szczerbak, Stefan.....CD
 Terry, Justin.....CD
 Venditti, Marnie.....ED
 Weaver, Mark A.....SD

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Editorial

Sgro Final Report Fighting for Respect

By Glenn Miller

Fighting for attention in a hyper-active media environment is now a competitive sport. Judy Sgro's long-awaited final report on cities may be one of the casualties of this particular war, in the short-term at least.

Without a mandate to include financial commitments or even cost estimates of future actions, the authors of the report have little more than nice words to offer. And in a cruel set of coincidences, having carefully timed the report's release to garner some headlines, Judy Sgro could only sit back and watch as Roy Romanow's health care report pushed its way into the same time-space. Felled by flu, Romanow was unable to meet his own release deadline. The media then perseverated over what Romanow might have said, leaving little ink for Sgro. To add insult to this injury, the government announced new initiatives related to its "innovation agenda" just 24 hours before the task force was due to announce its ideas. Sgro's report sank without trace.

In addition to detailing ideas for a long-term commitment to the three "bricks and mortar" components (housing, transportation and

urban infrastructure), Sgro also pitched for a cabinet minister to have responsibility for urban affairs. Some have interpreted this as a lost cause (how many ministers without portfolio are remembered after they leave office?), but the success of the idea lies in who is chosen to put the thought into practice. At the very least, having a strong minister with a mandate to get federal departments on the same (urban) page has to be a plus. The key will be if the Privy Council Office's work on the same file covers the same ground.

One wonders how much attention the prime minister will pay to Ms Sgro's work. He apparently sees policy related to cities and municipalities as the same thing. This is too narrow a view.

Planners clearly have a vested interest in keeping the ideas put forward by Judy Sgro afloat. We

should do all we can to keep the dialogue going.

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

Without a mandate to include financial commitments or even cost estimates of future actions, the authors of the report have little more than nice words to offer

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Opinion

Planning, Planners and the Future

By Ian. Lord

What do planners have to build on?

In my view, planners and the profession of planning can have a great future. There is a structural shift occurring, well-advanced, from the generalist planner to specialization; planners are being called upon to exercise new skill sets, both technological and in the art of persuasion whether through consensus building or mediation. The debate is about not so much on the need for the profession to articulate policy positions on principles of planning or matters of social conscience, but more on the need for the process of policy development and its publication.

I urge the profession to resist controls; to take steps now to institutionalize diversity and to maintain that independence of assessment and thought which the Code of Professional Conduct insists upon, under the principle of offering "independent planning advice."

I am not yet comfortable with the distinction between "objective" and "advocate" planners. I was not comfortable with the distinction in planning theory in school in the 1970s, and I am not comfortable with its distinction as a vision for planning into the future. In land use, design and policy formulation, I believe the planner's role is to identify, assess and accommodate competing private and public interests. The planner must be open to evaluate and recognize the social and business case for projects. Society is essentially a compensatory system of decision-making and justice. It rests upon four pillars: eco-

nomics; morality or social conscience; ecology and public policy.

Having weighed these interests, the objective planner must formulate a professional planning opinion. It must be distinct, definite and open to change on proper criteria. Having reached that position, I believe it is the duty of the planner to advocate its implementation—or risk becoming nothing.

This profession must respect each component: objectivity and advocacy. In doing so, its members must, in my view, be creative, less clerical. They must respect the rule of law yet be instruments of social change. They must be the sensors of community dynamics and not the narrow protectors of silos. They must search for new services to new clients (to use Jim Helik's analogy in a recent Ontario Planning Journal), built upon a profession's consensus rather than the autocratic positions of individuals.

In summary, planners must position themselves as implementers. This is a tough task; planners have many competitors. But the profession is well positioned to build upon its reputation, generalist's training and position, both in law and practice. The profession has recognition, not just with the Ontario Professional Planners Institute Act of 1994, but in the secured stature of the contribution made to the decision-making process in the 447-odd municipalities of Ontario. While some in the public sector may think they enjoy statutory recognition but have no substantive say, I believe that their contribution can be enhanced, even within our archaic systems. For those of in the private sector who compete with allied professions (architecture, engineering and law offices), the options continue to grow and exhibit a distinctiveness that can be built upon and enhanced.

We have all heard of the euphemism of disdain associated with being "judge, jury and executioner." But, in fact, the planning

profession, perhaps more than any other in a constitutional monarchy such as Canada, exhibits attributes of all three of these criteria. Planners make early judgments on the merits of development proposals, large and small; they are present in the deliberations and advise the jurors, including clients, councils and hearing officers, of the merits (indeed, planners sit on these decision-making bodies in ever greater numbers); and planners are the executioner in the sense that once the approval process has exhaust-

The planner's role is to identify, assess and accommodate competing private and public interests

ed itself, the planning profession administers, to some degree, the implementation process.

So while some pundits may groan about the inefficiencies of the system and the ineffectiveness of the planning profession to cause real change, in reality, planners occupy a unique position to deliver the goods. Planners are the gatherers of information; the facilitators of public participation; they can be the mediators of disputes; they are the experts who give opinion; and increasingly are becoming the project managers.

Coupled with that, planners have the official office to be visionaries, not perhaps with respect to the design of specific buildings but, more important, in the structure of communities, the linkages between uses, the distribution of social space and the identifi-

cation of needed improvements.

Earlier this year, William Thorsell wrote in the *Globe and Mail*, speaking of urban issues, that our problems are known, that our solutions are imminent and that what is needed are the implementers. My thesis is that planners are the "instruments of action." He said, "revival is inescapably dependent on the presence of those with the capacity to lead and the focused, selfish courage to do so."

So what do planners have to build on? Planners in Ontario can celebrate a rich history of plan-making. In the 1960s and 1970s, there were the provincial-scale visions: the Parkway Belt, the Niagara Escarpment; the Toronto-Centred Region; Central Ontario Lakeshore Urban Corridor. In the next two decades, planners prepared municipal and regional official plans and implementing zoning by-laws for all of urban and rural Ontario. In the 1990s, planners processed more plans of subdivision and condominium than in all the previous history of land use planning in the province, which lead us to the current fussing with the lack of comprehensive infrastructure planning, gridlock, restructuring, provincial policy directions, inade-



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quate resources and political reshuffling of the deckchairs, called "studies."

Now we are at the dawn of a new century. We have all those previous aspects, the Oak Ridges Moraine legislation and now, as an added attraction, "Smart Growth Panels," to tell us what we know.

The planning profession has a job to do. The power lies not in being responsible to a political electorate but in being responsible, period. As a profession, planners have the advantage of being on the fringe of "power," if power is defined as the ability to hold decision-making authority. Most planners are advisors to the "power" authority, the client. This can be a far more powerful position, if properly seized, than the elected decision-making authority itself. Planners can conceive policy; promote it; draft it and implement it. What other profession has that degree of access to the levers that communicate and advance social conscience, community values, built form, organizational efficiency, economic power and ecological balance?

Ian James Lord, Q.C., is a partner with WeirFoulds LLP. He has taught land use planning law at the University of Toronto for many years. This article was adapted from a presentation made at the London conference.

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Letters

Berridge Article Hits It Out of the Park

Regarding "Bon Continuation," by Joe Berridge, this is the best article I have ever read in the Journal. I am a 28 year planning veteran and appreciate the informative yet personal account of your experience. A refreshing change from the usual wordy techno materials one comes to expect.

My Lyon experience was sadly limited by a gentle man who insisted I visit the prison housing Klaus Barbie. You had a better time.

Thanks to you for improving the Journal.

—David Corks, MCIP, RPP,
Manager of Downtown
and Market Research,
City of Kitchener.

Jennifer Lewington's Advice Much Appreciated

First of all, I'd like to congratulate you on the tenor of the last few issues. It is really interesting and helpful to see more than descriptions of projects, reports and/or problems. The articles on ethics, policy and the like are indicative of the expansion of the planner's toolbox and responsibilities in recent years. I've just finished reading "How to Talk to Journalists" and suggest planners interested in speaking to their communities also look into more than the mainstream national level press.

As the former "volunteer" editor of a tabloid monthly paper for my local community association, I became very aware of the power of the printed word. Our paper was

sought out by local politicians at all levels as well as school trustees and others keen on talking to residents about issues and events. Residents eagerly awaited each issue and let us know if we were thought to be late. I know that there are not many of these papers in existence in the province but there are local papers such as the *Kingston Whig Standard* which carry high-quality articles on local issues in many communities.

I also became acquainted with the for-profit commercial community papers which exist in most urban centres. Although they are often full of hack-written items which seem to be used to separate ads, they are always looking for something to connect with their readership, especially if they don't have to pay for the articles. If planners were to write items about planning issues in the community served by the paper, I'm sure they would get printed. The only catch would be to write something that the residents would relate to—not something which you hope might get into the national press. Not something most planners should have a problem with.

Planners have a lot to say and they need to connect to the public more and more regularly, not just when there is a problem or hot issue. We need to be able to explain why things are done and how the work we do benefits people and not just business. And, you just might get read by local councillors, many of whom have an imperfect view of the need for planning to be done.

Keep up the good work. I know it can sometimes be a thankless job.

—Peter Hecht, MCIP, RPP,
Planner with Correctional Services,
Ottawa.

Editor's Note: We would like to thank all of the people who wrote or added their good wishes via e-mail, voicemail and snailmail regarding the 100th issue.

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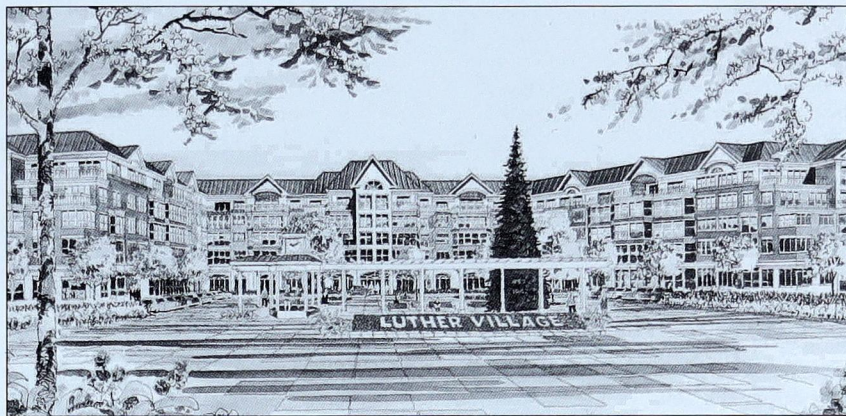
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Seniors Housing: If You Build It, Will They Come?

By Linda Lapointe



Luther Village

Earlier this year, OPPI was a sponsor of a Canada Forum conference on "Seniors Housing and Retirement Living: Meeting Seniors' Needs in a Changing Environment." Topics included economic trends, retirement communities and marketing to seniors as well as specific case studies.

Economic Trends

Economic trends are one of the most important factors affecting the seniors housing market. Both John Anania, Assistant Chief Economist, RBC Financial Group, and Stewart Hunt, ScotiaMcLeod Inc., predicted low inflation and low interest rates to continue in the future. While low interest rates have a positive effect on housing starts and housing affordability, they reduce investment income to seniors. This reduced income may either delay retirement plans or lower the disposable income of retirees. To illustrate the decline in investment income over the past decade, Stewart Hunt referred to the drop in 5-year GICs from 12.3 percent in 1990 to 3.4 percent in 2001. Recent steep declines in the stock market have further undermined the financial security of seniors or those thinking about retiring. According to Stewart Hunt, "Freedom 55 is just a concept—not a reality." He thinks that most people will continue to work after 55 years of age but will try to slow down and enjoy life more.

Marketing to Seniors

Jodi Flanagan, Mature Market Resource Centre, spoke of the need to understand the market for a particular development. The market is very segmented, reflecting differences in age, health conditions and lifestyles and housing developers have to recognize these differing needs and preferences. She pointed out that there is a myth that there are so many seniors out there that developers just have to "build it and they will come." Instead builders and developers need to anticipate a lengthy period of time for marketing. For example, for retirement homes, even after 40% are pre-sold, it can take up to 18 months to fill up the units. She strongly recommended hiring professional sales people to sell units.

Profiles of Three Seniors' Housing Developments—Two Non-Profit and One Private Sector

The following two examples indicate the persistence and ingenuity of community-based non-profit groups in the face of a lack of government funding for affordable housing. Each project is similar in that non-profit, religious-based organizations were able to use volunteer, organizational, financial and prospective residents' resources to develop affordable housing. Both organizations developed seniors housing within a continuum of care so that seniors can stay in their community if their level of independence changes due to changing health circumstances.

Shepherd Gardens and Luther Village on the Park

Shepherd Gardens is the most recent addition to Shepherd Village, an 800-resident retirement community located in Toronto near Sheppard Avenue and Kennedy Road. The retirement community includes a private apartment building with rent-geared-to-income units, a retirement home and a long-term care facility as well as recreational and social facilities and programs.

Units in the Shepherd Gardens life lease project range in size from a 679-square-foot one-bedroom suite to a 1,284-square-foot two-bedroom suite plus den. In addition to their suites, residents also have access to recreational and social services and programs on site, including personal support services. Under the life lease concept, residents have exclusive lifetime use of their apartment under a Life Lease Occupancy Agreement and have input into the operation of the complex through a Residents' Association. The building title remains with the organization and residents purchase the right to occupy their unit for life or until they sell the unit. Units have to be paid for up front and difficulties have been encountered with banks because the life lease resident does not hold title to the unit. Residents also pay a monthly fee to cover taxes and individual and common services.

When selling their life lease interest, occupants are able to retain between ninety and ninety-five per cent of the appreciated value of their Life Lease. When they were conducting market research for the project, the sponsoring organization, Shepherd Village Inc., thought the project would be targeted to those 65 years and older but has since found out that their target market is 80 years and over. In 1999 the suites sold at \$99,000 to \$150,000 and since the value of the life leases has increased 15 to 25 percent.

According to Dieter Kays, Chief Executive Officer, Luther Village on the Park, is the culmination of the vision for a retirement community developed over 10 years ago. "The dream became a reality three years ago when the first residents moved in." Today, Luther Village is home to 330 residents living in uptown Waterloo. The concept arose out of an idea that Lutherwood,

an organization that originally catered to emotionally disturbed children, could also use its organizational resources to meet the needs of seniors in the community. Lutherwood developed the notion of "social entrepreneurship," that is, that social needs could be met within a business-like environment and that the rewards (surplus) could be used to build a better society. The assets of the organization (people and volunteers, its reputation, its knowledge and its hard assets) could be leveraged through donations, endowment income, income-generating activities, government contracts and fees to fund future social services.

Today Luther Village on the Park is a \$40 million development on a 20-acre redevelopment site. The development consists of 155 apartments and 72 townhomes ranging in price from \$120,000 to \$320,000. Similar to Shepherd Village, the life lease is bought back when residents leave and the buy back is based on the appraised value minus 1.5 percent per year of the original value up to a maximum of 10 years (maximum of 15 percent off of the original purchase price). Fifty percent of the appreciation returns to the Corporation and 50 percent to the individual. Money for the initial stages of the development was generated through financial pledges—\$25,000 in no interest loans in exchange for a tax receipt.

Initially, Lutherwood was going to use a site on the outskirts of Waterloo, but found that prospective residents wanted to live in the city with access to parkland, gardens, shopping. Even once they acquired a suitable site, it took three years to clean up the land. With no track record, selling the units took time—in the first four months they sold only 12 units! Altogether marketing costs were over \$700,000. The project is now an overwhelming success with 200 households on the waiting list.

Swan Lake Village, Markham

In contrast to the two examples above, Swan Lake was developed as a private, profit-making venture. It represents the first Gated Adult Lifestyle Community planned in the Greater Toronto area and is located on 80 acres of land assembled in the late 1980s by realtor Brad Warren. Eventually it will include 1,200 units when fully built out. At the time of the presentation in May 2002, there were approximately 700 residents in the 415 homes completed on site, with 52 homes under development ready for occupancy in June. The original builders, the Daniels Group, are now both builders and partners in the development organization.

Doron Armony, Director of Development with the Daniels Group, identified many of the obstacles and hurdles associated with this development, including difficulties getting acceptance from planning staff regarding the gated community concept, land assembly, clean-up of the land, the cost of buying land when prices were high, and, the need to balance density (high enough to attain economic viability) versus realistic absorption of medium-density housing in this market. The land will be registered in two separate M plans to allow development charges and other financial obligations to be paid in two stages. The project is being developed in separate condominium phases to ensure money is returned to the builder/developer team in a timely fashion. Each phase needs site plan approval.

The site includes a park setting with a 15-acre lake and is well situated with respect to hospital, public transportation and shopping. The architectural style reflects "Florida type" communities with high-quality exterior

building materials, nine-foot ceilings, skylights, multi-use secondary space in a loft or additional den/study and bungalow-style homes. There are several four-storey mid-rise buildings in the community. Swan Lake Village also has a Swan Club—a social and recreational centre—as well as neighbourhood clubhouses.

The developers and builders have experienced significant challenges in the marketing of the units at Swan Lake including: a lack of familiarity by prospective purchasers with condominium living and decision-making time frames that are longer than in the traditional market. Daniels Group does not see a rapid development of Swan Lake. While originally targeting the 55+ age group, the average age of purchasers is older, at 63 years. Doron suggests adding six to eight months to normal sales absorption for this type of development and finding patient and knowledgeable sales consultants.

Lessons Learned:

- Older adults are cautious purchasers and take time to make a decision.
- Market research and marketing are key to the financial success of the development.
- New concepts take time to be accepted by the community and by prospective residents.
- It is important to have the community services/facilities up front in the development.
- The phasing plan is also important to the financial viability of the project.
- Developers need to be realistic about the build-out of the development.

Linda Lapointe, MCIP, RPP, is contributing editor for Housing. Linda is also president of Lapointe Consulting. She can be reached at lapointe.consulting@on.aibn.com.

Housing

CMHC is Providing Home Adaptation Assistance to Older Canadians

By Karen Gregory

This is the second of two articles on how CMHC is working to help meet the needs of an aging population.

CMHC has been actively conducting research and producing publications on topics such as FlexHousing with a view to helping Canadians understand and ultimately, make available housing choices for older Canadians. Building on this research base, CMHC has created programs such as Home Adaptations for Seniors

Independence (HASI).

The HASI program recognizes that older Canadians have distinct housing needs. For example, they may require minor adaptations to their homes such as hand rails and grab bars to cope with reduced balance and mobility. Since most older Canadians live on a fixed income, low-income seniors may find it difficult to pay for such alterations. To address this problem, the HASI program provides forgivable loans to homeowners and landlords. Financial assistance (up to

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CMHC promotes innovative housing

\$2,500) is intended to facilitate the minor home adaptations, and ultimately, extend the time that low-income seniors can live in their homes independently.

For a homeowner or landlord to qualify for the HASI program, the occupant of the dwelling where the adaptations are to be made must be: 65 years or older; experience difficulty with daily living activities due to aging; have a total household income below a geographically determined predefined limit; and have the intention of carrying out the home adaptations to their permanent residence.

Planning Implications

The population projections, expected market trends and CMHC New Initiatives discussed in part one of this article suggest that planning professionals must be aware of Canada's aging population as they develop policies and regulations that will shape the future:

- New and updated official plans will need to contain policies that support housing for older Canadians, taking into account the boomer generation's current and expected housing needs and demands.
- Official plan policies need to reflect affordable housing needs for older Canadians and the boomer generation who will eventually enter into the 55+ age group.
- These policies should also provide a framework for zoning regulations that permit intensification and a range of housing types such as FlexHousing, sec-

ondary suites and garden suites.

- Planners should encourage housing for older Canadians that is suitably situated in mixed-used, transit-oriented, pedestrian-friendly communities where not hav-

ing a car is no hardship. This acknowledges that the number of men and women licensed to drive decreases with age.

- Planners should work with public, private and non-profit partners to plan and develop housing that meets the diverse and changing needs of older Canadians.

While these points are not comprehensive in scope, they nevertheless suggest the need to re-think how communities are planned. In particular, planners must consider the people for whom they are planning—both the present and future members of the older Canadian population.

For more information about housing for older Canadians, please contact Karen A. Gregory, Senior Research Consultant, at

416-218-3446 or by e-mail at kagregor@cmhc-schl.gc.ca. Information on CMHC services and products can be obtained by calling 1-800-668-2642 or visiting the CMHC website at www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca.



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How Much Habitat is Enough? Direction for Natural Heritage Planning from the "Framework for Guiding Habitat Rehabilitation in Great Lakes Areas of Concern"

By Brian McHattie and Graham Bryan

How much habitat is enough? Traditionally, answers to this question have ranged from the more the better, to as much as we can get! As planners work to protect habitat, it is difficult to know whether the list of environmentally significant areas (ESAs), or natural heritage systems identified in official plans adequately function from an ecological perspective. For example, the number of significant woodlands identified in official plans may not contain enough forest interior habitat to ensure that all birds present at a particular latitude breed successfully. Similarly, there may be an insufficient percentage of wetland habitat to attenuate spring floods and recharge groundwater. In this article, we outline a habitat restoration/protection planning approach developed for

Great Lakes Areas of Concern, and offer ideas for possible new directions for natural heritage planning in Ontario.

The Great Lakes Remedial Action Plan Process

First, some background on Great Lakes habitat restoration efforts. In 1986, through the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement, the United States and Canada agreed to clean up 43 locations across the Great Lakes basin (17 areas in Canada) known as Areas of Concern (AOC). These areas have impairments such as contaminated sediments, eutrophication (excess nutrients), and loss of fish and wildlife habitat. Remedial Action Plans set out implementation strategies designed to lead to the

rehabilitation of AOCs. Considerable progress has been made, and to date two areas in Canada, Collingwood Harbour and Severn Sound, have been delisted.

One of the challenges faced by AOC planners is the need to set criteria to determine when ecosystem restoration has reached acceptable end points. In the case of impairment of fish and wildlife habitat, planners must know what quantity and type of habitat is sufficient for wildlife. In response to this need, Environment Canada's Canadian Wildlife Service, and the Ontario Ministries of Environment and Natural Resources developed the Framework for Guiding Habitat Rehabilitation in Great Lakes Areas of Concern. The Habitat Framework is a set of guidelines, similar to a predictive model, based on scientific literature and field studies on the amount of habitat required to provide for the ecological needs of fish and wildlife in three types of habitat: wetlands, riparian areas and forested areas (see table 1).

The Habitat Framework approach has been used to guide habitat restoration work, and to set targets for desired habitat in nine of the 17 Canadian AOCs, and by some Conservation Authorities working on sub-watershed plans

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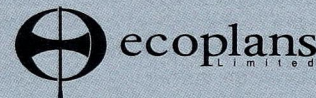
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outside AOCs. In practice, current habitat conditions are mapped on a GIS to compare against preferred Habitat Framework target conditions. The resulting maps are used to pinpoint "best bet" restoration opportunities. In the Bay of Quinte, over 30 hectares of reforestation has occurred based on Habitat Framework guidelines, resulting in more forest interior habitat and larger forest patches. The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority has adopted the Habitat Framework approach in all its six subwatersheds, and is taking the approach even further in its Terrestrial Natural Heritage Program, currently being adopted by the City of Toronto. This approach uses a computer model to generate habitat restoration and land-use scenarios to evaluate the best possible habitat protection/restoration/development strategy.

Going Beyond Current Natural Heritage Planning Approaches in Ontario

The continued loss of biodiversity is an indicator that traditional approaches dealing only with remaining habitats have not been entirely successful. These planning efforts have evolved through several approaches, evident in today's municipal official plans:

- Identifying significant or representative areas and listing them as ESAs, ANSIs, and significant wetlands, woodlands, and wildlife habitat (i.e., islands of green approach);
- Identifying rare, threatened and endangered species;
- Identifying natural heritage systems comprising key core natural areas and connecting corridors.

Protecting "islands of green" can be problematic, as they are often too small and isolated to support viable wildlife populations. Focusing primarily on rare species may result in populations of more common species declining and not being noticed until they too, are designated rare. The rare species approach also fails to account for the interdependence of all native species as integral components of a healthy ecosystem. Natural heritage system planning is a definite improvement, but still seeks to protect only what exists without considering what could or should exist.

What Could the Habitat Framework Approach Mean for Natural Heritage Planning Policy in Ontario?

If the notion is accepted that mapped natural heritage systems based on existing habitat may be inadequate from an ecological function perspective (that is, not enough forest cover, too few wetlands, not enough vegetated riparian habitat to maintain stream temperatures),

Summary of Wetland, Riparian and Forest Habitat Restoration Guidelines

Parameter	Guideline
Wetland Habitat Guidelines	
Percent Wetlands in Watershed and Subwatersheds	Greater than 10% of each major watershed in wetland habitat; greater than 6% of each subwatershed in wetland habitat; or restore to original percentage of wetlands in the watershed.
Amount of Natural Vegetation Adjacent to the Wetland	Greater than 240 m width of adjacent habitat that may be herbaceous or woody vegetation.
Wetland Type	The only two wetland types suitable for widespread rehabilitation are marshes and swamps.
Wetland Location	Headwater areas for groundwater recharge, floodplains for flood attenuation, and coastal wetlands for fish production.
Wetland Size	Swamps should be as large as possible to maximize interior forest habitat. Marshes of various sizes attract different species and a range of sizes is beneficial across a landscape.
Wetland Shape	Swamps should be regularly shaped with minimum edge and maximum interior habitat. Marshes thrive on interspersed, a term describing the irregular shape of functional marsh habitats.
Riparian Habitat Guidelines	
Percent of Stream Naturally Vegetated	75% of stream length should be naturally vegetated.
Amount of Natural Vegetation Adjacent to Streams	Streams should have a 30 m wide naturally vegetated buffer on both sides.
Total Suspended Sediments	Suspended sediment concentrations should remain below 25 mg/l for the majority of the year.
Percent of an Urbanized Watershed that is Impervious	Less than 15% imperviousness in an urbanized watershed should maintain stream water quality and quantity, and leave biodiversity relatively unimpaired.
Fish Communities	Targets are set based on knowledge of underlying characteristics of watershed (drainage area, surficial geology, flow regime), historically and currently occurring fish communities, and factors presently impacting the system and their relative magnitudes.
Forest Habitat Guidelines	
Percent Forest Cover	30% of watershed should be in forest cover.
Size of Largest Forest Patch	At least one 200 ha forest patch which is a minimum 500 m wide.
Percent of Watershed that is Forest Cover 100 m and 200 m from Forest Edge	Greater than 10% forest cover 100 m from edge; greater than 5% forest cover 200 m from edge.
Forest Shape and Proximity to other Forested Patches	Forest patches should be circular or square and close (i.e., 2 km) to adjacent patches.
Fragmented Landscapes and the Role of Corridors	Corridors designed to facilitate species movement should be a minimum of 100 m wide and corridors designed for specialist species should be a minimum of 500 m wide.
Forest Quality - Species Composition and Age Structure	Watershed forest cover should be representative of the full diversity of species composition and age structure found in that ecoregion.

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then it may be helpful to incorporate guidelines derived from the Habitat Framework into official plans.

For example, in a municipality currently with 12 percent forest cover there could be a preamble to the natural heritage section that incorporates the Habitat Framework guidelines, possibly suggesting an interim local target of 20 percent forest cover, to be achieved through both protection and restoration policies. This could serve to reinforce the concept of no additional loss of habitat, as well as promoting habitat restoration in strategic areas of the landscape (that is, reforestation gaps in interior forests, re-vegetating riparian areas). In keeping with current official plan practices of including maps of natural features, perhaps a schedule could be provided that outlines a desired future natural heritage system with identified restoration locations.

As noted at the beginning of this article, it is hoped that the Great Lakes Habitat Framework approach may serve some utility in stimulating innovative natural heritage protection policy at the municipal level.

Environment Canada welcomes discussion on the Habitat Framework and its application. Note that the Habitat Framework is currently being updated with a review of the science. A 12-page fact sheet entitled, "How Much Habitat is Enough?" is available from Environment Canada—Canadian Wildlife Service, or on the web at www.on.ec.gc.ca/wildlife/factsheets/fs_habitat-e.html.

Brian McHattie, MCIP, RPP, is a consultant to Environment Canada where he originated the Habitat Framework approach in 1998. He can be reached at mchattie@interlynx.net. Graham Bryan is a biologist with the Canadian Wildlife Service where he is a coordinator of the Ecological Gifts Program and the staff contact for the Habitat Framework (reachable at graham.bryan@ec.gc.ca). Steven Rowe, MCIP, RPP, is contributing editor for the Environment column. He is the principal of Steven Rowe Environmental Planner and can be reached at deyrowe@sympatico.ca.

Environment

District Energy Could Revolutionize Our Approach to Suburban Development

By Ken Church

This is the second of two articles on district energy as a key planning tool.

Having made the point in the previous issue that district energy is a key point of connection for a variety of planning-related economic development and environmental goals, I would like to conclude by addressing three interrelated issues.

1. Cogeneration offers flexibility

The CHP approach is by far the most effective way to deliver electricity and heating to the community, producing first the electricity and then using remaining low-grade energy for heating the buildings. For example, Sudbury District Energy Corporation's 5-megawatt co-generation plant provides hot water for heating, and chilled water to seven privately and publicly owned buildings in the downtown core of Sudbury. These buildings include the municipal government headquarters and the Sudbury Arena. Electricity produced at the plant is used by the municipally-owned Greater Sudbury Utilities Corporation. Although the electricity produced is capable of powering

approximately 2,000 homes and represents a relatively small portion of Sudbury's total power needs, it nevertheless provides a revenue source that will increase as the provincial market opens up and a valuable backup source of energy in the event of an emergency.

2. District energy can foster partnerships that accelerate development plans

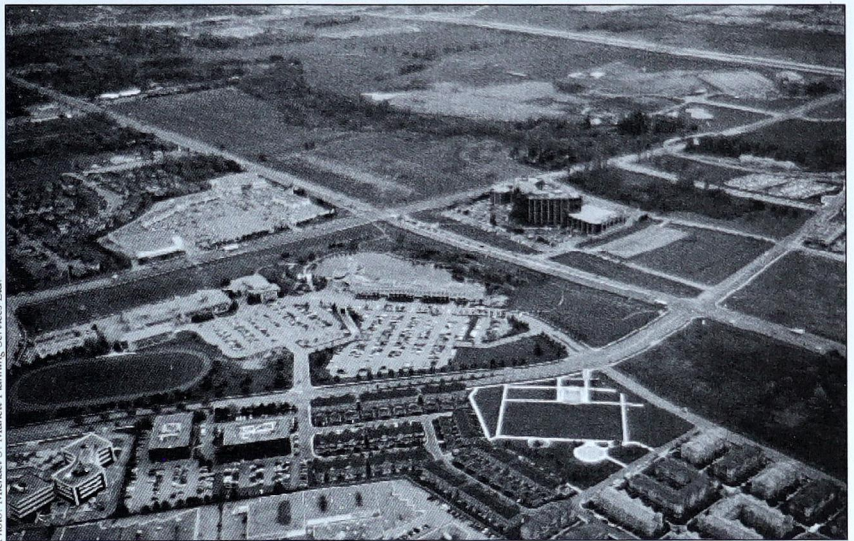
A stable energy cost is attractive to municipalities and private-sector owners of commercial buildings who can safely plan for future developments. When IBM wanted to build a new facility for its 2,500 employees, the Town of Markham competed with other municipalities for the project. Markham, however, saw an opportunity where a district energy system could provide the heating and cooling needs. A central plant that generated 3.3 MW (electrical), 10 MW (thermal) and 3,500 tons of chilling was built as a basis for the long-term growth vision. This vision has since attracted Motorola and has accelerated the development of a new mixed-use city centre. The availability of the energy system has created an important new means to attract investment.

3. District energy can give meaning to the goal of creating compact urban form in Greenfield situations

Owning and operating a district energy system provides a municipality flexibility in its land-use planning process. Smart Growth principles embrace the benefits of compact urban form, mixed-use development and a comprehensive approach to planning that creates an attractive pedestrian environment. Building a development concept around district energy—the approach taken in Markham Centre—marries broad public-sector goals for the environment with specific corporate objectives with respect to reduced operating costs for individual buildings.

Working closely with the municipalities and private-sector industries alike, Ken Church is a project engineer with the Community Energy Systems Group of Natural Resources Canada. He can be reached at kchurch@nrcan.ca. He has assisted in the development of both engineering and business aspects of district energy projects across Canada including projects in Windsor, Hamilton, Ottawa/Gatineau and

Photo: Michael S. Manett Planning Services Ltd.



District energy system will help the Markham City Centre stay compact

Halifax. His mandate is to spearhead an initiative to bring community energy and the community energy planning process into line with the development of a community's official plan.

He is also on the executive of the Canadian District Energy Association (CDEA). The CDEA's 2003 annual conference will be held in Markham.

Provincial News

Changes to Ontario Planning Act for Persons with Disabilities

By Peter Kakaletis

Several changes to the Planning Act come into effect September 30, 2002, to support the Ontarians with Disabilities Act, which the Ontario Government passed last year. The purpose of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act is to improve access and opportunities for persons with disabilities. As a result of the passage of this Act, complementary amendments were made to several other statutes. The associated amendments to the Planning Act are:

1) A new provincial interest is added to Section 2, stating that planning approval authorities shall have regard to accessibility for persons with disabilities in their land use planning and development decisions.

2) Section 51(24) is amended to add the requirement that, when considering a draft plan of subdivision, planning approval authorities shall have regard to accessibility for persons with disabilities.

In addition, municipalities, transit authorities, and agencies are required to develop accessibility plans. Municipalities larger than 10,000 people must appoint accessibility advisory committees, while it is optional for smaller communities to do so.

If a municipality has a committee, Section 12(5) of the Ontarians with Disabilities Act specifies that it may request to review site plans and drawings described in Section 41 of the Planning Act that are submitted to support applications. Section 12(6) states that municipal councils must supply such drawings in a timely manner.

Most new buildings, open spaces, and infrastructure are designed with barrier-free access in mind. The changes to the Planning Act reinforce that decisions affecting land use support

the province's overall goal to promote equal opportunities for persons with disabilities.

For more information please contact Peter Kakaletis, Provincial Policy and Environmental Services Branch, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, at 416-585-6122, or by e-mail at Peter.Kakaletis@mah.gov.on.ca.

Information on the entire Ontarians with Disabilities Act can be obtained on the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing web site at www.mah.gov.on.ca with links to the Ministry of Citizenship site.

Marcia Wallace is the contributing editor for Provincial News. She is a senior planner with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. She can be reached at marcia.wallace@MAH.GOV.ON.CA.



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What Is On Offer For Urban Design Education?

By Karen Hammond

Second of two parts.

In the previous issue, I reported on a panel presentation organized by the Urban Design Working Group. The following table summarizes the offerings from around the province for students and professionals already in the field.

As the panel made clear, all the schools teach urban design through a combination of studios and lectures. At Ryerson and Queen's, urban design theory and technique are incorporated into the regular planning curriculum. At U of T and Waterloo, however, new programs that specifically focus on urban design have been recently developed.

The three urban design programs at U of T can be distinguished in their format, duration and target student intake group:

- M.U.D. is a studio-based program intended to attract mainly graduate architects (major project required, not thesis).
- M.U.D.S. is a combination of coursework and studio for those who wish to study urban design theory (thesis required) and
- M.Sc.Pl. (Urban Design) is a combination of coursework, studio, and planning workshops intended for graduate planners seeking a solid practical understanding of urban design (major project required, not thesis).

At Waterloo, the B.E.S. program has been re-tooled to offer an urban design specialization that will include more intensive studios. Students will be granted a Certificate of Excellence in Urban Design if they achieve an 83 percent average in a specified stream of courses. At the graduate level, a new degree has just been approved. The M.A.E.S. was developed as an intensive one-year professional program for individuals who have some working experience, and who would like to come back to school to update their skills or concentrate their studies in a particular area of practice. Urban design is one of the focus areas available (along with GIS, ecological restoration, etc.). Waterloo's new urban design programs will begin in September 2003.

Following the panel's presentations on academic curriculums, a vigorous and wide-ranging discussion on the challenges and opportunities facing urban design education ensued. A variety of challenging ideas were offered to improve the status quo, some of



Urban design workshop in London

Offerings from around the province for students and professionals

University of Toronto		
Faculty of Architecture, Landscape and Design	M.U.D. (Master of Urban Design)	2 years
Department of Geography, Planning Program	M.U.D.S. (Master of Urban Design Studies)	1 year
Department of Geography, Planning Program	M.Sc.Pl. (Urban Design) (Master of Science in Planning – Urban Design Specialization)	2 years
University of Waterloo		
School of Planning	B.E.S. (Urban Design Specialty)	4 years
School of Planning	M.A.E.S. (Planning - Urban Design Specialty)	1 year
Ryerson University		
School of Planning	B.U.R.Pl.	4 years
Queen's University		
School of Urban and Regional Planning	M.Pl. (Land Use and Real Estate Concentration)	2 years

which may become topics of future urban design education forums. The group generally agreed that educators must move beyond teaching urban design as "larger site planning," with its emphasis on aesthetics. To encourage more contextually responsive designs, professors should teach more theory, especially with respect to urban design's cultural and political dimensions. The issue of introducing computer-based 3-D modeling into the urban design studio was more controversial. Thoughtful debate centred on the question "Is digital modeling a critical visualization tool, or a crutch for the graphically challenged?"

It was during this open roundtable discussion that the practitioners in the room voiced concerns that graduating urban design students needed better skills in:

- collaborative process, recognizing that urban design is a bridge discipline spanning various professions,
- spatial analysis, especially the ability to observe, understand and evaluate interactions between people and their surrounding environment, and
- drawing and graphic communication, particularly in conceptualizing and articulating a design idea.

On the topic of urban design research, there was consensus regarding the need to fill the theory gap as quickly as possible. The profession's development is being hindered by a dearth of studies that apply physical, social, cultural and political theories to urban design problems. There was a general sense that practice is currently leading academia with regard to advancing the field, and that this situation needs to be reversed.

As the forum drew to a close, the group agreed that the evening's exchange had been very stimulating and informative, but that this was just the beginning. How is urban design being taught in architecture and landscape architecture schools? How is it being handled in environmental design programs? These are questions to be explored in future forums. The Urban Design Working Group looks forward to continuing this important discussion.

For information or to get involved with the Urban Design Education Interest Group of UDWG, contact Karen Hammond at (519) 888-4567, ext. 3447 or by email at khammond@fes.uwaterloo.ca

Karen Hammond, MCIP, RPP, is a Lecturer and Manager of Design at the School of Planning, University of Waterloo.

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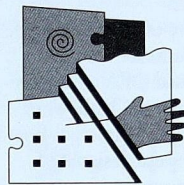
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Ontario Municipal Board

Quality of Neebing Wetland Recognized by OMB

By Paul Chronis

This case involved a proposal to construct a seasonal trailer park adjacent to the river-bank of the Cloud River at Cloud Bay on Lake Superior in the Municipality of Neebing. Neebing is located approximately 30 kilometres north of the City of Thunder Bay. Specifically, the proposal was for 70 fully serviced camp sites located on an approximately 61-hectare parcel of land generally aligned north and south, but wedged between the local access road and Cloud River.

When the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing failed to make a decision respecting the proposed OPA and implementing zoning by-law, the landowner appealed to the Ontario Municipal Board.

The subject lands were designated "Rural," with approximately 60 percent of the land area having an additional overlay designation of "Area of Use Limitation." This overlay designation triggered consideration of environmental issues and resulted in evidence at the hearing that played a significant role and which ultimately shaped the Board's consideration of the proposal and its decision.

The Board spent a considerable amount of time analyzing environmental sensitivity of Cloud River, the Cloud Bay wetlands and the marsh developed at the mouth of the

Cloud River. The Board indicated that all these three major natural features were environmentally related and if one was harmed, the effects could be detrimental to the remainder of the two natural features. Two qualified biologists, who were experts in the field of wetlands in Northern Ontario, conducted the evaluations. Both biologists concluded that the wetlands' special features qualified them as provincially significant.

The Board found that among the special features, the wetland played a significant role in filtering the water entering the lake, trapping its sediment and providing a habitat and "stop over" for migrating birds. In addition, the relatively warm water and its associated depth and richness in nutrients provided an abundant supply of food for fish and birds in addition to the colonization by aquatic plants which helped to stabilize shore areas by dissipating the energy of waves onto the shoreline. The Board accepted the evidence that Cloud Bay was the richest "stop over" for migrating birds in the area because it remained "ice free" longer than most bays and therefore had a disproportionately positive value to aquatic life forms.

In evaluating the very high quality wetlands with its prestige water quality, the



Wetlands can play significant role in filtering water entering lakes

Board accepted "a suite of indicators" used by one of the qualified biologists. Although the proposed camp sites were mostly outside the Provincially Significant Wetland boundary, the sites were within the 120-metre "adjacent" zone. Accordingly, a number of mitigative recommendations were proposed in the event that the Board deemed it appropriate to approve the development. Collectively, these recommendations underlined not only the uniqueness and environmental importance of the wetlands, but also its fragility.

Recommendations such as restrictions to watercraft use and discouraging boaters from accessing the wetlands and seasonal use restrictions to minimize impacts of waterfowl were examples of some of the mitigative measures proposed. Many of the witnesses before the Board had a heightened concern as to whether these recommendations would or could be implemented and which agency (the municipality or

provincial government) was going to "police" the implementation and adherence to recommendations. The Board found that a municipality as large as Neebing, which is the fifth largest municipality in land area (with a population of only 2,010 persons), did not possess the manpower and/or the financial resources for that "policing" role. The province, as represented at the hearing, indicated that it had no interest in taking on the "policing" role, and in fact admonished the Board to move with caution.

The Board concluded that the proposal was not compatible with what was acknowledged as a pristine environment. An environment that is unique must be regarded as having protection from harm and not be put at environmental risk. The Board was concerned that the approval of the application would encourage boat launching for inevitable fishing expeditions; uncontrolled access into the wetlands and estuary; seadoo

use; damage to the emergent and submergent vegetation and consequential damage to the food chain and environmental balance within the estuary; and represented an unnecessary disturbance of the waterfowl and other wildlife in and around the wetlands.

Given the Board's view that the use proposed posed too great a risk to a unique and pristine environment, the appeals were dismissed and the applications refused.

Source: Decision of the Ontario
Municipal Board
OMB Case Nos.: PL010318
OMB File Nos.: O010190, R010086
OMB Member: C. A. Beach

Paul Chronis, MCIP, RPP, is a senior planner with WeirFoulds LLP and the Ontario Planning Journal's contributing editor for the OMB. He can be reached at pchronis@weirfoulds.com.

39 / IN PRINT

Unsafe. Bad for the environment. I'll take one

The tale of a consumer trend that bodes poorly for the future

By Glenn Miller

High and Mighty SUVs: The World's Most Dangerous Vehicles and How They Got That Way

Author: Keith Bradsher
Publisher: Public Affairs, New York
Date: 2002
Pages: 426 pp
Price: \$42.50 hardcover

Review by Glenn Miller

Recently published air quality data from Environment Canada provide ample evidence that not only are we losing the battle to reduce emissions but as a society we are willfully making the wrong choices about how we affect the environment. The latest data single out North America's love affair with the SUV as a principal cause of worsening air quality.

Ouch. Sounds like the beginning of a lecture! Unfortunately, we deserve one. For the past few decades, both the number of vehicles and the total distance traveled by vehicles has been increasing. But continuous

improvements in the environmental performance of new cars have kept total vehicle emission levels in check. Alarming, in 2000 we experienced the second-highest emissions of the past decade. Much of the hike is due to the rapid increase in the use of SUVs (and vans), total emissions from which continue to rise while those from cars are dropping. For some time now, light trucks (including SUVs and vans) have been outselling cars on this continent.

To understand how, and possibly why, we find ourselves in this predicament, read Keith Bradsher's new book, *High and Mighty SUVs*. The review headlines in the mainstream press focused on the environmental headaches associated with SUVs—their classification as light trucks exempts them from stricter standards set for cars—and safety concerns—SUVs tend to roll over more easily and do more damage to anything and anyone they come into contact with. But this book should in fact be required reading for anyone hoping to understand links between public policy, the marketplace and consumer behaviour.

Bradsher traces the lineage of SUVs to the Jeep (GP for "general purpose") built to the U.S. Army's specifications in the Second

World War. The brand was eventually picked up by struggling AMC. The CJ5 jeep, notwithstanding its tendency to roll over, became a top seller. A federal commission sought to impose strict new standards on AMC to fix the safety problem. The capital expense of responding to these requirements would have bankrupted the company. But timing is everything. With 27,000 jobs at stake, the U.S. government backed off, which allowed Jeep to survive and ultimately to invest in the wildly popular Cherokee.

Another fascinating thread in the SUV story is an obscure quarrel between the U.S. and Europe over frozen chickens. Piqued that the EU had placed a 25 percent tax on American birds imported to Europe, the U.S. retaliated with a tax on light trucks in order to send a message to Germany, home of VW, the only company seeking to export such vehicles to the U.S. Not so coincidentally, Ford was proposing to invest millions in a new factory in Germany. The upshot of the "chicken tax," which stayed in place for more than a decade (and long after Germany got its factory), was to protect the "big three" against foreign imports in the light truck category. This loophole proved

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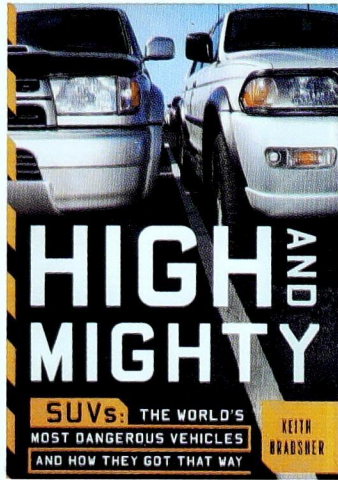
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invaluable when these companies needed to tap an emerging market potential for large vehicles without affecting average emission standards for the corporation as a whole, which applied only to cars. This was also a time when the big three could ill afford new capital investment to develop new car models. Because light trucks had earlier been exempted from increasingly strict environmental and safety requirements (another triumph of lobbying), the big three were able to copy and expand on the Cherokee concept with the SUVs brands with which we are now only too familiar. Additional exemptions regarding vehicle weight later on encouraged an even larger breed of SUV, as exemplified by Expedition, Escalade and Yukon. The option of bolting on cheap new bodies to readily available light truck chassis

turned out to be a financial bonus, as the per unit profit is unusually high.

Bradsher also suggests why the consumer finds rugged, four-wheel drive vehicles so appealing: take a streak of baby boom selfishness, top up with affluence and hone with years of practice in conspicuous consumption, then combine with frustrated ambitions to be "wild and free." The upshot accurately sums up the marketing for SUVs, which is strikingly different from the family-oriented commercials for mini-vans.

Award-winning journalist Bradsher is also critical of the environmental lobby, suggesting that in the early days (when it might have been possible to nip the SUV boom in the bud) the desire of environmentalists to access the great outdoors with a four-wheel drive trumped concerns about air quality.



We are left with some stunning conclusions:

- The rate of increased market share for SUVs guarantees that their share of the market will increase as more car manufacturers enter the field and consumers choose SUVs out of a concern for self-protection.
- As the fleet of SUVs ages, poor maintenance and acquisition by youth in search of cheap vehicles bodes poorly for public safety.
- The SUV's form of construction is inherently unsafe to occupants and other road users alike.
- The union lobby, although concerned about the environmental consequences of building more SUVs, is constrained from taking action for economic reasons.

A minor criticism of the book is that it lacks illustrations, or charts that could help the reader track events. Yet the book is well researched, and manages to provide almost an encyclopedic range of scope and analysis of the SUV phenomenon. Bradsher's greatest strength, however, is in avoiding the haranguing tone of a zealot. Although clearly appalled that North American society has chosen such an environmentally damaging path, he mostly lets the facts speak for themselves. Unlike the SUV, less is more.

Glenn Miller, MCIP, RPP, is editor of the Ontario Planning Journal and director of applied research with the Canadian Urban Institute. Some of his best friends drive SUVs.

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