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ONTARIO PLANNERS: VISION · LEADERSHIP · GREAT COMMUNITIES



Traffic Gridlock, Policy Gridlock

Congestion leads to
policy gridlock
in Windsor.

Is there a way out?

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ONTARIO PLANNERS:

VISION · LEADERSHIP · GREAT COMMUNITIES

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Traffic gridlock meets policy gridlock

By Philippa Campsie

At first it sounds like a trucker's joke—"There are 17 stoplights between Montreal and the Mexican border, and 16 of them are in Windsor." It isn't a joke. There really are 16 stoplights along a 10-kilometre stretch of the infamous Highway 3-Huron-Church Road (HCR) corridor, which funnels truck traffic from Highway 401 towards the Ambassador Bridge to Detroit. (To be brutally accurate, with the recent addition of a new stoplight, there are now 12 in the City and five on Hwy 3 from the City limits to the 401.)

About 6,000 trucks a day cross the bridge in each direction, and work their way through the stoplights along the six-lane Huron-Church Road. That's about a quarter of all Canada-U.S. truck traffic. Not surprisingly, the immediately surrounding community routinely registers air quality levels that are among the worst in Canada. The line of trucks forms a wall that separates the community to the west, which includes part of the University of Windsor campus, from the rest of the city.

From the trucker's point of view, those stoplights mean lowered gas mileage, wear and tear on brakes and clutches, and delays. Truckers are limited to 60 hours a week driving, and border delays limit the number of trips they can complete in that time. When the United States goes on orange alert, or the computers used by U.S. Customs break down, the delays become hours of lost time, as trucks back up for hours along the bridge approach. For Ontario's automotive industry, delays mean lost revenues and lost business.

All these problems are well known. They've been the subject of studies and complaints and meetings and government announce-

ments for years, long before September 11, 2001, which slowed traffic further because of tightened border security procedures. The community's position is clear: get the [expletive deleted] trucks off

local roads. The trucker's is equally clear: don't force us to use a local road lined with 16—make that 17—[expletive deleted] stoplights. When Ontario's Smart Growth advisory committee held a consultation in Windsor in summer 2001, they got an earful about Huron-Church Road. Any federal or provincial politician who shows up gets to hear about the problem. But so far,



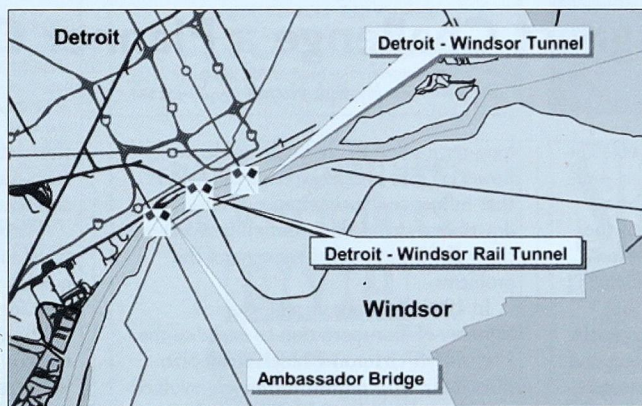
Noisy neighbours: Windsor residents would like NAFTA superhighway to disappear

no one has come up with a solution that everyone can accept.

Short-term relief?

On March 11, 2004, Infrastructure Canada released an optimistic news release titled "A New Solution for the Windsor Gateway Endorsed by All Three Levels of Government" (meaning the feds, the province and the city of Windsor). The announcement apparently represented the first step in the "Let's Get Windsor-Essex Moving strategy"—an odd name, for surely it's the trucks that are supposed to move, not the community.

The announcement included five initial projects: improvements to the Windsor-Detroit Tunnel Plaza, final design and construction of the Walker Road rail grade separation and completion of an EA for the Howard Avenue rail grade separation, improvements to support a pre-processing facility near Huron-Church Road, a pedestrian overpass over Huron-Church Road, and the deployment of intelligent transportation systems, including elec-



Choke points lend to crippling congestion

struction of the Walker Road rail grade separation and completion of an EA for the Howard Avenue rail grade separation, improvements to support a pre-processing facility near Huron-Church Road, a pedestrian overpass over Huron-Church Road, and the deployment of intelligent transportation systems, including elec-

tronic message boards. The cost of these improvements was estimated at \$80 million. All well and good, but not a word about the stoplights or the Ambassador Bridge itself, although the remaining dollars could well end up being applied to solutions that address the traffic signal problem.

In early June, the Ontario Chamber of Commerce released a report warning that keeping the status quo at the Windsor-Detroit border would see losses of \$17.8 billion a year to the Canadian economy and the elimination of 70,000 jobs in Canada by 2030. Yes, the crossing is that important.

Long-term plans

Longer-term solutions are in the hands of the Canada-U.S.-Ontario-Michigan Transportation Partnership, a working group that includes representatives from the United States Federal Highway Administration, Transport Canada, the Michigan Department of Transportation, and the Ontario Ministry of Transportation. Several consulting firms are also involved: URS Corporation, The Corradino Group, IBI Group, and HLB Decision Economics.

The group is required to find a new crossing or expand the existing border crossing, as well as recommend ways to use travel demand management and other transportation modes to ease the traffic flow. So far, the Partnership has completed a "Planning/Need and Feasibility (P/NF) Study," the first stage in a projected six-

stage process. One would have thought that the "need" aspect was fairly well-established, but apparently the Partnership felt it was important to start from scratch.

The study identified five corridors in the area, where it would be theoretically feasible to develop a new or improved roadway and new/expanded crossing. It calls them "Opportunity Corridors." and has reserved

squeaks of alarm from the fast-food outlets along Huron-Church Road about the loss of business.

The Partnership has already held several open houses to discuss Terms of Reference in Windsor, LaSalle, Tecumseh, and Amherstburg, and consulted with everyone from General Motors to Aamjiwnaang First Nation to the U.S. Coast Guard. However,

when it comes to design concepts, the Partnerships documents note the "Open houses do not seem like the appropriate vehicle for obtaining information on the concept designs. Targeted stakeholder meetings with affected residents/businesses and other stakeholders have proven to be more effective." The comment suggests that further consultation may be by invitation only.

And it's going to take time. The Partnership suggests that the opening of a new crossing is still eight to ten years away. Eight or ten years more of

trucks on the Huron-Church Road belching diesel fumes. For the residents of Windsor, the process has started eight to ten years too late.

Philippa Campsie is deputy editor of the Ontario Planning Journal and the principal of Hammersmith Communications. She can be reached at pcampsie@istar.ca. Thanks to Bob Hayes and Windsor's City Engineer for their comments.



Photo: City of Windsor

Solutions for the Ambassador Bridge?

the right to identify other corridors if necessary. Several routes were identified in June 2003, but are still being analyzed.

The trouble is, the choice of any one of those corridors could affect (if not obliterate) certain Windsor and Detroit neighbourhoods and will no doubt elicit heated opposition from residents. As Bob Hayes, City Planner for Windsor puts it, "Community stakeholders fear they will be left with the short straw." Even if the route bypassed Windsor entirely, no doubt there would be

The Toughest Challenge a Planner Can Face

By Bob Hayes

The City of Windsor has been advocating the need for additional cross-border traffic capacity and appropriate roadway linkage from Highway 401 to the U.S. Interstate Highway System for years. Unfortunately, the federal and provincial governments have failed to address this problem in a meaningful way until recently. Policy initiatives such as the Auto Pact and NAFTA have placed tremendous demands on the corridor, creating wide-ranging community problems.

Consolidated government efforts to improve the movement of people, goods and services across the border by providing a

long-term solution are finally under way, however. This article explains the factors that influence the timeframe. It also describes short/medium-term improvements that offer interim relief to many of the problems.

In 1999, Windsor urged Ontario's Ministry of Transportation to expedite the Highway 401/Huron-Church Road planning study. This request ultimately evolved into the formation of the "Canada-U.S.-Ontario-Michigan Border Transportation Planning/Need Feasibility Study," commonly referred to as the 'Bi-National Study.' Its mandate is to assess the existing transporta-

tion network and identify medium to long-term transportation needs, alternatives and a potential new border crossing.

There are two factors which make it difficult to complete the Bi-National Study quickly and implement solutions in the near future: the necessary involvement of multiple jurisdictions and the need to apply the Environmental Assessment Process for infrastructure investments.

Jurisdictions other than the City of Windsor include:

- Governments of Canada and U.S.- multiple departments and agencies;

- Governments of Ontario and multiple departments and agencies from Michigan;
- County of Essex, Town of LaSalle, Town of Tecumseh, City of Detroit;
- South East Michigan Council of Governments (SEMCOG).

The Environmental Assessment Process provides generally for a fully open and rigorous public process to determine the overall best solutions to large-scale public projects, or large scale projects with significant potential public impacts.

The combination of these two factors places the time frame for implementation of large-scale funding projects (such as a new crossing) well into the future. For this reason, there is a practical necessity to pursue projects that can be implemented in a shorter period. The federal and provincial governments' commitment of \$300 million to Windsor Gateway improvements is targeted for this purpose. The first measures announced earlier this year include investments to improve the Windsor-Detroit Tunnel Plaza, construction of a pedestrian overpass along Huron-Church Road, final design and construction of a rail grade separation, and a combination of intersection and operational improvements along approaches to the Bridge and Tunnel.

Discussions are under way to finalize the second phase of the Windsor Gateway improvements. This includes consideration of major infrastructure projects identified as opportunities to improve access to all existing and proposed border crossings. One possibility involves upgrading the City's E.C. Row Expressway and providing a new connection from the expressway to the 401 along the Lauzon Parkway corridor east of Windsor Airport. International bound traffic would thus have an opportunity to avoid nine of the existing traffic signals along the Highway 3-Huron-Church approach to the Bridge.

Not all community stakeholders embrace the E.C. Row-Lauzon Parkway concept as an operational solution. Local citizens and ratepayer groups argue that it would simply shift the problem and that the increased truck traffic would make the expressway a hazard for local drivers. Some also fear that it would benefit the Detroit River Tunnel Partnership (DRTP) a.k.a. "The Jobs Tunnel" formed by CP Rail and Borealis Transportation Infrastructure Trust. The partnership proposes to build a new rail tunnel

capable of accommodating large rail cars and convert the existing Detroit-Windsor Rail Tunnel, opened in 1910, to carry truck traffic. The most contentious feature of this proposal is the connecting link between 401 and the existing rail tunnel along the DRTP rail line adjacent to several residential neighbourhoods in South Windsor.

The border crossing issue is clearly fundamental to Windsor's survival as a North American economic centre. It nevertheless raises one of the most important issues this community has ever faced. The decision made years ago when 401 was under construction to forgo a direct border route laid the foundation for the current challenges. Mayor Eddie Francis and members of City Council have made it very clear that quick fixes to our border crossing are unacceptable. Finding a creative solution that gets trucks off city streets is advantageous to local business and industry and helps Canadian exporters get products across the border is their promise.

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Conference organizers excel

Joint Conference Sets New Standard for Size, Breadth of Content

By Glenn Miller

The organizers of the CIP/OPPI conference did the Institute proud. The joint event went off like clockwork, offering many memorable moments, beginning with a great reception at the Distillery under sunny skies and ending (for all intents and purposes) with a glitzy gala event that feted new Fellows and the handing out of planning excellence awards.



Mayor David Miller set things off with a rousing speech, exhorting planners to believe in their visions for better places and to work hard at "moving minds" of those whose support is needed to make things happen. Former Curitiba mayor, Jaime Lerner, entertained his audience with an idiosyncratic talk dotted with wonderful one-liners. "Want to encourage innovation? Knock two zeros off every budget line." "You can judge a mayor's effectiveness by the way he carries himself . . . I think this mayor (David Miller) is going to do fine." Also memorable was the presentation from McGill's Avi Friedman, who made the broad concept of city building seem very real.

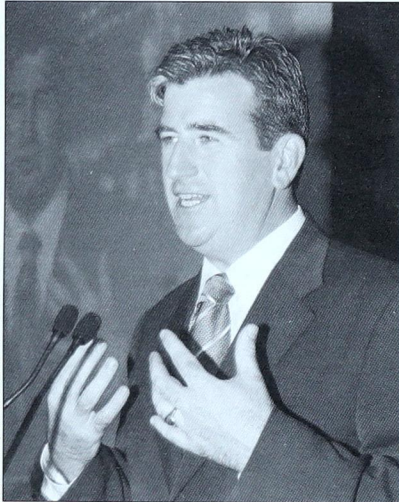
Movable feast

The odd thing about large crowds is that it doesn't take much to lose track of even 1,000 people in a hotel the size of the Sheraton. From the energy of a packed ballroom, the conference transitioned quickly to re-adjust to more intimate gatherings in the breakout sessions. The one-day urban design workshop got excellent reviews, beginning with a walking tour, and producing many worthwhile ideas. In the words of a recent graduate who participated, "That was the equivalent of half semester course. I learned so much."

The future of Main Street vs Big Box was a highlight for a standing room only crowd on Monday afternoon. Gordon Harris provided a rich context on trends, ending with the comment that even the world's biggest

retailer doesn't have all the answers. "After all, Wal-Mart has 245 stores 'dark' at the present time." Harris's advice was, "Keep up your knowledge base because retail changes so quickly. Don't over-regulate." Oxford Properties' George Stewart complemented Dan Leeming's talk with some pithy insights into the practical limits of what is financially feasible for developers seeking to support municipal goals for downtown development. Tall buildings, planning reform, goods

movement, arts and culture in the city, climate change, brownfields . . . the palate of options was rich throughout the conference. With opportunities for everyone, catering to the preferences of the technically minded to the policy wonk, and everything in between. I had the opportunity to moderate two sessions and was very impressed with the insights of participants from every part of Canada, leading to discussion between audience members as well as the panelists—



Former mayor Glen Murray combined passion with a vital message



UDWG chair Ann McIlroy on tour



Sue Cummings and friends having fun in the distillery district

always a sign that the session is going well. - And there was always a volunteer on hand to answer questions or offer an explanation or promise to get help. "This is how you get to the Windsor Room." "The doors are locked because the hotel's computer went down but I have an override." "The elevators are slow because the heat of the day is causing power surges." "More chairs are coming in two minutes." Great organizational skills and a way to leave a good impression on visitors.

Glen Murray Worth the Price of Admission

David Crombie, President and CEO of the Canadian Urban Institute, who chaired the gala dinner on Tuesday night, explained that, "Mayors are important because some of them can find the words to articulate the desires and aspirations of a city's residents. There are a very few mayors who have the capacity to speak for city dwellers everywhere. Glen Murray

is such a person." Speaking without notes for more than 30 minutes about the values and role of cities in Canada's future, Winnipeg's former mayor left planning veterans and beginning planners alike misty-eyed with his thrilling oratory.

Murray plans to travel to Toronto on a regular basis to take up offers that could range from teaching, writing and broadcasting to inspiring planning students. His thoughts on priority-setting for cities resonated with the audience. "We can't afford not to invest in cities," he told us. "And never forget, cheap and ugly leads to decline."

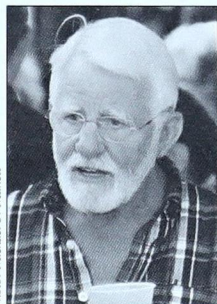


Photo: Michael S. Monnett

Max Bacon returns to Ontario

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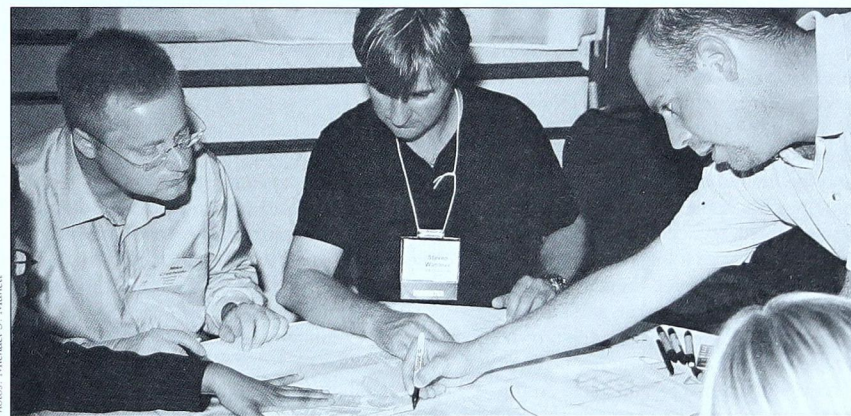


Photo: Michael S. Monnett

Veterans and new planners combine forces at the Urban Design Working Group workshop

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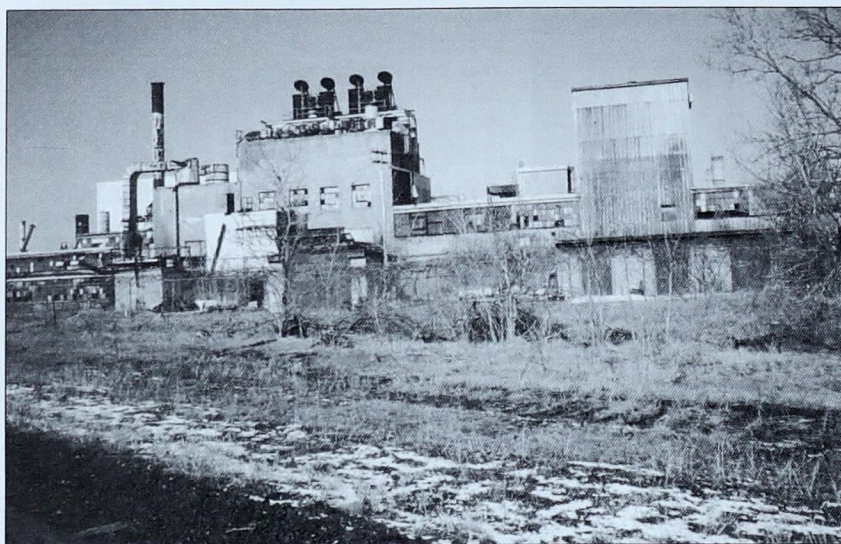
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Brownfield Policy Reform, A Five-Year Perspective

By Stephen Willis

In 1999, Stanley Stein and I both published articles in the Ontario Planning Journal on brownfield sites policy and barriers to redevelopment. I applaud Stanley Stein and Shari Elliott for bringing the brownfield issue back into the context of the current planning reform debate ("It's time to boost Ontario's Brownfield Initiatives," Ontario Planning Journal, March/April 2004). Their recent article gave me pause to consider what has changed in the last five years, and how much has not.



Brantford's brownfield sites could use a boost

The New Imperative

Most planners understand the benefits of redeveloping brownfield sites from an urban sustainability perspective. In addition to addressing environmental problems on a site, brownfield redevelopment allows for the re-use of existing infrastructure, and higher order uses in the core of established communities. There are economic paybacks in terms of higher property values with new property taxes, and eliminating an economic and social "drag" on adjacent properties and neighbourhoods.

Bill 26, and the draft Provincial Policy Statement (PPS), add a new imperative to the brownfield policy debate. The introduction to the draft PPS says that communities are to "build strong communities" by "promoting intensification, infill and brownfields development." The PPS achieves this by including brownfield sites as a defined component of "intensification."

The more significant proposed change to the PPS is the requirement to find opportunities for intensification before extending development into designated growth areas. Although this is still a very indirect reference, the province presumably expects municipalities to look at the potential for brownfield redevelopment opportunities

before looking to new greenfield sites. This is a challenging task, which this article discusses further.

This is a welcome change from the negative-sounding 1997 PPS which only stated that, "Contaminated sites will be restored as necessary prior to any activity on the site associated with the proposed use such that there will be no adverse effect." While a comparable provision still exists in the new draft PPS, the collective language change finally attaches a positive value to brownfield sites in a planning policy context.

A Positive and Supportive Regulatory Environment

In 1999, Stanley Stein and I both wrote of the need for a positive and supportive regulatory environment. Stein and Elliott in their March/April article discuss the Brownfield Statute Law Amendment Act, and the limited degree to which the province has implemented the Act. If fully implemented, and combined with the PPS changes, this goes a long way.

At the federal level, there has been some excellent policy discussion, and significant investment in a few high-profile brownfield projects, but no real reform has taken place. The 1998 National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy (NTREE) report, *Greening Canada's Brownfield Sites*,

is a seminal report on the major issues and barriers, and an action plan for reform to encourage brownfield development. In their 2004 report, *Environmental Quality in Canadian Cities, the Federal Role*, the NTREE revisits its previous work and sets out a rationale for brownfield development in a wider sustainability framework that underpins the federal urban agenda.

Progress

In addition to these regulatory framework

changes, there have been other notable steps forward in Ontario:

- The City of Hamilton's ERASE program has convincingly demonstrated the positive benefits of an activist approach by municipalities on brownfields. A program of tax-increment-style financing has reenergized many formerly derelict or underutilized sites.
- Community improvement programs are being adopted in many communities as a means to bring financial measures to bear on brownfield sites.
- In larger redevelopment projects, communities are using creative approaches for safe on-site containment or re-use of contaminated materials, as part of park blocks, or as part of road infrastructure.
- Financial institutions are taking a much more sophisticated approach to brownfield sites. Several institutions are now willing to take on the financial risk, provided other financial conditions are right. In addition, the insurance industry is providing several costly but useful products to minimize financial risk.
- A Community-Based Risk Assessment (CBRA) is being prepared for Port Colborne. This is an important advancement on planning on a district-basis for the re-use of areas with widespread conta-

mination. This model may be adapted for the Toronto Waterfront Revitalization initiative.

- Market conditions, and specifically land values, in some communities have made the redevelopment of brownfield sites economically viable. This has greatly increased the number of completed projects, and with that, the collective experience of Ontario's consulting community.

Further Action

If municipalities are to take the brownfields lands stock seriously as part of their vacant or underutilized land inventory prior to urban expansion, much more needs to be done. There are more actions that the federal and provincial governments must do to empower municipalities.

The initiatives described above have been very useful in allowing redevelopment of the "low-hanging fruit" properties, that is, those with sufficient residual value or minor contamination. However, in communities throughout the province, there are properties that are either too seriously contaminated, and/or lack sufficient residual value. They will not redevelop without help, regardless of the impact of the draft PPS. In

this context, it will not be reasonable to criticize municipalities for urban expansion decisions despite an inventory of brownfield sites.

While the federal 2004 budget commitment of \$3.5 billion over ten years to remediate federally controlled sites, and \$500 million over ten years for other sites (mainly the Sydney Tar Ponds) is admirable, the federal Urban Agenda needs to embrace the remaining recommendations of the NTREE. Most importantly, there needs to be regulatory reform to address legal liability, and tax reform to give strong incentive to brownfield remediation, which may finally give an economic imperative to the remediation of economically or technically difficult sites.

As Stein and Elliott noted, the province must continue the implementation of the *Brownfield Statute Law Amendment Act*. As they point out, further regulatory reform is essential to limit liability for third-party actions. There also needs to be some form of liability limitation for municipalities who exercise *Planning Act* responsibilities on brownfield sites.

The Province also needs to do much more to educate community leaders and the public at large on risk-based cleanups. There remains a lingering perception that

cost-effective, risk-based clean-ups are inferior, and less safe. This is not necessarily the case, and if the Province truly wants to encourage more brownfield development, it must step up to its responsibility to promote risk-based cleanups as a viable and safe alternative.

In five years, much has been accomplished, but more needs to be done. The federal Urban Agenda and the province's planning reform initiatives must be backed by further action on brownfield policy.

Stephen Willis, MCIP, RPP, is Manager of Planning and Environmental Design at Marshall Macklin Monaghan Limited. Steve has been involved in environmental planning policy for over ten years, and has worked much of the last eight years on the renewal of brownfield lands on the Toronto waterfront. He also represents the Urban Development Institute on the CUI Brownie Awards committee. Many of the issues raised in Steve's article will be addressed in CUI/CBN's "Brownfields 2004: Turning Up the Heat," which will take place in Toronto this October (see Billboard for details).

ANNOUNCEMENT

Ontario Association of the Appraisal Institute of Canada

The Ontario Association of the Appraisal Institute of Canada has elected Robert Robson, AACI, P. App as president for 2004-2005. Mr. Robson is president and founding partner of Robson McLean & Associates Inc., a real estate appraisal, land economist and consulting firm in Toronto.

Mr. Robson has been an active member of the association's Board of Directors for several years, serving his first term as president in 1988. He has accepted this second term to further advance the appraisal profession in Ontario. He will work with the Board on both internal and external issues that are currently impacting the appraisal industry.

The Ontario Association of the Appraisal Institute of Canada is the provincial association of professional real estate appraisers. Dedicated to maintaining a Code of Ethics and Canadian uniform standards of professional appraisal practice, the Appraisal Institute of Canada protects the public and the integrity of the real estate sector. It awards Canada's most recognized appraisal designations: AACI (Accredited Appraiser Canadian Institute) and CRA (Canadian Residential Appraiser). Professional appraisers provide services related to the principles of value in real estate including consulting.

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Planning Agenda Comes at a Critical Time for Ontario's Future

By Norman Pearson

One of my motivations for writing this is to pay tribute to the seminal work of Sir Patrick Abercrombie, who, in the 1940s, produced a plan for Greater London. As a very young planner in the 1950s, I worked on the statutory refinement of that plan for what was then London County Council. At that time, the population of Greater London was 12 million, a population larger than that of Canada (still in the process of becoming urban at that time).

When I came to Canada in 1954, at the invitation of Central Mortgage and Housing Corporation, it was immediately apparent that Canada urgently needed strong regional planning, preferably with strong federal and provincial support. I may therefore well be in the minority of those who strongly support Ontario Bills 26 and 27 as a vital first step towards more guidance for the great metropolis, because a Greater Toronto of 12,000,000 people is within sight in a few decades. That figure, during my career, has

come full circle! I was involved in the 1972 Toronto Centred Region "Design for Development" and learned to see a cycle of about 35 years in such much-needed regional design and planning.

The 35-year cycle

Our cities are still relatively new, but the need for vision arose very early. In the period 1890-1920, the Canadian version of "The City Beautiful" hit Toronto, and we still have some civic design remnants of that period: the setting of Old City Hall and Bay Street, the Legislature, and the efforts to open up the waterfront. That was the first modern cycle.

The next, after the Great Depression of 1929, was the wonderful Greater Toronto Advisory Plan of 1943 under the leadership of people like Roland Michener, Anthony Adamson, Humphrey Carver, Eugene Faludi, and the leading geographers. They correctly grasped the shape of the future metropolis and argued for conservation greenbelts along

the Lake Ontario shore, the Toronto ravines, the Niagara Escarpment and the Oak Ridges Moraine. It never led to a statutory plan, but it bore fruit in Toronto in the creation of Metropolitan Toronto in 1953, with its larger regional planning area. The metropolitan plan took a very long time to emerge, and so the second cycle passed.

The third cycle was that of the Toronto-Centred Region "Design for Development" and its aftermath in the 1970s. That set out rudimentary greenbelts (now reduced essentially to infrastructure corridors), some alternate forms of large-scale regional urbanization, and even plans for second-tier urbanization in North Burlington, North Oakville, and beyond Mississauga; it spelled out major growth centres (already occurring) in Brampton-Bramalea and an alternative eastern airport and associated new towns. There then was the flurry of provincial advisory regional plans, covering the whole province, and once again, in due time, regional planning was put to bed. That was



Abercrombie's 1942 plan for London inspired Ontario planners in the 1960s

the third 35-year cycle. Those plans are all gathering dust in the Legislative Library.

Are we now in the beginning of the fourth cycle in 2004? One hopes that this time it continues as a process, a permanent part of our evolution. It is late in the day, but, in my view, the province is to be congratulated on a strong and powerful initiative, whatever the shortcomings of the proposals. It is somehow symbolic that at a time when the Ontario Municipal Board is dominated by the minutiae of land severances, the province seems to have woken up to the Courts' findings in the Sherway case (late 1960s), that "The Ontario Municipal Board is the hidden seat in the Cabinet," and decided that this time, the Cabinet should intervene directly and forcefully in a very dramatic and compelling way. It will be a landmark in Ontario's planning history. Few governments have shown such courage. We are now in about where Greater London was in the 1930s.

I also applaud John Bousfield's excellent and objective paper (Vol.19, No.2, 2004) and thank Malone Givens Parsons for their magnificent map of the main urban areas.

Can we build stronger communities?

The "Strong Communities Act (Bill 26)" includes minimum time frames for OMB appeals; the end of private appeals to the OMB regarding boundary changes without local government support; requiring that matters "be consistent with" the Provincial Policy Statement; and the possibility of Ministerial declarations of provincial interest, thereby moving such matters to Cabinet rather than the OMB.

I concur with John Bousfield that the minimum time frames are likely of little significance for the bulk of development.

The question of targeting private applications for boundary changes is strange. The Bousfield article correctly argues that it is an error to label recent GTA growth as "urban sprawl" (which is a meaningless pejorative term, and not a professional definition). By contrast to the 1950s, such changes are not led by speculators; urban areas have sharp-edged; land severances are under strict control; and in any case, as he points out, it is all planned lower-density urban development. By cutting out the input of the development industry, in my 50 years of experience, the net result, if no other action is taken, will be shortages of development land, rising costs and rising prices. Eventually, we will once again see "crash programs" as we did in the 1950s and 1960s as the demographic trends unfolded. The causes are known: lack of advanced planning and substantial immigration.

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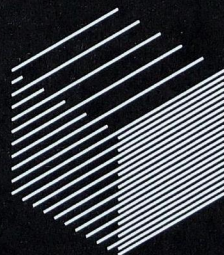
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The change regarding Provincial Policy Statements will have one inevitable and undesirable consequence: Cabinet will soon get bogged down in debates reminiscent of local councils, to the detriment of their actual policy governance. The same consequence will flow from declarations of "Provincial Interest," without a Provincial Plan.

Finally, there will gradually be a realization by local government that to be really strong, they need provincial regional planning guidance and a guaranteed tax base. The province has awoken a potential dragon!

The "Greenbelt Act"

The "Greenbelt Study Area" is really the ghost of a future Provincial Regional Plan for the GTA, going back to the brilliant 1943 analysis that the real greenbelt would be the Niagara Escarpment and the Oak Ridges Moraine. That is a major conceptual step forward.

Regarding the effectiveness of the proposed greenbelt, I think that we shall be driven to reflect on the strategies of the Greater London Plan, which deliberately steered urbanization beyond the very effective greenbelt, into new towns and expanded towns. This is also reminiscent of one of

the neglected but prophetic alternatives of the "Design for Development" process, which echoed the U.K. experience.

The challenge to the province is twofold: either produce a long-range regional plan to deal with an eventual 12 to 15 million people, and put in place meaningful greenbelt or "green wedges" of some magnitude; or, watch, as Bousfield's excellent analysis shows, the steady erosion of such things as the Parkway Belt (now little more than a narrow infrastructure corridor), and a strait-jacket of meaningless but good-sounding regulations while problems grow.

But "planned Greater London" at 13 million was only about 60 miles across (30 miles from the Thames in a northerly or southerly direction). Due to the mathematics of peripheral expansion as expounded by Unwin in 1910, the span of London's development footprint, 50 years later, is not greatly different today. It was eventually found more convenient to move from suburban form to creating whole new cities at the edge, with a range of densities, and populations varying from 60,000 to 300,000. We should take heed.

The intensity of growth in the GTA and Niagara Peninsula puzzles many planners. It is simply a function of location. Consider that in areas like Greater London, or

Minneapolis, or Winnipeg, the metropolis can readily grow in a 360-degree area. However, in Toronto and Niagara, the growth area, because of Lake Ontario, is only about 180 degrees. Growth thus has an unusual intensity, roughly twice the force of a 360-degree location. Note that in Hamilton-Burlington, which has about a 300-degree area, the forces are less intense. We may, therefore, expect quite forceful outward growth pressures in the GTA, which could be usefully harnessed in regional planning. We might study areas such as Greater Chicago, now about 15 million people, to see what can happen. Oddly enough, this factor is rarely mentioned, whereas in 1890-1930 in Britain, it was fully understood and enunciated by people like Raymond Unwin, Ebenezer Howard, Thomas Adams (who later influenced Canada and the USA) and Sir Patrick Geddes (who coined the word "conurbation," and identified Toronto as a candidate). This suggests we have no time to lose to create a permanent large-scale regional planning system for the "Golden Horseshoe and adjacent areas.

Final Word

I suggest that our planning profession needs to present significant vision and leadership to guide Ontario through the likely consequences of this highly interesting legislation. If we do not, we will simply be regarded as "paper-pushers."

Norman Pearson is a consultant planner in international practice and also President of Greenleaf University, St. Louis, MO, which specializes in PhD programs in Futures Studies. He is a Fellow of the Royal Town Planning Institute and holds the RTPI Bronze Medal for research.



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President's Message

OPPI is Thriving

Approaching the halfway point of my Presidency of OPPI, I can tell you that it is a wonderful experience to see the excellence in planning being done daily by our members and the important contribution that our member volunteers make to the profession on our behalf. Many hours are given to assist in areas such as membership, policy, professional development and district responsibilities to keep our Institute strong. Through being relevant to our members and the community at large, we have gained greater recognition as a profession. OPPI is participating as a key stakeholder in Planning Reform Consultations. Watch for our current response on OPPI's website.

Our efforts in outreach to bring in more planners have been very successful over the last few years and we are visiting the planning schools to inform planning students of the value of membership in OPPI. We are also encouraging further outreach to high schools and OPPI's districts have wonderful initiatives for World Town Planning Day November 8, 2004.

Our joint conference with CIP, Moving Minds—Our Urban Challenge, was a great success with over 870 delegates. The program and the speakers were a credit to the excellence our profession has gained. On behalf of all the members of our Institute, I extend my appreciation to the organizing committee, staff and all the volunteers. Mark September 29-30th, 2005 in your calendars for OPPI's next annual conference. Hosted by the Hamilton-Burlington planning community, this conference will explore the many CONNECTIONS within the planning community. Watch for the Call for Presentations with your September Members Update e-News.

On September 16-17th, 2004, we are having a Planning Symposium in Kingston on the Management of Public Lands, featuring speakers from the National Capital Commission, Ontario Realty Corporation, and Canada Lands Company. Our AGM will provide an opportunity to review our progress and achievements to date set out by our Strategic Plan. We will also recognize OPPI Award Winners at the Awards Luncheon. For more details on this event, check the OPPI website.

OPPI's vision sets in place the cornerstones for all of our strategic initiatives at OPPI. Our cornerstones are that OPPI:

- is a visionary organization—being a leader in public policy, promoting innovation in the

- practice of planning in Ontario;
- is an innovative organization—being the recognized voice of planners in the province;
- is an effective organization—providing services valued by its members.

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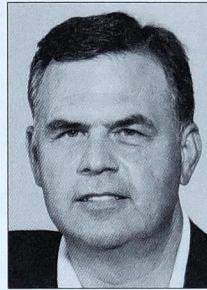
We have influence on the quality of life in our communities. We provide vision and leadership to plan for our future. We are proud of the position we have in advising the decision makers and consulting with the public at large.

The continuing commitment to professional excellence by our members and the collective high standard of practice will result in increased recognition and value to all our members. Please take the time to review the Standards of Practice posted in the Members area of the OPPI website and take an interest in our continuing professional learning initiative.

OPPI will be issuing a survey to all members to complete in September. Please take the time to complete it, as we would like your thoughts on OPPI's continuous professional learning program.

In summary, we are moving forward as a profession and I would encourage all members to help in organizing and supporting Institute initiatives as we all have a responsibility to assist in the advancement of our profession.

Don F. May, MCIP, RPP, is President of OPPI, and heads his own planning consultancy, based in Burlington. He can be reached at donmay@almostthere.ca.



Don May



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Ontario Welcomes Election of Four New Fellows

Four Ontario members have been elected to the College of CIP Fellows. In a glittering ceremony at the joint conference Tuesday night gala, Dr. Beth Moore-Milroy, Jack Diamond, Dr. Barbara Rahder and conference co-chair Wendy Nott received the enthusiastic acknowledgement of their peers.

Beth Milroy, FCIP, currently teaches at the School of Urban and Regional Planning at Ryerson. She is

a practitioner whose interests span research, practice and mentoring students.

Her career encompasses contributions to two other planning programs, Ottawa and Waterloo. She was director of the Ryerson program from 1996 to 2000.

Beth also sits on the editorial board of *Planning Theory*, the *Journal of Planning Literature* and *Environments: a journal of interdisciplinary studies*.

Jack Diamond, FCIP, a principal in the firm of Diamond and Schmidt, may be best known for his architectural work but has also made significant contributions as a consulting planner over a period of more than



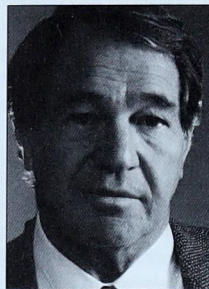
Beth Milroy

35 years. Whether it is the attention to detail that makes the concept of infill a practical reality or the ability to envisage cities at the regional scale—Jack was one of a handful of professionals asked to serve on the GTA Task Force in the 1990s—his dedication to vibrant, livable cities has made a difference in many cities around the world.

Wendy Nott, FCIP, a principal in the firm of Walker, Nott

Dragicevic Associates Ltd., is a Waterloo graduate who has built a solid reputation as a consultant to both private and public sector interests.

She has also contributed her expertise to the cause of improving professional practice through volunteering for OPPI and CIP. A recent role for OPPI has been the coordination of the



Jack Diamond



Wendy Nott

Institute's comments on the future of the OMB. And her role as a co-chair of the joint conference has been a testament to her organizational skills.

Dr. Barbara Rahder, FCIP, started her career as a social planning consultant, becoming well known for her advocacy on behalf of vulnerable communities. She is currently teaching in the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University, and served as director of the graduate program.

In 2001, Barbara co-founded the Planners Network, which helps connect students, faculty and other planners across Canada and beyond. She is also the author of a book on sustainability.



Dr. Barbara Rahder

Congratulations to these outstanding professionals! Other members of CIP to be recognized were Mary Bishop from Atlantic Canada, Erik Karlsen from B.C., and Bruce Duncan from Edmonton. Gary Davidson, FCIP, was responsible for the process on behalf of the college, and presided over the presentations with humour and style.

Members No Longer on the OPPI Roster

The following Full Members resigned in good standing from OPPI for the 2004 membership year:

Judy Dunstan
David Forget
Stephen Glogowski
James Helik
Robert Johnson
Tom Lemon
Nina Maher
Darren Stulberg
Joseph Verdirame
Jennifer Voss

Bohdan Wynnycky
Yvonne Yamaoka

The following Full Members have been removed from the roster for non-payment of membership fees for 2004:

Gloria T. Brandao
Eric M. Conley
Sean G. Harvey
John R. Hitchcock (Ret.)
Leon R. Kentridge
John S. Michailidis
Timothy V. Murray
Terence R. Priddle (Ret.)
Avrum Regenstreif (Ret.)

The Bylaw of OPPI requires that this notice be published in the *Ontario Planning Journal*. The notice is accurate at the time of going to press.

Obituary

We are sorry to report that Patricia Mara Herring, MCIP, RPP, (Ret.), passed away in June after a long battle with illness. Pat was Senior Planner with the Region of Halton for 25 years and she has a wide network of friends in the professional community who will miss her greatly.

A fuller report on Pat's tremendous contribution to planning, written by Paul Attack, will be published in the next issue of the *Ontario Planning Journal*. In the meantime, we are pleased to note that a memorial bench is being dedicated in her honour at Bronte Heritage Waterfront Park, the site of Pat's crowning achievement as a planner.

Editorial

RPP Turns 10, and Ontario Planners Get Ready to Do Real Planning

By Glenn Miller

As the world rushes along, it is sometimes hard enough to keep up with the change in seasons, let alone to keep track of important dates in the evolution of a profession. But as any member whose desk is close to his or her Certificate of Registration can attest, 2004 is the tenth anniversary of the passing of the Ontario Professional Planners Act. Can it really be ten years?

For newcomers to the profession it is hard to imagine a time when OPPI wasn't regularly consulted by government on matters affecting planning and development. But, imperceptibly, during the past decade, OPPI has emerged as a credible professional association with a legitimate role to play in providing advice to the provincial government on planning policy and its implementation.

So it is fitting that the current climate of innovation and comprehensive policy proposals from the province give OPPI as an Institute, and our collective membership working in all sectors of the economy, a chance to make a genuine contribution. The planning reform proposals currently out for public review demand our attention. With luck and hard work, the next year could prove to be a turning point in the way Ontario gets things done. The elevation of MP John Godfrey to the role of Minister of State for Infrastructure and Communities also bodes well for Ontario although little is known about his mandate at present.

The breadth of the challenge ahead of us is neatly summarized in

an opinion piece in this issue by Municipal Affairs acting ADM, Joanne Davies—setting out the linkages, the trade offs and the tensions that are necessary for sound decision making. The depth of the response will be determined by our profession's ability to move beyond the convenient silos into which planners traditionally retreat. The debates and decisions ahead of us are too complex to resort to ideology. We're heading into a period when we might even have to do some real planning. Hold on to your hats!

The growing maturity of the profession, not just in Ontario, but across the country, as expressed through the quality of the presentations and discourse during the recent joint conference, was welcome indeed. Conference co-chairs Wendy Nott and Paula Dill, and the many volunteers who helped make this event such a success, should feel proud of their accomplishments. Joint events are never easy, but the professionalism of OPPI staff and the conference team helped to make Moving Minds truly enjoyable for everyone who attended.

Glenn R. Miller, MCIP, RPP, is editor of the Ontario Planning Journal and Vice President, Education & Research, with the Canadian Urban Institute in Toronto. He can be reached at editor@ontarioplanning.com.

Opinion

Planning Reform, Greenbelts and Growth Management: Tough but Necessary

By Joanne Davies

Getting your mind around the province's planning reform agenda is a bit like assembling a Rubik's Cube—unless the pieces fit together just right it's not going to work. Make no mistake: this is the challenge—ensuring Greenbelt Protection and Growth Management and Planning Reform fit together and result in a cohesive, integrated planning system.

The Provincial Policy Statement (PPS) sets the broad planning policy framework for the Province. The Greenbelt Protection initiative will be consistent with the PPS and will create a "green" framework on a specific geographic area. This framework will deal with environmental issues, natural heritage, agriculture and recreation. It will link together existing components of the green system and tell us where urban growth will not occur. Growth Management (just

released by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal) will also be consistent with the PPS. It will create a plan for *how* and *where* we will grow in a specific geographic area.

Changes to the *Planning Act* will ensure that the process by which land use decisions are made is up to the task and is aligned with the realities of today's complex landscape.

The goal for Ontario Municipal Board (OMB) reform is to establish a basis for dispute resolution on land use planning matters that is effective, fair, balanced and responsive to today's challenges. The Implementation Tools will provide the encouragement, incentives and opportunities for "green" and "growth" to thrive.

The PPS

The PPS articulates provincial policy inter-

ests in land use planning. The proposed changes to the PPS that are initiated in the consultation document reflect some of the planning reform priorities. The key policy areas can generally be divided into three key areas:

- Building strong communities
- Wise use and management of resources
- Protecting public health and safety.

One proposed policy is that urban boundary expansions should only be considered through a comprehensive municipal review of the official plan. If we are going to successfully protect greenspace in a rational and purposeful way, then any decision to expand urban boundaries should not be done on an application-driven, ad hoc basis. There should be a careful examination of the total land currently designated for urban growth,

the population projections over the appropriate timeframe, opportunities for intensification, infrastructure needs, the adequacy of servicing, environmental impacts and impacts on agricultural land. If, based on a comprehensive review of all the relevant data, an expansion to the urban boundary is justified and necessary, then the municipality must determine *where* growth should take place. This decision needs to be taken not only with local interests in mind, but in a regional and watershed context.

This process provides an opportunity to comprehensively assess issues related to land use planning, servicing infrastructure, transportation infrastructure and natural features and functions. In my view, this is the time to look at housing needs, transit-supportive densities and the real, long-term costs of growth.

Another area of the *Planning Act* worthy of discussion is that of "complete application." If we want to look at "green" and "growth" in an integrated and comprehensive way, then there needs to be adequate information upon which to make these decisions. A fair question is whether the current requirements of the *Planning Act* are sufficient to make sure that adequate information is available?

It is not desirable to create unjustified delays and costs. It is an issue of balance and of ensuring the process supports the policy objectives. Any additional requirements for information should be necessary.

The existing *Planning Act* provides for a 5-year review of the official plan. Practice has been inconsistent. There are some very out-dated official plans out there. If the PPS is going to require that urban boundary expansions are only to be considered at the time of comprehensive review of the official plan, then this review must be meaningful and result in official plans that are consistent with the PPS and address population projections, growth projections and opportunities for intensification.

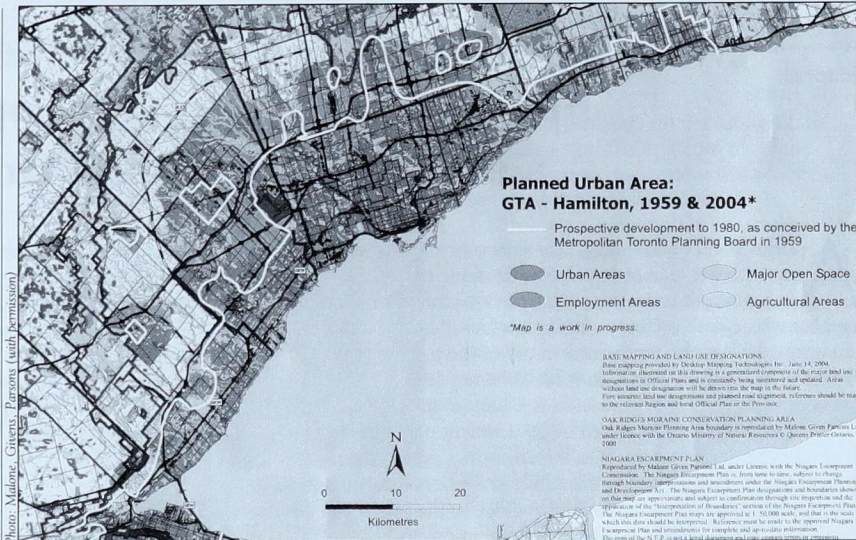


Photo: Malcom, Clutter, Parsons (with permission)

The "white line" depicts 1959 forecast to 1980

The discussion paper asks a series of questions intended to encourage a discussion to answer this issue. For example, should all *Planning Act* matters be subject to appeal? In the context of Greenbelt and Growth Management the issue of "onus" is important: The *Planning Act* generally requires the Board to conduct each hearing "de novo"—literally, to start anew. This means that the OMB hears a presentation of evidence as if the municipal council has made no decision.

A key point in this regard is that the Board is reviewing the merits of a case on the evidence being presented, rather than challenging the decision of the municipal council. That challenge has already been made by the party launching the appeal.

Holding a "de novo" hearing provides the opportunity for the Board to take a fresh look at the facts related to an issue. The knowledge that all reports and opinions rendered by municipal staff or by consultants for an appli-

cant could potentially be put into evidence at the OMB has an important influence on planners and others who may be required to give expert testimony. This knowledge might have an influence over the consideration given to planning reports and other materials produced during the course of dealing with an application or other matter that could potentially be appealed to the OMB. Clearly, this is linked to the issue of complete application.

The Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and other stakeholders suggest that "de novo" hearings should become the exception rather than the rule.

Their recommendation is that a hearing be allowed only when "the appellant could show that there was an error of fact or law . . . bad faith so serious that council made a wrong decision as a result of it."

Although it may be reasonable to suggest that "de novo" hearings become the exception rather than the rule, this would require a

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major shift in approach, effectively requiring the OMB to function more like a court by focusing on the validity of the appeal rather than the merits of the case on planning grounds. It is likely that as much effort would be expended in hearing the merits of an appeal per se as is currently devoted to "de novo" hearings.

Implementation Tools

Finally, once land use decisions are made, we need mechanisms for implementation that mean land use decisions become reality. We want to encourage development consistent with the vision of our communities that is established by the official plan. The discussion paper sets out some of the existing tools and asks whether they need to be revised or enhanced.

For example, should upper-tier municipalities be permitted to use community improvement plans to facilitate transit corridors?

Should the Development Permit System be revised to enable issues such as affordable housing, transit, green technology, source water protection and compact urban form to be addressed? What provincial standards need to be revised to reflect urban infill, intensification and brownfield redevelopment?

Greenbelt

The government is suggesting that policy objectives of the PPS need to be aligned with Greenbelt Protection. Greenbelt protection could provide a blueprint for how municipalities can work together to integrate environmental protection, agricultural preservation, natural resources, transportation, infrastructure and recreation into a green system in other parts of the province.

Growth Management

There is the opportunity for Growth Management to move beyond the PPS. The Golden Horseshoe is the economic engine of Ontario and one of the fastest-growing regions in North America. Growth management should provide municipalities with stronger direction on where to grow and how much to grow. Growth management should go beyond land use planning.

There is a tremendous opportunity to begin to link investment in critical infrastructure to land use planning in a way that furthers not frustrates public policy objectives. (Minister Caplan's recently released proposals address this.)

Conclusion

The integration of Planning Reform, Greenbelt Protection and Growth Management require the following questions to be answered:

Where are we now—what are the facts and givens? What is the end game—what are our objectives? What do we want to achieve?

What are the critical components of getting from where we are now to where we want to be in the future? What are the linkages and the path to pull these together and lead us to our objectives?

The result should be revealed in a logic that is compelling and obvious. We need a land use policy framework that is visionary as well as some clearer direction through Greenbelt Protection on how to weave a green fabric through the region that links and integrates. We need some clear direction in the region on where to grow in a way that curbs sprawl and makes efficient use of limited resources and focuses investment.

Joanne Davies is Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. This article is based on a presentation given to the Canadian Urban Institute in June.

Letters

Trading spaces: more information needed on emissions trading

I enjoyed Jim Helik's article on "risk trading" (Vol 19 No 1); but weather trading? Surely you are kidding. Now emissions trading sounds more grounded. Can you recommend any literature or books that are particularly informative re emissions trading—or indeed pollution mitigation trading as well?

Any help would be appreciated.

John Seldon, MCIP, RPP

Jim Helik replies:

Re weather trading, think of it more like "weather betting." Just as insurance companies offer crop insurance or hurricane insurance, the idea is to change the definition from a general insurance against bad things happening, such as a farmer losing an entire crop, to a narrower focus, where a retailer could recover losses suffered to reduced sales resulting from too much rain during a summer statutory holiday when customer traffic would normally be expected to be high.

The "trading" component occurs when the insurance company then parcels out these "bets" to other investors. Thus an investor would "lose the bet" and pay out accordingly if crops were damaged by rain but "win the bet" if there is no damage. So far the biggest player in this was Enron, and we know what happened there.

The best source for more information is www.co2e.com—an actual exchange in operation.

(Jim Helik was formerly a contributing editor for the Ontario Planning Journal.)

Gone with the wind

I read the March/April issue with great interest, particularly the article by Ken Church on community energy planning. Some 20 years ago we were enthusiastically involved in "community energy audits," measuring input and output. We also discovered the "throughput," which we dubbed the community metabolism. We were looking for energy "bleeding points" and for ways to plug them.

In the past, universities had energy "institutes" that offered a helping hand to industry and communities. Energy management and conservation was everywhere, and even

incorporated into official plans, giving legal status to the practice of conservation.

Unfortunately, this has gone "with the wind." The resurgence of interest in community energy planning is welcome, but has no legal authority. It all requires public participation. But the true face of "public participation" can be seen on our congested highways, sprawling subdivisions and gigantic regional shopping centres. People shape their environment. John Bousfield's reality check with his perspective on bills 26 and 27 leaves us with the question: is long-term planning even possible?

Vladimir Matus, Toronto

Editor's note: The draft proposed PPS opens the door to giving legal authority to community energy planning

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Downsview Park The Challenge of Sustainability

By David V. J. Bell

Finding new ways of living on this planet that will support both human well-being and ecosystem health is the imperative challenge of the 21st century. Agenda 21, the ambitious blueprint that emerged from the first Earth Summit held at Rio de Janeiro in 1992, identified cities as crucial to this quest. Chapter 28 noted that a number of the most difficult sustainability problems emanate from cities and will require concerted local efforts to effect sustainable solutions. The rate of urban population growth globally greatly exceeds the overall increase in population. More than half the world's six billion people now live in cities and this number is rising dramatically in what has been called an "urban tsunami." Canada is one of the most urbanized countries in the world, underscoring the challenge Canada faces while opening a window of opportunity for us to become global leaders. As major change agents, urban planners play a key role in attaining urban sustainability.

Implications for Planners

The policy guide "Planning for Sustainability" begins with the following "findings":

There is growing concern for the issue of sustainability—whether the Earth's resources will be able to meet the demands of a growing human population that has rising aspirations for consumption and quality of life, while maintaining the rich diversity of the natural environment or biosphere.

Patterns of human development—physical, social, and economic—

affect sustainability at the local and the global level. City and regional planning is integrally related to defining how, where, and when human development occurs, which affects resource use. Planners can therefore play a crucial role in improving the sustainability of communities and the resources that support them.

Planners in Canada are increasingly committed to a conception of "good planning" as "the orderly development of socially, economically and environmentally sustainable communities."

Downsview Park as a Model Urban Sustainable Community

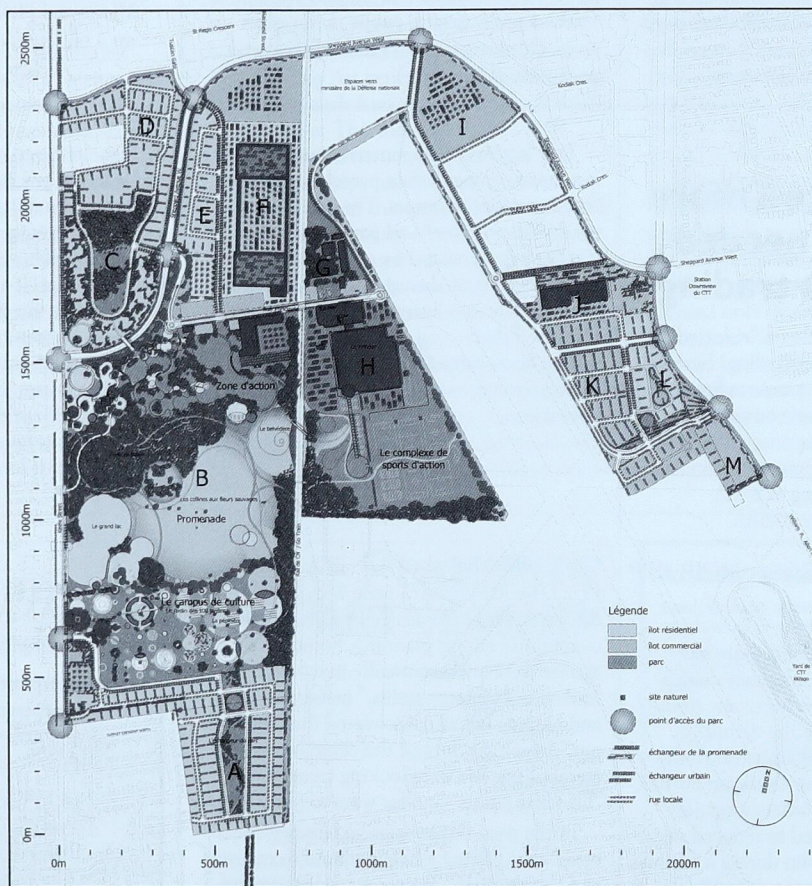
The opportunity to transform nearly 600

acres of open space and buildings into one of the greatest parks in the world invites a sustainability-based planning approach. Not surprisingly, Downsview Park aspires to become a model of urban sustainability practice.

The idea of an urban park in the heart of the Greater Toronto Area was born in 1994 when the Government of Canada announced the closing of the Canadian Forces Base at Downsview and decided that the lands should become "a unique urban recreational greenspace for the enjoyment of future generations" on a self-financing basis. In 1999, Parc Downsview Park Inc. (PDP) was established as a Crown Corporation by the Government of Canada and given the

mandate to develop and manage the creation of Canada's First National Urban Park. The site owned by the federal government is adjacent to approximately 400 acres currently owned by Bombardier Aerospace, which maintains an operational landing strip nearly two kilometres in length. The Canadian military are retaining approximately 60 acres of federal land for a new armoury, defence research facility, and dryland training, leaving 585 acres that will be under the direct control of PDP.

The Board of PDP developed a Vision Statement for Downsview Park that made sustainability a core value and initiated a development path that would lead to



Downsview Park's progress towards sustainability

the conception of the entire 585 acres as an environmentally, socially and economically sustainable community.

"Downsview Park is a unique urban recreational greenspace, a safe and peaceful place, developed according to the principles of environmental, economic and social sustainability, for Canadians to enjoy in all seasons. The Park reflects Canada's mosaic brilliance and celebrates its past, present and future accomplishments."

Following an international design competition (the terms of reference of which were geared to sustainability) to design the core recreational space on more than half of the Downsview Park site, the Tree City design team was chosen from 179 Expressions of Interest from 22 countries. The land and buildings on the rest of the site were designed to support the self-financing mandate of the park's development in keeping with the mandate of PDP Inc.

This year Tree City Inc. completed the Park Plan design, involving an extensive public consultation process, thus preparing the stage for the further development of the sustainable community. The Board initiated a Peer Review process of the Park Plan, inviting leading professionals in urban planning, environmental planning, landscape architecture and architecture to provide advice to ensure that the plan is both sound and achievable.

Results and Remaining Challenges

The Board and team at PDP have worked hard to turn the commitment to sustainability into practice. We have developed a sustainability policy, introduced metrics (including sustainability indicators), and sustainability criteria to evaluate programming, tenancies and other business ventures. More work is needed, here but preliminary results are very promising. Current examples include such ventures as the Hangar Sports Complex—a multi-dimensional sports facility that currently houses four soccer fields, indoor beach volleyball courts, and includes trade show opportunities. Other organizations on site include the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority, the Toronto Wildlife Centre, Ontario Native

Plant Nursery and many others.

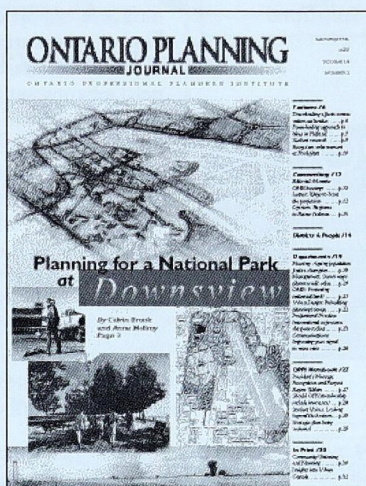
The approach to taking down surplus buildings left over from the CFB Toronto era was to deconstruct rather than demolish. As a result, more than 95 percent of the material was diverted from landfill. More significantly, the Board has transformed the way it regards existing buildings. Though few buildings have been officially designated as having heritage value, the Board has shifted from an earlier view that only those buildings needed for currently identified uses should be retained (and all others deconstructed) to the policy of retaining all buildings unless there are compelling reasons to remove them. This philosophy is very consistent with sustainability—thinking about the need to connect the future to the past, as reflected in our vision statement.

The Park Design prepared by Tree City Inc. exemplifies the values of sustainability in terms of both the role of the park and the operational aspects of its construction and maintenance. The design is replete with exciting images of how the concepts will be implemented throughout the green space area. It now remains to expand the understanding and excitement about sustainability-in-practice to the rest of the site,

including the residential, commercial and industrial areas.

To accomplish this, we will be creating a set of Sustainable Community Development Guidelines (SCDGs) to ensure that the project retains its sustainability focus throughout the entire site and becomes a seamless integrated whole. We will draw on the expertise of a multi-disciplinary team of consultants in such fields as engineering, energy, architecture, landscape architecture, planning, finance, traffic, housing, and sustainable development to provide the best available advice and to analyze ideas generated through public participation.

The SCDGs will include a Land Use Plan with associated development policies. The guidelines will ensure the design standards established for the recreational space are expanded throughout Downsview Park.



Ontario Planning Journal, March/April 1999



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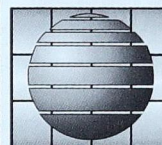
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A "Streets, Blocks and Community" Plan (which establishes access and design connections between the park and the surrounding community) will extend the features and benefits of the park into these neighbourhoods. We intend to integrate ideas for a wide range of sustainably designed housing into the development plans.

PDP intends to lead with the development of the Park by beginning with the cre-

ation of the Canada Forest as soon as this Fall. The phasing of the rest of the development must await the transfer of the land from DND (the Department of National Defence) to PDP.

Conclusions

PDP has the exciting opportunity to apply to Downsview Park nearly all of the planning processes, practices, actions and out-

comes associated with sustainability planning. Our intention is to encourage new learning and innovation with regard to the parklands, residential, and commercial/ industrial areas of the site; and to attract to Downsview Park leading sustainability entrepreneurs, practitioners, and thinkers so that Downsview Park becomes a centre for innovation, a showcase of urban sustainability—in short a place to celebrate the future. But it is also a place to celebrate the heritage of the site, to link the future to the past.

Ultimately PDP will become a sustainability-based "learning organization." Initial efforts to take the company in this direction are now under way through a combination of education/awareness and professional development strategies. Soon the new culture will be reinforced by performance evaluation. In undertaking this kind of organizational transformation, the Board and Management are aware of the need for constant learning and a commitment to "adaptive management." Sustainability governance is a work in progress, and no organization has yet fully mastered all of its elements.


Downsview Park aspires to be at the leading edge of the wave of sustainability thinking and action that is beginning to spread locally, nationally and globally. We at PDP will learn from and further inspire the efforts of planners in Canada and other countries who are helping create a sustainable future for all communities.

David V. J. Bell, PhD., is Chair, Board of Directors, PDP Inc. He is a member of the National Roundtable on the Environment and the Economy, and is a professor and former Dean of the Faculty of Environmental Studies at York University.

Karen A. Gregory, MCIP, RPP, is a senior research consultant with CMHC in Toronto. She is the Ontario Planning Journal's contributing editor for Sustainability and can be contacted at kagregor@cmhc.ca.

- 1 Adopted in April 2000 by the American Planning Association. Available at <http://www.planning.org/policyguides/sustainability.htm>
- 2 "Smart Growth and Growth Management in Ontario." Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) Position Statement. June 15, 2001.

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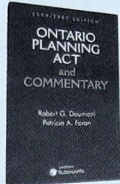
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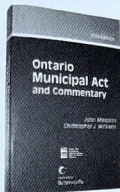


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Legislative Agenda Getting Fuller By the Minutes

By Jason Ferrigan

As we head into the dog days of summer, the provincial government continues to consult on its key planning reform initiatives. In early June, the Government released discussion papers on the Strong Communities Act (Bill 26), the Greenbelt Protection Act (Bill 27) and the draft Provincial Policy Statement. These papers, together with the public information sessions to be held across the province, are designed to promote a better understanding of and solicit input on these three initiatives. The consultation will extend throughout the summer, ending on August 31. (As we go to press, the Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal has just released his paper on Growth Management: more of that in the next issue.)

The draft Provincial Policy Statement

The Government's release of the draft Provincial Policy Statement has been met with a mix of relief and cautious optimism. The draft PPS is very different from the current PPS, addressing growth and settlement, land use patterns, coordination between municipalities, housing, infrastructure, long-term prosperity and social well-being, natural resources, water, agriculture, minerals and petroleum, mineral aggregates, cultural heritage and archaeology as well as natural and human-made hazards. The discussion paper conveniently summarizes the key differences between the existing and proposed PPS in the following table.

Source: Government of Ontario.

The draft PPS is an important step forward, but highlights some of the challenges inherent in crafting a comprehensive policy document of this type. The one size fits all approach to policies should be reconsidered to recognize and better reflect the opportunities and challenges facing fast-growing communities on one hand and slow-growing, stable or declining communities on the other. Other policies, like growth management, which appear to be strengthened, could be further elaborated to ensure that the intent of the policies encouraging intensification and redevelopment are maintained. Additional direction is also needed in certain areas to help municipalities understand when they

have generally satisfied a policy or decide between competing policies. These are just some of the big questions that the content of the draft PPS raises. Another is how the PPS will be implemented, particularly as it relates to Bill 26. The finalization of the PPS and passing of Bill 26 will need to be carefully coordinated to ensure that the PPS and Bill 26 come into force at the same time and to address fairness issues relating to the retroactive nature of Bill 26, which, when passed, will have been deemed to come into force in December 2003.

Bills 26 and 27 take the next steps towards Royal Assent

Back at Queen's Park, Bills 26 and 27 have made their way through second reading. The debates on both Bills were quite exhaustive, filling nearly 200 pages. The debate on Bill 26 has been focused on the proposed measures that would allow the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to declare a provincial interest in a matter scheduled to go before the Ontario Municipal Board and its retroactive nature. Bill 27 went to the Standing Committee on General Government, to which OPPI made a deputation in May. Bill 26 has been referred to the same standing committee. No word on when the hearings on Bill 26 will start. The committee hearings are the last step before the Bills are brought back to the Legislative Assembly for third reading and are given royal assent. With the consultation on the discussion papers under way, look for these Bills to be brought forward for third reading in the fall session.

Ontario Heritage Act and Municipal Act Changes

The government also recently introduced two bills dealing with heritage and the relationship between the provincial and local levels of government.

The first, Bill 60, the Ontario Heritage Amendment Act, received first reading in April. If implemented, this bill would provide municipalities and the Minister with greater powers to preserve and protect heritage properties. It contains a number of administrative amendments. Bill 60 is generally along the lines of a bill brought before the assembly by

the previous government, respecting changes to the *Ontario Heritage Act*. Absent from the bill are any new provisions dealing with financial tools to encourage and support heritage conservation. The absence of such provisions has not gone unnoticed by many heritage and architectural advocacy groups, who are advocating for their inclusion as the bill moves forward.

Managing Growth & Promoting Settlement Areas

- Boundary expansions permitted onto prime agricultural lands, including specialty crop lands, with justification
- General policies for managing and directing growth
- Intensification, redevelopment and infill of employment, residential and other lands prior to expanding onto greenfields

- *Boundary expansions only at time of comprehensive municipal review*
- *Prohibit expansions onto specialty crop land*
- *Upper-tier role to direct growth including allocating population, housing and employment projections for lower-tiers*
- *Recognition of linkages to provincial plans*

Revitalizing Brownfields / Intensification

- Provide opportunities for intensification and redevelopment in areas with sufficient infrastructure, but not required prior to boundary expansions
- Brownfields not specifically recognized
- Contaminated lands viewed mainly as hazards to human health
- No targets for intensification/density
- *Identify brownfields as opportunities for redevelopment*
- *Intensification of existing built-up areas and brownfields development prior to expanding into greenfield areas where possible*
- *Upper-tier municipality to set targets for intensification / minimum densities*
- *All municipalities to permit / facilitate all forms of intensification / redevelopment*
- *Plan infrastructure to support priority growth areas*

Transit-Supportive Land Use Patterns

- Support transit-supportive densities
- Support multi-modal transportation systems
- Protect transportation corridors
- *Promote transit-supportive land use patterns including density / intensification targets*
- *Direct new development to areas well-served by transit*
- *Provide housing / jobs in close proximity to one another*

The second, Bill 92, the Municipal Amendment Act, received first reading in June. If passed, this bill would commit the province to consulting with municipalities on matters of mutual interest in accordance with a memorandum of understanding entered into between the province and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario in 2001. This Bill is being touted as the cornerstone of a new partnership between the two

levels of government and significant illustration of how they should work together.

Jason Ferrigan, MCIP, RPP, is a planner with Urban Strategies Inc. in Toronto. Melanie Hare, MCIP, RPP, and John Ghent, MCIP, RPP, also contribute to these articles on behalf of OPPI. If you know of legislative initiatives readers should know about, contact Jason at jferrigan@urbanstrategies.com.

Policy Areas

Current PPS Policies ("shall have regard to")

Proposed New PPS Policies ("shall be consistent with")

- Focus travel intensive land uses on transit corridors
- Link transportation and growth planning
- Protect strategic future transportation corridors and preclude incompatible uses within them
- Upper-tiers to set minimum densities for transit corridors

provision of housing which is affordable to low and moderate income households

- Define "affordable"
- Permit and facilitate special needs housing

Preserving Greenspace

- Protect significant natural heritage features
- Support planning for recreation
- Protect more significant natural heritage features including coastal wetlands, additional wetlands on Canadian Shield and habitat of endangered and threatened species
- Support urban greening
- Support planning for recreation / tourism and natural heritage systems

Water

- Protect quality and quantity of ground water and surface water and function of sensitive areas
- Use watersheds as basis for planning
- Maintain watershed integrity
- Protect surface and ground water features, functions and drinking water supplies
- Identify vulnerable areas
- Promote conservation and appropriate stormwater management
- Restrict development and site alteration in sensitive areas
- Address cross boundary impacts

Agriculture

- Protect prime agricultural areas and specialty crop lands while non-agricultural uses permitted when justification provided
- Strong protection for specialty crop lands including prohibiting growth expansion onto these lands and prohibiting non-agricultural uses
- Protect prime agricultural areas
- Strictly limit re-designation of prime agricultural lands to other uses
- Prohibit residential lot creation on these lands

Employment Lands

- Long-term (20-year) planning horizon to include sufficient land for industrial, commercial and other uses to promote employment opportunities
- Well-being of downtowns and mainstreets to be maintained
- Ensure adequate supply of land and opportunities to accommodate range/mix of industrial, commercial and other employment uses to meet long-term needs
- Vitality and viability of downtowns and mainstreets to be maintained
- Maintain diversified economic base and range and choice of employment lands
- Focused investment through identification of priority growth areas and corresponding coordination / allocation of employment projections
- Support jobs / housing balance in communities

Air Quality / Energy

- No policies on air quality
- Support energy conservation
- Transit supportive land use patterns
- Provide housing / jobs in close proximity
- Focus travel intensive uses on transit corridors
- Support urban greening
- Support alternative energy systems and conservation

Housing

- Encourage housing forms and densities designed to be affordable to moderate and lower income households
- No target
- No definition of affordable
- Require municipalities to set minimum targets for the



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Court Decisions: Commotion in Environmental Assessment

By Janet Amos

The Ontario *Environmental Assessment Act* (EAA) was dismissed in its early days as the “Environmental Exemption Act.” Every project or plan by every ministry was subject to the EA Act unless specifically exempted. From 1976 to the early 1980s a large number of routine projects were exempted from the requirements of the Act with the result that there were more exemptions than approvals.

During the 1980s and 1990s the Act became notorious for the number of major municipal waste management projects that got bogged down in time-consuming planning processes and astronomically expensive hearings. As a result of the novel and untested EA process, many of Ontario’s large infrastructure projects were denied approval or abandoned. For example, before reaching a conclusion and despite a long and expensive hearing, the Ontario Hydro Demand Supply Plan for expanding Ontario’s electricity system was abandoned in mid-stream. The Act seemed to require an ideal (and continually evolving) planning process.

Over the last two decades, an environmental impact assessment-style approach to comprehensive planning has been incorporated into a number of our standard planning processes. For example, environmental impact statements are now commonplace in planning applications. Indeed, there are hundreds of projects that proceed smoothly under approved EA processes known as Class EAs every year. Still many people associate the Act with interminable processes and contentious projects that are rarely approved. EA is definitely a love-hate relationship.

Until 1996, no provincial government dared to attempt any legislative reform of the EA Act. One of the first actions of the Harris Government in 1996 was to adopt broad

changes, including a requirement for each study to begin with a “Terms of Reference” which must be approved by the Minister of the Environment. At the time of the introduction of the revisions to the EAA, Terms of Reference were seen as a means to bring focus to EA studies and to gain agreement by all parties on identified issues before the EA studies were begun. Terms of reference

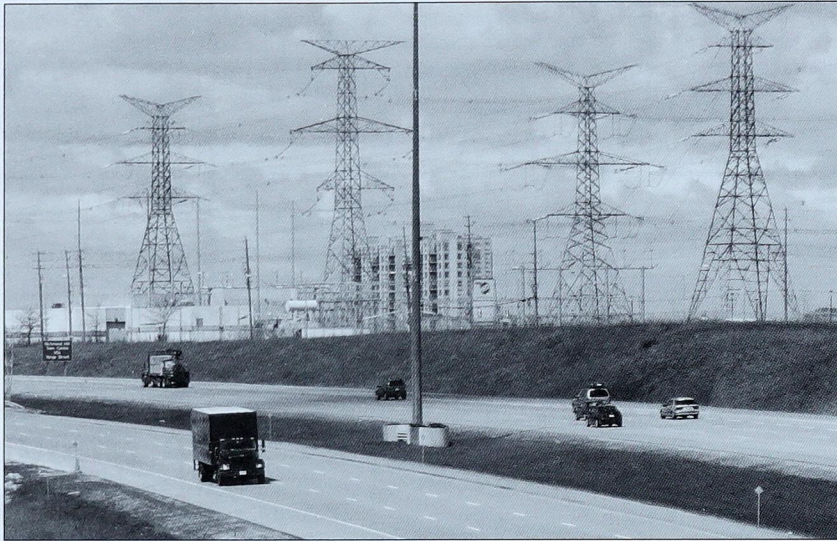


Photo: Steven Route

Court case changes the game plan for Terms of Reference

were supposed to be a process roadmap. The MOE and the EA “community” believed that the terms of reference amendments also allowed the Minister to “scope” the requirements for the EA document—that is, to limit the alternatives that the proponent had to study and consider before finally deciding on the nature of the undertaking.

Proponents hailed the terms of reference initiative as a way to increase “certainty” and to allow the private sector to define study limits. Opponents challenged this change because they felt it would result in broad planning issues being “scoped out” of the decision-making process.

Sutcliffe Decision and Individual EAs

In June 2003, Ontario’s Divisional Court released the “Sutcliffe decision.” This quashed the Minister of the Environment’s approval of a terms of reference for the

expansion of the Richmond landfill site near Napanee. The case was brought by local residents and an aboriginal group, assisted by the Canadian Environmental Law Association. The Minister, in approving the terms of reference, had “scoped out” the need for a comprehensive site search, and it would have allowed the EA study to focus on the expansion of the particular site, without considering the full range of options (waste reduction, alternatives to disposal, diverting to another site, establishing another site).

Two out of three Divisional Court judges in Sutcliffe determined that the EAA does not permit the Minister use the terms of reference to limit the focus of an EA study—each full EA must study the full range of “alternatives to” and “alternative methods” required by the pre-1996 Act. The decision is currently under appeal by the proponent (now joined by the Ontario Attorney General) and is expected to be heard by the Ontario Court of Appeal at the end of June.

Proposed terms of reference for other undertak-

ings have been affected by this decision. In May 2003, the Ministry of Transportation (MTO) released for consultation its draft terms of reference for the extension of Highway 407. The terms of reference established the rationale and the preferred alternative to the undertaking, and included specific study areas for the highway extension. As a result of the Sutcliffe decision, in April 2004, the MTO amended the terms to remove any “scoping.” This meant that the rationale and alternatives would be dealt with as part of the EA study over an unspecified area where transportation problems and opportunities will be examined. After a year’s delay, the Highway 407 EA Study is several steps behind where it was in 2003. Many landowners on the originally proposed routes are claiming hardship resulting from EA studies that originally targeted their

land in the early 1990s but which have still not been resolved.

Many proponents are not prepared to wait until the Sutcliffe appeal is completed. At this time 11 "unfocused" ("unscoped") terms of references are under consideration by the MOE. This suggests that the Sutcliffe decision has caused proponents to be more cautious. Indeed, many proponents believe that they must reconsider even approved terms of reference, or their EA studies could be challenged in light of the Sutcliffe decision. Those affected include two terms of references for transit improvements in York Region that had been approved by the Minister but which are now being resubmitted. Clearly the court decision has created considerable delay, additional costs and uncertainty.

Sanford Decision and Class EAs

Class EAs establish approved EA planning processes for particular "classes" of projects as proposed by a particular proponent. One of the most commonly known Class EAs is the Municipal Engineers Association EA for Municipal Projects (water, wastewater and roads). Once a Class EA is approved, projects that follow the prescribed planning process are considered to comply with the EA Act. Hundreds of projects are processed under Class EAs every year. Class EAs are an EA success story.

When a person appeals a project under the Class EA, the mechanism for appeal is to request that the MOE issue a "Part II Order" (formerly called a bump-up). Lately, this appeal mechanism (which has never been tested by the MOE) has been subject to criticism.

In May this year, the Ontario Superior Court released a decision regarding a private prosecution by an aboriginal person, assisted by Environmental Defence Canada, against the Ontario Realty Corporation. The Ontario Realty Corporation has its own approved Class EA process. Land transfers are subject to a prescribed Class EA planning process which requires that affected parties are consulted and that consultation be documented. In the Sanford decision, as this case is known, the Court found that the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC) had not consulted adequately with aboriginal people when it conducted a land transfer in Markham. The Court concluded that ORC had not met its Class EA requirements and therefore had not complied with the EA Act. The ORC site recognizes a Huron village site to be included in an archaeological reserve that would not be developed, based on the recommendations of the corporation's archaeologist.

Private prosecutions against proponents in

Class EAs are rare. In this case, the appellant found a means of opposing the project, outside the "Part II Order" provisions of the EA Act. Because of this decision (and subject to any appeal), proponents of projects under Class EAs will be motivated to make greater efforts to comply with all requirements of a Class EA, including the need to consult with aboriginal groups.

Carrying on from its success in Markham, Environmental Defence Canada is now undertaking a private prosecution of the City of Vaughan over a road project pursuant to the Municipal Class EA. This is proceeding although the City has agreed to abandon the Class EA process and to pursue the project under an individual EA. If this prosecution is successful, it will bring Class EA concerns closer to home for many land use planners.

Next Steps

Practitioners and proponents must pay attention to the emergence of the legal disputes. When the courts become the decision-makers, instead of the Ministry of Environment, the EA process loses credibility with the public. The challenge is to find a way to ensure that the practice of EA can accomplish its lofty goals while maintaining (or some would say regaining) the support of those it is designed to assist.

In April this year, Minister of the Environment Leona Dombrowski announced that she will appoint an "expert panel to produce recommendations on improvements to the environmental assessment process." Practitioners on the panel will look at possible approaches to improving the environmental assessment process for waste management facilities, transit and

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transportation projects and clean energy facilities. The role of the panel will be to "identify key impediments to obtaining timely approvals for projects subject to the environmental assessment process and examine the existing environmental assessment process and identify potential improvements by category of activity (for example, in the areas of guidance, the review process, the environmental assessment approvals process, other approvals necessary following environmental assessment approval)."

The values of transparency and accountability that the EA process promotes must not be eclipsed by the escalation of legal challenges. Hopefully, the Ministry of Environment panel of experts will recommend a revamped EA process that is fair, robust and resistant to challenge. In the meantime, practitioners must struggle to encourage and maintain these values in the face of court challenges and government reactions that make the EAA process seem wasteful, unmanageable and inconclusive.

Sources:

The Minister's announcement of the expert panel review:

<http://www.ene.gov.on.ca/envision/news/2004/040502mb1.htm>

The Sutcliffe Decision:

<http://www.canlii.org/on/cas/onscdc/2003/2003onscdc10681.html>

The Environmental Defence Canada website includes a news release about the Sanford case:

<http://www.environmentaldefence.ca/press-room/releases/20040517.htm>

Highway 407 EA website:

www.407eastea.com/index.html

Janet E. Amos, MCIP, RPP, Principal of Amos Environment + Planning has over 20 years experience with EA processes and practices. Her practice focuses on the integration of land use planning and Class EAs for municipal projects for both private and public sectors. Janet can be reached at amos@primus.ca.

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He is also contributing editor for the Ontario Planning Journal on Environment. For the past two years he has been collaborating with the Canadian Urban Institute to organize the CUI's annual brownfields conference. This year's conference, with the newly formed Canadian Brownfields Network, will take place in Toronto on October 21-22.



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Board Refuses Mississauga Quarry Conversion

By Paul Chronis

A former shale quarry and brick manufacturing operation on a large parcel of land in the City of Mississauga was the subject of a redevelopment proposal to permit the conversion of the site from "general industrial uses" to a mix of uses comprising of 915 residential units on the majority of the site, along with a range of community recreation and other office commercial uses.

In his bid to redevelop the site, the landowner appealed a site-specific official plan amendment (as well as an appeal of a newly adopted City Official Plan), draft plan of subdivision and zoning to the Ontario Municipal Board. Although the appeals had a long history, the basic land use disagreement between the City and the landowner was:

1. Whether the proposed mixed use development constituted an appropriate re-use of the site;

2. Whether this particular proposal would be compatible with surrounding land uses; and
3. Whether the proposal would create an acceptable living environment for its future residents.


The subject site is located at the edge of Meadowvale Business Park, one of Canada's premier business parks. The topography created by the former quarry use left the site with steep perimeter walls, earth piles and ridges.

During the course of the hearing, the Board heard conflicting evidence and was required to decide whether the hearing was actually to assess the potential conversion of lands from an industrial/employment use to a primarily residential use, or whether the application constituted the first rational planning assessment of the appropriate land use for the subject site. On this point, the

Board accepted the City's evidence that the existing official plan designation of "General Industrial" was applicable to the site for a number of years (instead of an "extractive industrial designation") which could have been applied to the lands in recognition of its quarry use. The "General Industrial" designation therefore did not leave the final end-use of the quarry open ended. As such, the Board concluded that the "General Industrial" designation was not a historical anomaly.

With this finding, the Board indicated that the proponent was required to present a compelling rationale to justify a land use change as well as evidence that the proposal would result in a development that was compatible with surrounding lands which would create an acceptable living environment for its future residents. Therefore, the onus for providing a valid planning justification for the change in the designation rested with the proponent and not with the City.

In the course of the hearing, the Board was asked to consider evidence respecting the economic viability of the project based on unusually high site preparation costs for




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the redevelopment, rendering private redevelopment of the site solely for employment uses not economically viable. On this point, the Board found, among other reasons, that the quarry was not a brownfield site (for the purposes of the Brownfield legislation) and that it continued to be subject to an outstanding licence under the *Aggregate Resources Act*. This licence required the implementation of the final approved rehabilitation plans.

Extensive evidence was also heard on the value of pro forma financial statements. Typically, the Board found that this was one of the tools used by private investors when deciding how to, when to and whether to pursue a development proposal. The Board noted that it was unusual for either municipalities or the Board to receive evidence regarding the financial viability of a development proposal.

In the end, the Board concluded that the pro forma evidence anticipated that the Board would need to make a determination of the adequacy of the profit level that could be generated based on assumptions used within the calculation. The Board found no practical reason or value to make a finding on the return on equity. Such a numerical exercise, in the context of the hearing before the Board, was found not to be in the public interest.

On the technical evidence respecting the issue as to whether the proposal would be compatible with surrounding land uses (predominantly related to noise concerns from a rail line within the subject property), the Board found from the evidence presented that the development had the potential to place the neighbouring industrial operations into non-compliance with the City's noise by-law and into non-compliance with the applicable Ministry of Environment noise guidelines. The Board was persuaded that the proposal would expose the neighbouring industries to potential complaints and prosecution. The Board concluded that the development proposal would jeopardize the existing operations and future expansion plans of the adjoining non-residential operators. The identified need for such extensive, over-engineered noise mitigation measures to address stationary noise sources was evidence of the incompatibility of the proposed residential uses with the adjoining neighbouring industrial operations.

The Board refused the application, citing a number of planning considerations, including:

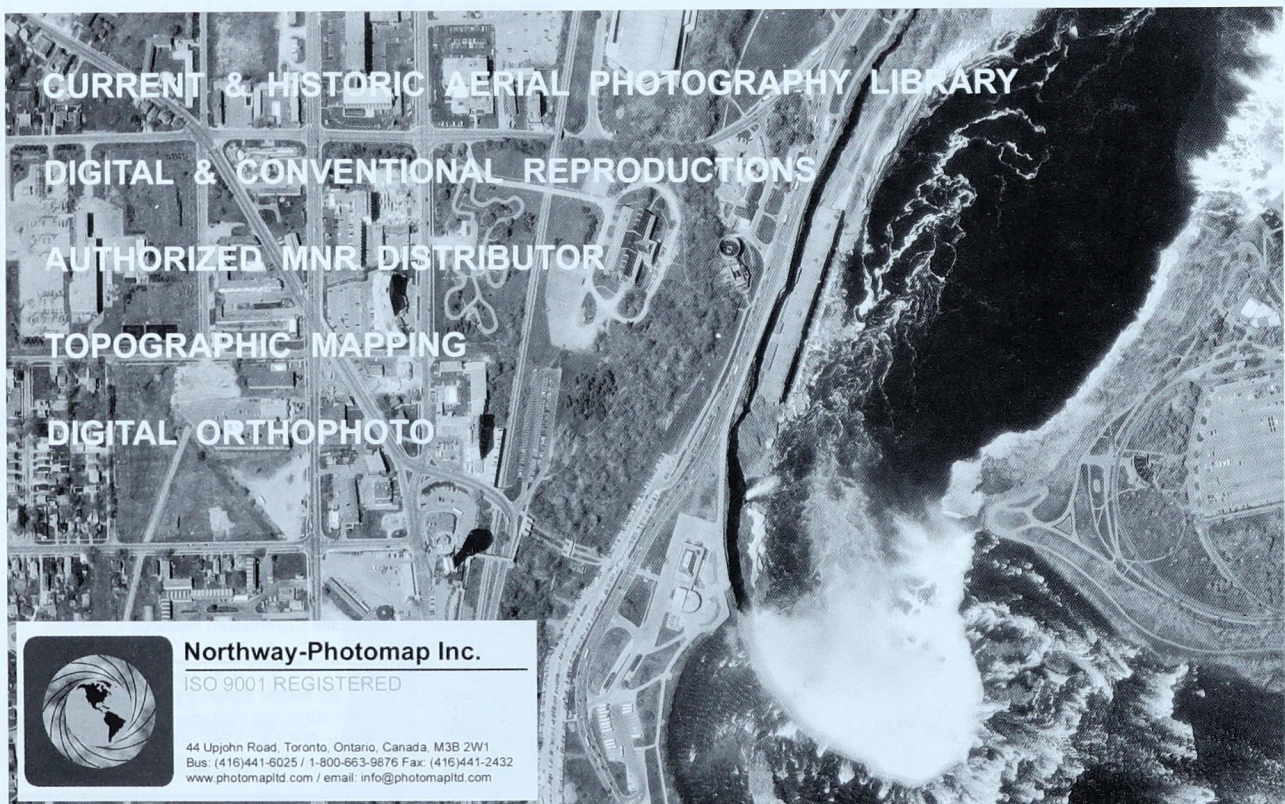
1. The proposal for executive housing lacked the basic elements that purchasers would seek as the community matured; and
2. The difficulty presented in terms of main-

taining the existing base of employment lands. The future potential of the subject site to contribute to the City's economic goals was significant and should not be missed. Public benefits would be generated by an industrial redevelopment of this site in the long term.

In closing, the Board noted that the proposal offended the City's goal of protecting and enhancing its industrial areas, would not be compatible with surrounding uses and would not create an acceptable living environment for its future residents. The Board thus determined that the proposal was not in the public interest and did not represent good planning, and dismissed the appeals.

Source: Ontario Municipal Board
Decision
OMB Case No.: PL980083, PL970870
OMB File No.: O980029 et al.
OMB Members: P. L. Wyger

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



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Faster than a speeding paragraph—or not

By Philippa Campsie

At what point, exactly, did the bullet point supersede the paragraph as a method of organizing text?

All right, I'm exaggerating. But when a couple of my graduate students turned in final papers spattered with more bullets than the shoot-out at the O.K. Corral, I did begin to wonder.

Point form has traditionally been associated with lecture notes, resumes, memos, and meeting minutes. But I can remember a time when it was rare in essays, articles, or formal reports. My guess is that point form became more respectable when formatting took on the trappings of typography. Once it became possible to dress up points with neat little black circles instead of vague-looking dashes, bullet points began to proliferate.

It's not just bullets. Now that anyone with a word processor can turn out something that appears professionally typeset, formatting tricks are starting to affect the content of reports and papers. I'm quite sure that some students spend one-third of their time on research, another third on writing, and the final third on formatting—columns, text boxes, sidebars, three kinds of fonts for different heading levels, dingbats, inset illustrations, running heads, borders, you name it. Not only is there less time for reading, thinking, and writing, but the use of all these gimmicks often leads to choppy, disjointed writing.

Bullets in particular do not allow for continuity. They are useful only for introducing each item of a list in which each element is of equal weight, and they ensure that the list stands out from the surrounding text ("There are three main disadvantages to this approach . . . bullet, bullet, bullet").

However, in the writing of some students—and, to be fair, of many working planners—bullets have become ubiquitous. Every paragraph is introduced by a bullet, and sometimes even headings are preceded by the familiar little black blob, heaven knows why.

The trouble is, bullets do not indicate any relationship between the bits of information they introduce. Transitions between one idea and another (normally heralded by *nevertheless*, *consequently*, *subsequently*, *moreover*, or some other connector) are absent. One of my students, for example, wrote an entire section on the history of a certain topic in the form of bullets. It wasn't history, it was a

laundry list of historical facts. The reader was required to assemble the lot, like a flat-pack from IKEA, into some sort of narrative.

Some writers genuinely believe that bullets or point form make things easier for the reader, particularly in this age of short attention spans. These writers use bullets lavishly in executive summaries, short reports, or briefing notes. Hey, it's point form! None of those tiresome old-fashioned paragraphs to read! They fondly imagine that placing a small black dot in front of a paragraph will magically make it seem concise and to the point. Alas, no. Bullet points can be as long-winded or repetitious as any other kind of writing.

Furthermore, as bullets proliferate, their value for making certain points stand out is lost. If everything has a bullet, then nothing has a bullet. Heavily bulleted documents are no easier to read than ordinary text, and in some cases harder, because the reader has to work out the logical connection, if any, between the bulleted points.

Certain writers use bullet points as a crutch, because they haven't the faintest idea how to organize their thoughts. Let's throw a whole bunch of bullet points at the reader and see what sticks. Download the tiresome task of figuring out what is important and what the logical order should be. Well, I for one have had quite enough of downloading. What do we pay the writers of summaries, reports, and briefing notes for, if we have to do all the work of connection and analysis ourselves?

Civics

Cities transforming themselves into idea creation centres

By Tim Jones

In the not-too-distant future, idea creation will be widely accepted as one of the most important functions of cities and communities. This is not a revolutionary new concept. Jane Jacobs talked about this 30 years ago. But in the past five years there has been an explosion of interest and understanding about the role and power of the arts and creativity in fuelling economic growth and enhancing competitiveness of cities; helping to build social cohesion; and acting as a catalyst for neighbourhood revitalization.

And then there is PowerPoint. It takes a mighty effort of will and considerable familiarity with the software to avoid bullets in PowerPoint. Whole hierarchies emerge at the touch of the tab key—up to at least five levels, each with its own unique colour or symbol, each with text in of a slightly different size.

To be sure, bullets in presentations have their uses, focusing the audience's attention on a series of points (it's the presenter's job to explain the relationships among those points), and serving as a general outline of the talk. However, PowerPoint software, by making bullet points the default format, forces a straitjacket on presentations, stifling other approaches that might be more closely tailored to the content. One bullet point looks much like another. Nothing has more weight than anything else.

Bullets are like any other stylistic trick—helpful in moderation, but deadly when overused or used to disguise sloppy thinking or choppy writing. It's time to ask yourself: are you in the grip of a bullet addiction?

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(We also recall that a senior bureaucrat of our acquaintance explains that every submission to the Ontario Cabinet must now be made in the form of a PowerPoint deck. The full reports—containing actual analysis and conclusions—rarely make it to the decision desk.—Ed.)

So what does this have to do with planners of Canadian cities and communities? For starters, planning successful communities that are able to thrive and compete in the knowledge-based economy will require creating and sustaining environments that are highly conducive to creativity. I am not just referring to arts amenities like public art and cultural attractions that serve as monuments to our cultural sophistication. I am talking about a paradigm shift in our thinking—one that sees the development and retention of creative environments as part of the core services that successful cities and neighbourhoods need to deliver, along with education, health, emergency services, and public works.

There are many challenges that cities face in transforming themselves into idea creation centres, but by far the biggest is the lack of physical infrastructure to support the creative sector. This is exacerbated by the fact that creative people and real estate markets have a perverse relationship. At Artscape, we have begun documenting the process of change that artists trigger in neighbourhoods. There is no question that artists have a revitalizing impact on local

communities, but if they are tenants, they can be quickly priced-out of the neighbourhoods they have helped to enliven.

It is clear that the real estate market, left to its own devices, has a destabilizing impact on the creative sector and usually pushes artists and young entrepreneurs to the margins of urban life where they are disconnected from communities and each other. It is also clear that communities that celebrate and invest in their artists are places that people want to go. A city does not need a huge population of creative people to support an arts scene, but it does need a physical environment where they can interact with each other.

So the challenge we have is not that we lack ingenuity and innovation, it is that our creative forces are often working in isolation, and therefore not generating the kind of ideas, buzz, and energy that will drive growth. Consequently, there is significant untapped potential in many communities. The key to unlocking this potential is building environments that are conducive to creativity. This can be achieved in all sizes of community. This is where the arts, economic development and urban planning goals can comfortably intersect.

The growing acceptance of the notion that creativity drives economic growth, and that people are the key input to the economy is a challenging economic and social fact. Thankfully, leading thinkers in both public and private sectors are beginning to understand this.

Planners must now play a much more active and activist role in building and sustaining creative communities. This is especially true in Canada where we have relatively few tools at our disposal compared to those that American cities that enjoy:

- significant direct public investment
- tax credits
- development charges
- tax-increment financing
- non-profit finance funds
- more substantial deductions for charitable donations
- legislation that requires banks to play a role in community revitalization projects.

So practically speaking, what can planners do to harness the energy of the creative sector? Supporting the development of clusters and micro-clusters is absolutely key.

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Canadian planners need to be highly creative in finding ways to grow creativity within neighbourhoods, districts and cities.

Artscape is a non-profit arts organization in the real estate development and management business. Our development work is highly specialized in that it focuses on the creation of multi-tenant arts centres. Since its inception in 1986, Artscape has created hundreds of studio, live/work, exhibition, performance and retail spaces for artists and arts organizations in six multi-centres across Toronto with several more projects in development. I am happy to say that today, unlike five years ago, there is huge interest in our work and it is coming from many quarters: economic development, arts and culture, urban development services, business and community improvement associations, as well as the private sector.

Artscape has been a leader in arts-driven revitalization through innovative projects like The Distillery District in historic downtown Toronto. We are also currently working with a team of other consultants on a master planning exercise for Governors Island just off the tip of Lower Manhattan.

However, it is not only major urban centres that are interested in this work. In June, Artscape announced its intention to launch the Creative Clusters Development Program, a capacity building program that will train Canadian organizations to develop and manage micro-clusters or multi-tenant centres that serve the arts and creative sector.

We put the initial call out to Ontario communities and 22 organizations applied representing 16 different areas of the province. Our hope is that we will be able to roll this program out nationally given the wide range of interest. This program has been created to assist artists and arts organizations to purchase, develop and manage real estate. There will necessarily be a broader range of community impacts including:

- the creation of long-term affordable space for artists and arts organizations
- encouragement of collaborations with other non-profit sectors as well as the private sector
- exploration of creative solutions to space-related challenges
- conservation of resources otherwise spent by each organization trying to address its space challenges independently
- better use of municipal planning provisions in securing affordable space.

There are three components to the Creative Clusters Development Program, starting with a Workshop Series throughout



Photo: Michael S. Minnett

Distillery district a popular destination

2005, followed by a two-year email/phone support service and project site visits by program faculty and staff. The intent is for communities to learn about non-profit real estate development while creating their first multi-tenant arts centre.

The need for this new program was apparent during and after the incredibly successful Creative Places + Spaces Conference in October 2003, when representatives from dozens of Canadian cities expressed interest in tapping into Artscape's expertise. This

experience helped crystallize the notion that creativity can no longer be restricted to the arts, but must be applied across the full spectrum of problem solving in our cities and neighbourhoods.

The next Creative Places + Spaces Conference will take place in the Fall of 2005. If you would like to be included on the mailing list for this exciting event, contact Liz Kohn at liz@torontoartscape.on.

Tim Jones is executive director of Artscape.

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Transit Oriented Development, Warts and All

How-To Book With a Difference

The New Transit Town: Best Practices in Transit-Oriented Development

Edited by Hank Dittmar & Gloria Ohland
Island Press; Washington
2004
250 Pages

“This book is about investing in smarter development of our community assets.” This is the first sentence of the concluding chapter and sums up the theme of the book quite nicely. Contained within the compilation of essays are the foundations of Transit-Oriented

Growth (TOD). It's not quickly clear what TOD is, but as you read through the first four or five chapters, it begins to take shape. The last few chapters are case studies of TODs in the United States with some commentary about how they meet (or don't meet) the basic objectives of TOD.

The book takes a surprisingly balanced approach, neither touting TOD as the end-all and be-all of development, nor does it state that current practices are acceptable for the long-term future. One of the themes throughout the book is a firm grasp on reality that transit and TOD are essential parts of the toolkit for healthy metropolitan economies and improved quality of life. At the same time the authors acknowledge that transit and TOD have their limitations, that

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autos, highways, and suburbs are also integral parts of the toolkit, and that a return to the era of streetcar suburbs is neither possible nor necessarily desirable. Another statement made in the introductory chapter is that TOD cannot and should not be a utopian vision; it must operate within the constraints of the market and realistic expectations of behaviour and lifestyle patterns.

The plan for this book is to provide the reader with an orientation into the practice of TOD and an evaluation of the first generation of projects emerging around the United States. Case studies make up chapters 7 to 11, and include the geographical areas of Arlington County, Dallas, Atlanta, San Jose, and San Diego.

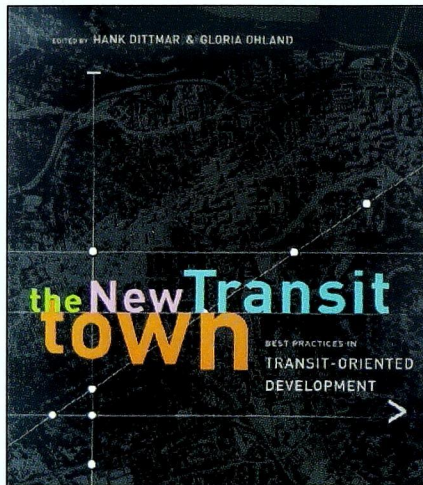
There is a performance-based definition of TOD included in Chapter 2. The definition

specifies five goals that should be sought when planning and implementing a TOD. They are, Location Efficiency, Rich Mix of Choices, Resolution of the Transition between Node and Place, Value Capture, and Place Making.

Throughout the book the authors go through the planning and policy approach needed to facilitate successful TOD, the recommendations for regulatory provisions and specific zoning standards, financing issues, traffic, parking, and case studies demonstrating each of these subjects. It is actually a very comprehensive look at TOD, particularly for those planning

practitioners who have had little or no exposure to the concept.

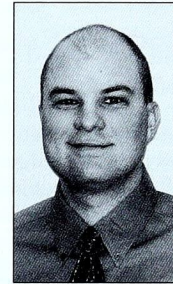
The chapter on financing TOD was particularly interesting, although I found that



the details of development financing were too detailed and specific to the U.S., and they would not be applicable in Canada or Ontario.

One note I would make is that many of the principles of TOD seem to be already in practice in various ways throughout Southern Ontario. Issues of building density, housing mix, and intensification along transit corridors are already a prevalent part of our planning rationale and many municipal policy documents. It seems that there is just that little jump we have to make to go to a full-blown TOD here in Ontario (as defined by the authors). Whether this is desirable or not is the subject of another debate. In any event there is not yet a definitive answer as to the effectiveness of TOD in reducing traffic and parking demand at the local and regional levels, because the projects studied are not yet old enough to provide the empirical data to support such conclusions.

I would recommend this book to anyone who is involved in the development process, particularly in the built-up metropolitan areas of Ontario, namely the GTA and environs. The case studies are interesting, but each is specific only to its geographical location and political framework. Many of the principles used in the U.S. are simply not applicable here due to policy regimes and funding practices, but they are useful to know nonetheless.



T.J. Cieciora, MCIP, RPP, is contributing editor for In Print. He is also a planner with Design Plan Services Inc. in Toronto. Readers interested in doing book reviews should contact TJ at tj@designplan.ca.

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