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RURAL ONTARIO



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Say Hello to OPPI's NEW Website!

If you haven't visited OPPI's website in a while, you should. OPPI has updated its website to better serve members and the public. Our website has a new look. The content is reorganized and is responsive so you can visit on your smartphone, tablet and laptop with ease. To speak to a wider audience, OPPI is introducing easily identifiable and relatable stories through case study examples on the homepage. These case studies illustrate the importance of the work RPPs do and speak to issues that transcend the planning profession. Visit the new ontarioplanners.ca today!

Thanks to OPJ contributors over the years

OPPI would like to thank members for supporting the Ontario Planning Journal, which has served the profession well over the past 30+ years. First started in 1987, the Journal has been the premier publication for Ontario's planning profession and has featured the work and informed opinions of RPPs across



Ontario. This issue will be the last one. In the new year, members and subscribers will receive the first issue of OPPI's new publication, Y Magazine. Y Magazine will feature the discussions RPPs are engaged in and the informed choices and inspired communities that result.

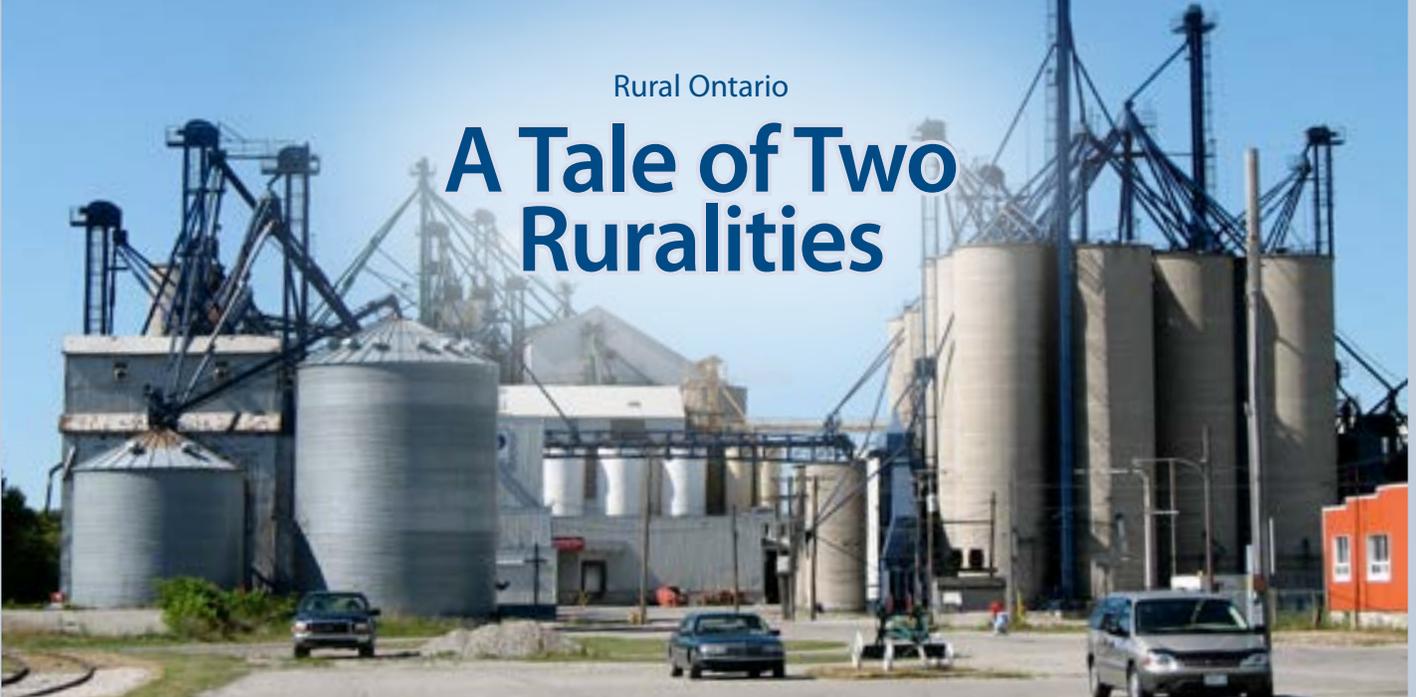
Write for the Planning Exchange blog!

Since 2015, OPPI has offered its Planning Exchange blog, facilitating the exchange of planning knowledge, best practices and dialogue about important issues. It runs on your contributions. OPPI is always looking for great topics to highlight, and members to write. Do you have any experience with the LPAT that you want to share? Are you conducting interesting research and want to profile it? Do you have informed opinions on issues of the day in which planners can play a vital role? Is OPPI missing an emerging topic or theme that members need to know about? If you are interested in contributing, please contact OPPI's Education Manager, Ryan Des Roches at education@ontarioplanners.ca. Submit your post today!



Further information is available on the OPPI website at www.ontarioplanners.ca

A Tale of Two Ruralities



By Wayne Caldwell, RPP

There are two realities within rural Ontario. One is a reality of growth. The 14 counties and regions in closest proximity to the City of Toronto, for example are forecast to grow by more than 2.6-million people or a collective 39 per cent over the next 25 years (2041). The other reality is one of near zero growth and in some instances population decline. In fact, the 20 counties and regions with the lowest growth rates in the province are forecast to collectively grow by only 1 per cent or 17,000 people. Indeed, 10 of these communities are forecast to have zero or negative population growth over this time period.¹



While it is important to remind ourselves that non-metro Ontario was home to more than 2.5-million residents in 2016 (more than in each of Canada's six smallest provinces²), it is also important to remember that there is significant variability in population change between 2011 and 2016 even within counties and regions. The implication is that in some instances while towns and villages are growing the rural landscape is increasingly depopulated (see Figure 1).

These differences impact the practice of planning in fundamental ways. In a growth scenario, planners will spend a larger portion of their time responding to the physical aspects of development—processing applications, developing plans, managing and directing growth, allocating land uses, planning for transportation and infrastructure, protecting the environment and generally dealing with the rural-urban interface and related transitions.

In a low or no-growth scenario, additional community priorities require a response. How do we stimulate economic activity, enhance our small towns and villages, encourage population growth (immigration) and plan for a disproportionately large concentration of elderly? What does a healthy rural

community mean in a no growth scenario and how does this relate to the need to use and manage our agricultural, forestry and scenic resources in an environmentally friendly way?

Rural planning by its nature is multidisciplinary and robust enough to serve as a catalyst to address the range of issues identified above. It includes rural, remote and small town communities and the interface with large urban centres (the fringe). On top of this there are layers of geography reflecting regional differences that exist across the

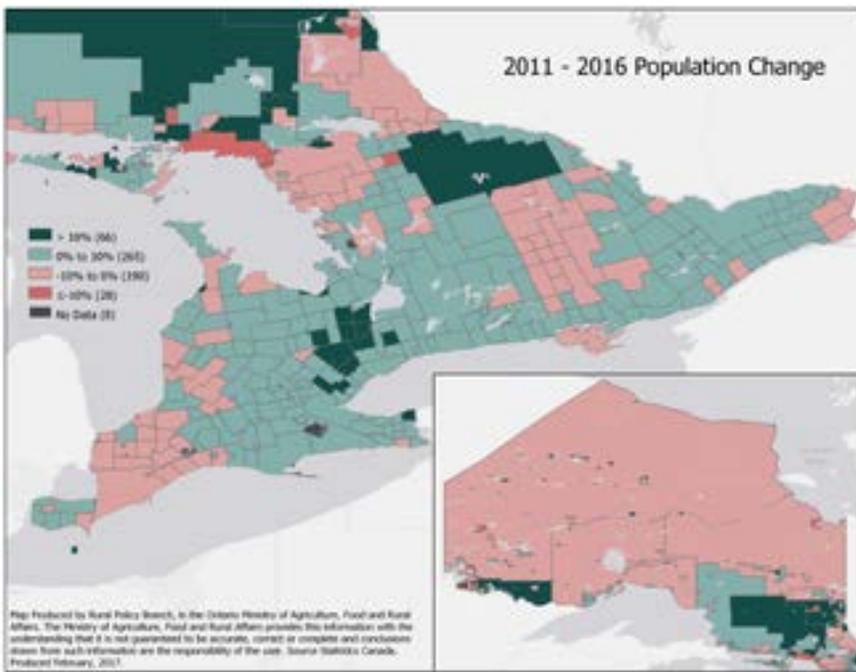
province pointing to the merits of place-based policy.

This issue of the *Journal* provides an opportunity to consider what planning means in these diverse circumstances with a specific focus on those areas of the province outside the direct influence of large urban centres. The selection of rural focused articles are summarized as follows:

The article by Sara Epp considers local food systems in northern Ontario and the settlement of Mennonite farmers in a number of northern communities. While this movement has placed demands on municipal services, it has contributed to both economic and population growth and diversity.

Likewise, the article by Howes and Rees demonstrates the potential to build economic opportunities connected to waterfront property owners. They note that within nine eastern Ontario upper-tier municipalities there were nearly 100,000 waterfront property owners. This sector was studied and the results demonstrate the potential for municipalities to work with this group to enhance local economies and the vitality of small towns and villages throughout the region.

A third article written by Pam Duesling, the director of planning in Norfolk County and a farmer herself, reflects on the changes in policy that are occurring across rural Ontario that are leading to enhanced



Population change in Ontario

diversification on the farm—from wedding venues to micro-breweries. While noting the benefits that this can have on the farm, she also issues a word of caution, making sure that we continue to plan for the well-being of downtowns that may be affected by these trends.

This perspective leads naturally to the article by Collins, Doncaster, Geerts, and Puterbough. Within their article they identify a number of tools to support economic diversification and community development focused on the agri-food sector. As they note, this sector is an important economic driver, contributing almost \$40-billion in gross domestic product to Ontario's economy while supporting more than 800,000 jobs.

The article by Burnham, Bastedo and Longboat demonstrates the essential importance of using appropriate planning processes when working with Indigenous communities. The authors encourage planners to reframe their own understanding of planning and use community-led planning approaches, to reclaim decision-making ways that have been obstructed by colonial dominance.

While these articles capture a range of topics, they are just a sample of current issues, policy and planning practice relevant in rural Ontario. Additional topics could have been considered. At the University of Guelph, for example, we have recently completed three major studies intended to assist planners in their work with rural communities. These topics and links to further information are offered below:

Measuring Farmland Loss—Official plan amendments that convert prime farmland to non-farm uses have been identified and documented across most of the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The results provide insight into the effectiveness of the *Greenbelt Plan*. Since 2005, for example, the conversion of prime farmland within the Protected Countryside has virtually stopped. This is in direct contrast to the period prior to 2005.

MAP: RURAL POLICY BRANCH, ONTARIO MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE

Detailed results are available on my [website](#). This work is now continuing for the entire province.

Healthy Rural and Small Town Communities—While the concept of healthy communities has brought planning and public health together, the focus has largely been urban. The Healthy Rural Communities project has been completed in partnership with OPPI and a number of rural health units. The [results](#) are available online and include a toolkit for rural municipalities. While it includes elements of design and active transportation for example, it also brings a rural lens to actions connected to safe and affordable housing, planning for special age groups and climate change, among a number of other topics.

Enhancing Local Food—Surprisingly, there are many communities across rural Ontario with limited access to local food. The Enhancing Local Food project identifies and analyzes issues of local food access and how this impacts food sovereignty/security. While the project was completed in the Northern Ontario context the recommendations and actions are relevant for communities across Ontario. These [findings](#) are available online and include a toolkit.

This article points to the divergent needs of those areas within rural Ontario facing enormous growth pressures compared to those areas that are and will struggle to maintain their existing population. These differences call for planning policies that accommodate this reality. Thanks to the contributing authors, insight has been provided that can help contribute to the betterment of rural and small town Ontario.

Wayne Caldwell, MCIP, RPP, is a member of OPPI and professor in Rural Planning and Development at the University of Guelph. His works centres on rural and small town communities and his three most recent books focus on rural resilience, farmland preservation and attracting newcomers to rural communities. He is a passionate advocate for the betterment of rural communities and previously served as President of OPPI and is a current member of the Greenbelt Council. He invites comments and inquiries from planners and students who share his interest in rural well-being.

Endnotes

- 1 Population forecasts (reference scenario) have been obtained from the Ontario Ministry of Finance. <https://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/demographics/projections>
- 2 Rural Ontario Institute (Rural Ontario's Demography: Census Update 2016 released March 2017)

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Mennonite and Social Planning Perspectives

By Sara Epp

Many rural communities across Ontario face challenges related to population decline, youth retention and economic stagnation. A number of these communities are actively promoting rural migration and seeking to attract new immigrants. It can be a challenge to meet the needs of these new community members, and planners must adopt a social perspective. Social planning recognizes the diversity of local communities and seeks to plan in an inclusive manner that considers the needs of all residents.

Within Ontario, the challenges associated with population decline are compounded by issues of food security and access to locally produced food, especially in more northern and remote locales. Many parts of northern Ontario are experiencing an influx of farmers from southern Ontario due to the availability of cheaper land. These new northern residents stimulate economic activity, enhance food security and in some places, have encouraged population growth.

These new residents come from diverse backgrounds and include new immigrants, as well as unique cultural groups, such as Old Order Mennonites. Planners in these communities often have limited resources available to address the needs of these migrants, while also balancing the needs of existing residents. Further compounding these challenges is a lack of understanding regarding the lifestyle of these migrants, their needs and the role they fill within their new community.

In northern Ontario, a migration of Old Order Mennonites from southern Ontario has occurred over the past 15 years, due to the availability of agricultural land priced significantly lower than in southern Ontario. While there are many different types of Mennonite groups that fall within the Anabaptist religion, Old Order Mennonites are considered the most conservative of all Mennonite groups. This conservative view is evident in their agricultural lifestyle, traditional clothing, continued use of horse and buggy for transportation and avoidance of modern technology. They are often segregated within society due to their private school system, use of Pennsylvania Deutsch as their primary language and avoidance of non-Mennonite organizations (e.g., churches, community events, etc.).

As depicted in Figure 1, three northern communities—Massey, Desbarats and Black River-Matheson—have experienced an influx of Old Order

Mennonite families, seeking affordable agricultural land. The migration of Old Order Mennonites began in Desbarats in 2004, Massey in 2006 and Black River-Matheson in 2013, with five families moving to each town. Today, there are approximately 100 Old Order Mennonite families within these three towns, representing nearly 500 people.

With the migration of Old Order Mennonites, significant agricultural developments have ensued, with a broad range of livestock, crops and food processing endeavours undertaken. These families have also established secondary businesses including woodworking, carpentry, equipment repair and retail outlets for the sale of fresh food and other products (shown in Figure 2). Of importance, has been their commitment to producing fresh food for sale and consumption locally and their pursuit of a variety of partnerships that ship their produce to other northern towns, including a remote First Nations community. Access to locally produced food has been well received by residents and retail establishments have been broadly supported within each community. The Old Order Mennonite farmers have had significant impacts on food security and have helped re-establish agriculture in these three locales.

While the movement of Old Order Mennonite farmers to northern Ontario has brought significant benefits, challenges related to land use planning, transportation networks and community engagement have been experienced. While agriculture has a strong history within northern Ontario, its prominence has been reduced due in part to aggregate operations and



Figure 1: Location of three northern communities experiencing the migration of Old Order Mennonites

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR

opportunities to work within the extractive industries. As a result, municipal staff, including planners and building inspectors, are unprepared for the unique planning requirements and legislative regulations associated with agriculture. Furthermore, the needs of Old Order Mennonites are unique and create significant logistical challenges.

As Old Order Mennonites rely on a horse and buggy for transportation, their presence on provincial highways and unmaintained rural roads is problematic. While the main highways are regularly maintained, the presence of horse and buggies and other slow-moving farm equipment has posed significant safety concerns and required road improvements (e.g., wider shoulders). Finally, community engagement among Old Order Mennonites is low, as, for example, they do not attend local schools, participate in social events or engage in democratic processes. For some residents, this lack of participation has been a source of frustration.

Within each of these communities, however, the migration of the Old Order Mennonites has generally been viewed positively and their continued migration has been encouraged. Their impacts on local food and food security are immense, with high demand for local produce and value-added goods. This positive outlook can be attributed to municipal staff and elected officials that have worked hard to engage the Old Order Mennonite community and balance their

needs with those of the broader community.

An important component has been communication and the recognition that public engagement should occur through a variety of formats depending on the needs of community members. From a social planning perspective, this engagement is critical because it recognizes the diverse needs and preferences of community members and the importance of engaging all members of society.

When planning for diverse cultural groups, social planning practices that seek inclusivity and engagement across a broad spectrum of individuals is important. The three northern communities presented in this article highlight both the challenges and opportunities associated with rural migration. While Old Order Mennonites require unique styles of engagement, their impacts on food security, economic development and population growth within these northern towns cannot be understated and their continued growth within these communities has been encouraged.

Sara Epp, MA, is a PhD candidate at the University of Guelph in the Rural Studies program. Her current research interests are related to land use planning and the impacts of planning policies on farm viability. Her dissertation explores the expansion of agriculture in northern Ontario, focusing on the impacts of policy on farmer resilience and community economic development.



Figure 2: Examples of Old Order Mennonite businesses and availability of locally produced food in northern Ontario

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE AUTHOR



Rural Economic Development

By Katherine Howes & Terry Rees

The Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations (FOCA) is a federation of over 500 community associations located in over 100 rural municipalities across Ontario. Since 1963, FOCA has represented these associations and their member families, to protect thriving and sustainable waterfronts across Ontario. FOCA knows that waterfront property owners, both seasonal and permanent, are a significant force in Ontario. The property taxes from this cohort alone generate an estimated \$75-billion annually, directly supporting local government programs and infrastructure. Cottage-related household expenditures in rural communities amount to considerably more than that each year.

Despite this significant footprint, a comprehensive review of this sector has never been conducted to determine how this part of the rural population could be more thoughtfully embedded into local economic development.

In 2017-18, FOCA undertook a [study](#) to articulate the significance of waterfront property owners as vital economic contributors to rural communities in Ontario. In partnership with the University of Guelph's School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, FOCA conducted a study of eastern Ontario, where tourism and a thriving cottage industry play key economic roles. Increasingly seasonal residents nearing retirement are spending more time at their second homes, with some choosing to relocate there permanently. Within the study are there are nine upper-tier municipalities, and in 2012 it was estimated that there were 95,587 waterfront property owners, representing 35.4 per cent of all residential properties.

The study results indicate widespread optimism among waterfront property owners regarding potential opportunities to engage in rural economies, while identifying challenges, such as poor high-speed internet coverage and lack of professional networking opportunities. Key informant interviews with economic development staff revealed that engaging waterfront property owners in economic development opportunities beyond their role as a consumer had rarely been considered and municipalities were struggling to find ways to engage with waterfront property owners.

The study found that more than half of those surveyed either worked from their waterfront community or have considered doing so. Those individuals are mainly motivated by greater access to

the outdoors and a strong connection to living on the waterfront. Half of respondents have owned their cottage or waterfront property for over 25 years, which contributes to a strong connection to place. However, respondents indicated some barriers to working from their cottage: gaps in technology (internet, cell service); insufficient municipal services (garbage pick-up, winter road maintenance); and a lack of professional networks or peer motivators in the area.

This study supports a recommendation for place-based development with diverse opportunities to integrate waterfront property owners into local community networks, to develop new business ideas, and to revitalize rural economies. Lake associations have been identified as important communication partners in this endeavour. To better inform municipal rural economic development strategies recommendations include the need for more data about seasonal waterfront property owners, as well as further studies quantifying urban outmigration.

Recommendations for the three key stakeholders participating in this study—the waterfront property owners, FOCA, and eastern Ontario municipalities—are summarized as follows:

Waterfront Property Owners—Owners can take a more active role in establishing or participating in local economic development committees in their local municipality.

FOCA—The federation has a role in bridging the gap to build stronger engagement between waterfront



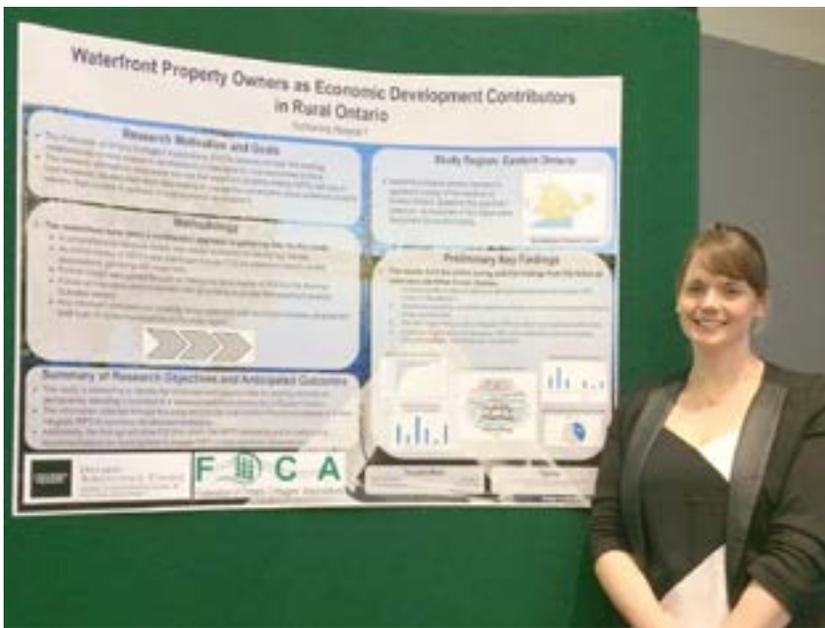
Katherine Howes



Terry Rees



Research meeting



OMAFRA WEBRES Rural Symposium poster presentation, March, 2018

property owners and municipalities, to better connect owners with local economic development personnel, programs, and chambers of commerce. Also, FOCA has a role in fostering local networking opportunities to connect owners with peer mentors who have successfully made the shift to rural work/life, as well as rural economic development organizations that can support and connect owners with local opportunities.

Municipal government—Municipalities need to continue to invest in rural high-speed internet service and other year-round programs and services, to increase the appeal for owners to relocate (or start) their businesses in rural communities. To better include Waterfront Property Owners in rural economic development initiatives, Local economic development advisory committees with waterfront property owner membership should be created to help bridge the communication gap and help to advocate the interests of owners in community economic development.

The development of small and medium enterprises in rural communities is of great interest to both economic development staff and to land use planners. Some considerations to allow this development to occur include: the availability of suitable commercial properties, zoning by-laws, available servicing for residential properties, and the implications for a growing year-round population.

To increase the diversity and viability of their rural economies, rural municipalities should proactively engage waterfront property owners in local economic development.

Katherine Howes is a MSc. Candidate in Rural Planning & Development at the University of Guelph and a land use planner at D.M Wills Associates in Peterborough. Terry Rees is executive director, Federation of Ontario Cottagers' Associations.

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Size and Scale Matters

By Pam Duesling, RPP

There is no doubt about it, today's agriculture includes wine tasting, bakeries, cheese factories, cafés, zip lines, breweries, concerts and anything else an entrepreneurial farmer can dream... But, are these new uses compatible with historical farming operations and are they appropriate on prime agricultural lands?

Agriculture in the last decade has substantially changed in Ontario as new uses are continuously introduced in agricultural areas. It is not only new crops and improved farming practices that are being introduced, it is new businesses and not all of them are related to farming. Ontario has more than half of the highest quality farmland in Canada³. Prime agricultural lands are defined by the *Provincial Policy Statement* as specialty crop areas and/or Canada Land Inventory Class 1, 2 and 3 lands.¹

"Ontario's prime agriculture land is a finite, non-renewable resource comprising less than 5 per cent of Ontario's land base. It is the foundation for food, fibre and fur production, the local food economy, agri-food exports, economic prosperity and the growing bio-based economy."² The PPS requires that prime agricultural areas be protected for long-term agriculture use.¹

While it is important to support farmer's creativity and innovation, it should not come at the expense of lost prime farmland. Therefore, size and scale of agricultural diversification on prime agricultural land matters!

Norfolk County along the Lake Erie shoreline in southwestern Ontario has had to diversify out of tobacco and into a variety of other crops and uses to maintain livelihoods. County farmers are extremely innovative out of necessity and continue to push the boundaries of who farmers are and what farmers do. New uses such as wineries, breweries, eco-adventures, zip-lines, restaurants, concert venues, botanical gardens, wedding venues and much more are now all located on prime agricultural lands in Norfolk County.

While agricultural diversification is on the rise in Ontario, the number of overall farms is declining—59,728 in 2001 to 49,600 in 2015—and the number of farms with sales over \$100,000 is increasing.³ Long gone are the days of small post-war family farms for simple food production. Larger farms dominate the Ontario market, which leaves small-to-medium-size farms looking for innovative opportunities.

All agricultural lands in Norfolk County are considered prime agricultural lands and contribute to an abundance of crop production. The county is Canada's leading producer of asparagus, tart cherries,

ginseng, peppers, pumpkins, squash and zucchini and leads Ontario in growing cabbage, rye and strawberries. In Ontario, Norfolk's fertile soils are only matched within the geographic locations of the Holland Marsh and the Niagara Tender Fruit Region.

Agricultural diversification in terms of new uses on farms can consume many acres of farmland (e.g., parking and event space) and is not a good use of prime agricultural land. Therefore, the size of secondary uses on farms should be limited, allowing farmers the opportunity for innovation and additional livelihoods while balancing the importance of the natural resources.

In 2016 the Province of Ontario created guidelines for Agriculture, Agriculture Related, and On-Farm Diversified Uses, to ensure that prime agricultural lands remain for crop production and farming purposes.² These guidelines are an essential tool in Norfolk County as they contribute not only to the protection of prime agricultural lands but to limiting conflicts between non-farming uses and farming production.

These guidelines recommend that an on-farm diversified use be located only on a farm, secondary to the principal agricultural use of the property, limited in area (up to 2 per cent of a farm parcel to a maximum of 1 ha (10,000 m²). They may include home occupations, agri-tourism and uses that produce value-added agricultural products and must be compatible with and not hinder surrounding agricultural operations.² Norfolk County not only utilizes these OMAFRA guidelines but has incorporated them as policy in the Norfolk County Official Plan.

Site plan control can also offer an opportunity to buffer normal farming practices, such as storage of manure, farm equipment, livestock and equipment traffic, from non-farm uses, such as parking, public entrances/exits, outdoor entertainment areas, noise and



Whistling Gardens—Botanical Garden, Wilsonville, Norfolk County, Ontario



lighting. Many agri-tourists are not accustomed to the true intricacies of “the field to fork” approach and prefer a romantic experience on the farm without odors and on-farm nuisances. Therefore, on-farm diversification can affect the logistics of normal farm practices.

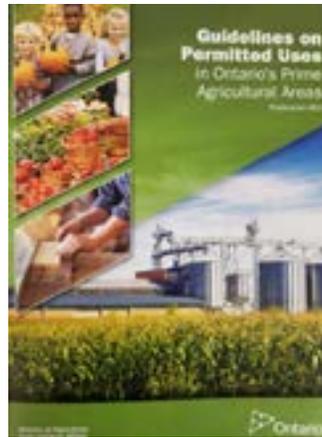
Finally, new uses on farms can diminish retail and commercial opportunities from other areas of a community, especially local downtowns. Many rural downtowns are struggling. Retail food stores such as cheese shops, butchers, arts and crafts, wine stores, etc. could assist in making local rural downtown areas flourish. A hub of local food shopping that is unique, trendy and touristy all in one location surrounded by the farms that supply the stores is unheard of in our current environment of on-farm diversified uses.

Currently, Norfolk County is experiencing a decline of store fronts in its communities’ downtowns. Planning staff are conducting a downtown secondary plan to assist in rejuvenating downtowns as the historic boutique shops—the butcher, baker and candlestick maker—have now moved to the farm! Agricultural diversification can also affect other areas of a healthy local community.

Prime agricultural land is a precious commodity not only in Norfolk County but all of Ontario. While farmers attempt to be innovative and creative by introducing new non-agricultural uses on the farm, we need to be cautious about the size and scale of these ventures so as to not utilize too much of our precious farmland commodity.

I urge all rural Ontario planners to utilize the OMAFRA guidelines to their fullest potential, think resource based, anticipate larger community effects, and listen to what is not yet being said by the next generation of farmers.

Pam Duesling MCIP, RPP is a member of OPPI and the director of planning in Norfolk County and proud 6th generation farmer in Norfolk County. Pam is currently a candidate for her PhD in Rural Studies at the University of Guelph.



Sources

- 1 Ministry of Municipal Affairs Housing – Provincial Policy Statement, 2014
- 2 Ontario Ministry Agriculture Food Rural Affairs - Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas, 2016
- 3 Statistics Canada, Census of Agriculture, 2016

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Resources to explore

By Danielle Collins, Michele Doncaster, Helma Geerts, RPP, Carolyn Puterbough

This article is a call to action for planners, economic developers and community members to support economic diversification and community development focused on the agri-food sector.

The agri-food sector is one of the most recession-proof industries. From the sparsely populated north to the booming south, the agri-food sector is an important economic driver, contributing almost \$40-billion in gross domestic product to Ontario's economy. The sector supports more than 800,000 jobs (11.5 per cent of the total employed labour force in Ontario) and is celebrated for its contribution to our quality of life, good health and wellbeing.

In planning for prosperous rural communities and agricultural areas, we need to consider the entire agri-food value chain. This will also help communities and future generations create healthy, vibrant communities, enjoy local food, achieve greater food security, and ensure a skilled, dynamic workforce is available to fill new opportunities.

Ontario is home to the majority of Canada's best Class 1 farmland, an abundant water supply, one of North America's largest food processing clusters, a dense fast-growing population, and a well-educated workforce. These attributes give the sector a global competitive advantage. Challenges such as soil erosion, climate impacts (e.g., droughts and floods) and trade issues continue to demand attention.

Traditionally, agricultural land use planning has focused on farmland protection. The new norm is to combine farmland protection with economic development to deliberately and strategically plan for the needs of the agri-food sector so it can grow and prosper.

In the Greater Golden Horseshoe, the need for a systems approach is particularly critical, as farmland and clusters of agri-food infrastructure must coexist and be compatible with rapidly growing communities. The Province of Ontario is applying an [agricultural system](#) approach to the region to protect a continuous, productive land base for agriculture across municipalities, while recognizing the agri-food supply chain on which the sector depends.

While the current focus of the agricultural system is the Greater Golden Horseshoe, other communities

could adopt a similar approach as a best practice.

To make good land use and economic development decisions, it is necessary to have a full understanding of the local agri-food sector. Analysing the data will enable you to set goals, identify gaps and opportunities, develop strategies, and explain the economic importance of the sector to your council. It will also build credibility with farmers and business owners in your community.

Many resources, tools and initiatives are available to support the agri-food sector. Collaboration across disciplines, such as public health, economic development, land use planning, tourism, food security and poverty reduction, is intersecting around agriculture and in particular local food. It's an exciting time to seek out opportunities to better support the long-term viability of the agri-food sector and learn from others to gain experience and build expertise.

Here are a few examples of the tools and resources that can assist you in pursuing agricultural economic development. Links to all of the resources mentioned in this article are provided in this [website](https://ofa.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/OFA-OMAFRA-Resources-to-Support-Ag-in-Your-Community.pdf): <https://ofa.on.ca/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/OFA-OMAFRA-Resources-to-Support-Ag-in-Your-Community.pdf>.

[Agriculture Economic Development: A Resource Guide for Communities](#)—Primer on agriculture economic development. It provides information to assess community readiness, prepare community snapshots and undertake any number of economic development initiatives.

[Statistics Canada](#)—Using census information, statistical profiles can help show what economic and community assets are present. It provides business information (e.g., employment profiles, business types and numbers), agricultural profiles (e.g., area in agriculture, number and type of farms, products produced on those farms, gross farm receipts), food expenditure profiles (e.g., household income, food expenditure), and food consumption statistics. These statistics as well as country profiles across Ontario are available on OMAFRA's website.

[Agricultural System Mapping Portal](#)—Maps show transportation corridors and agri-food infrastructure and assets such as crop and livestock production areas,



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farmers markets, and distribution centres. For the first time, municipalities, business investors and organizations can easily visualize the agri-food supply chain in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The portal can be used to identify gaps and opportunities to grow the sector, as well as to support tourism, trade and marketing initiatives.

Agricultural Information Atlas—An interactive online application allows you to create custom maps and find agricultural information Ontario-wide. It combines agricultural data on soils and drainage with data layers from other ministries.

ConnectON—An agri-food asset mapping database with an inventory of existing production, processing, distribution and marketing businesses that support food and farming activities.

Analyst—Communities can use this online tool to estimate the number of jobs in the agriculture system, identify changes in job numbers over time, and whether the community has a specialization within the agri-food industry. It provides data on regional economies and workforces.

Agriculture System Implementation Procedures—The procedures explain how to protect a continuous, productive land base for agriculture and how to combine that with economic development. Communities can support the agri-food sector regardless of their capacity or the stage they are at in exploring agriculture as an economic development opportunity. The document provides a handy matrix to help match capacity with achievable activities.

Agri-Food Initiatives Ontario Directory—An online idea bank of best practices, inspirational ideas and resources for use by communities across the province.

Community of Practice—Virtually brings together economic development and planning professionals across Ontario interested in agriculture and agri-business issues. Previous topics include how to find

agri-food data, culinary tourism, farm succession planning and agri-food infrastructure. Visit the website for information on past webinars and to find out about future topics.

Agricultural impact assessment—Tool to evaluate the potential impacts of non-agricultural development on agricultural operations and the broader agricultural system. It provides recommendations on how to avoid, minimize and mitigate adverse impacts. OMAFRA is developing guidelines to assist with the completion of agricultural impact assessments.

Of the many ways to support agriculture and agri-food businesses, here are a few examples.

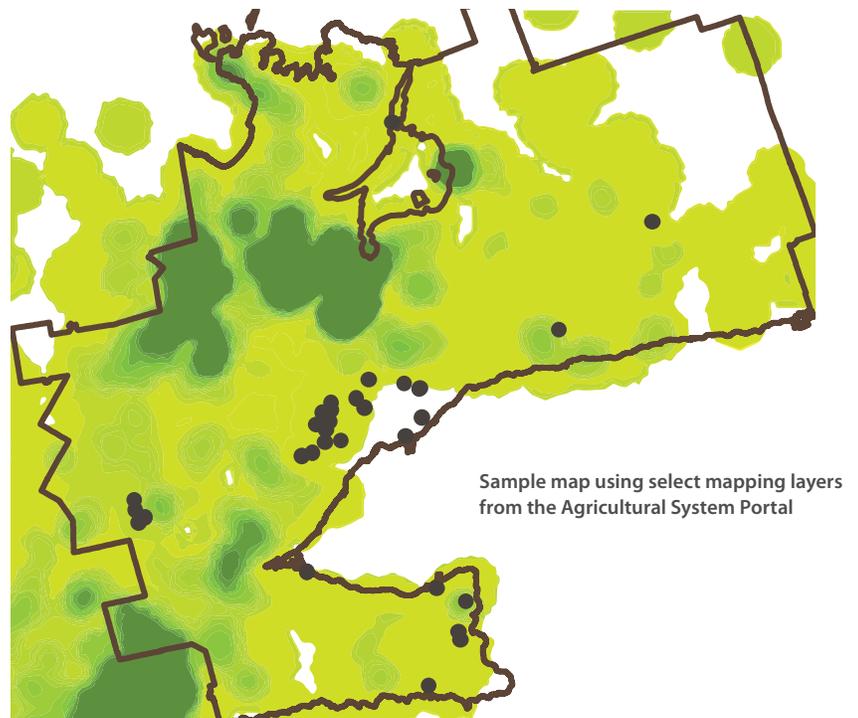
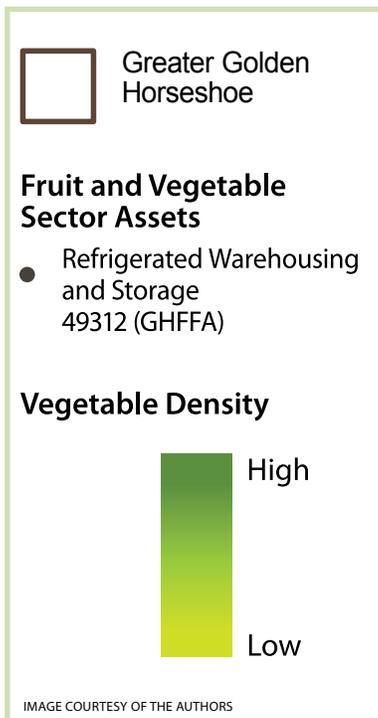
Implementing Community Improvement Plans with a rural and agricultural focus means you target grants and loans to agri-food businesses embarking on value-added agricultural production and direct farm marketing ventures.

Diversified uses such as retail shops, small-scale food processing and culinary tourism experiences can all be supported through proactive comprehensive zoning by-laws that reflect OMAFRA's Guidelines on Permitted Uses in Ontario's Prime Agricultural Areas.

Conducting agri-food **asset mapping** helps to evaluate your regional strengths and identify gaps in processing or other infrastructure that should be addressed.

Proud of initiatives in your community? Share your projects on the **OFA Agri-Food Initiatives Directory**.

Danielle Collins, is an economic development policy analyst with the Ontario Federation of Agriculture. Michele Doncaster is a candidate member of OPPI and a policy advisor, Helma Geerts, RPP, is a member of OPPI and a policy advisor and Carolyn Puterbough is an agriculture & rural economic development advisor with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.





Our People Are The Planners

By Stephanie Burnham, Jake Bastedo & Sheri Longboat

Many Indigenous cultures have been given instructions on how to plan through various laws, ceremonies, and teachings. These constructs bring balance in the community and are taught at a very young age to ensure that resources are sustained for future generations.

The Haudenosaunee (Six Nations) Thanksgiving Address is one such teaching that identifies primary Haudenosaunee planning principles that centre on the balance created by giving Thanks to Creator, which reinforces our connections with all of creation. It teaches “mutual respect, conservation, love, generosity, and the responsibility to understand that what is done to one part of the Web of Life, we do to ourselves.”¹ The Thanksgiving Address identifies the cycle of 13 ceremonies, and acknowledges all within creation needed for sustenance. Most ceremonies are “a way of expressing thanks to the people, the natural world, the spirit world and the Creator.”² They are reminders that we must ensure we are prepared for the next year’s growing season and that we are caretakers for the next generations to come. It is through our ceremonies that we help to maintain the health and prosperity of the nations.

The value of the Haudenosaunee is to prepare for the 7th generation—we borrow the earth, from our children’s children and it is our responsibility to protect the earth and the culture for future generations. All decisions made now consider the future generations who will inherit the earth. This very essence of planning is built into the Haudenosaunee governance.

Community members’ opinions are valued because they hold knowledge of the land. Different families have different understandings, and therefore all voices are welcome at the fire (table) and decision-making is inclusive, integrative and collaborative.

The late Cayuga Chief Jake Thomas once said, “There are no experts in Iroquois [Haudenosaunee] culture. When we come together we say we put our minds on the table. That way if you have knowledge I could use, I could borrow it and if I have knowledge you can use, you can borrow it. We always have something to learn.” Therefore, engagement with the community is critical in any planning process; public

input shapes the decisions that are being made and guides the process to create balance and harmony within the Haudenosaunee communities.

Many Indigenous communities have or are now creating community-led planning processes, often referred to as comprehensive community planning, to reclaim decision-making ways that have been obstructed by colonial dominance.

The Six Nations of the Grand River created a plan from community voices in 2009-2010 to lay out objectives for community development. Based on Haudenosaunee teachings and protocols, the plan organized action items into seven priority categories: Mother Earth, Built Environment, Employment & Education, Economic Development, Community, Wellbeing and Arts & Culture. The community is now updating the plan and is identifying current issues and emerging priorities.

Seen as a living document, this update will infuse the vision, values and goals reflective of the community today. The overall engagement approach is to meet the community where it is at; to hear conversation on the ground, as opposed to in large, contrived and unnatural public meetings where community members have expressed their voices are not heard or fear those places are unsafe to share ideas. The main strategies for engagement are centred on traditional forms of gathering with

family and community, and providing opportunity for focused discussion and feedback. These include: pop-up booths in public events/places, hosting the community plan team to facilitate a discussion, focus groups based on the priority categories, and open houses to share what has been heard and gather feedback on the community plan update.

The purpose of the engagement is foremost to gather the ideas of the diverse community and develop a common direction for the future, but the engagement also builds public awareness on the importance of having a community plan and how it can be used.

A community-led plan is not a technical document but one that all in the community can use to understand their responsibilities and support governing bodies in making informed decisions that



Stephanie Burnham



Jake Bastedo



Sheri Longboat

will benefit the whole community. A few overall lessons have emerged to date.

Small groups are successful—While demanding on resources, community members say they feel their voices are heard, and feel respected when there is diversity of opinion.

Provide constant feedback—Issuing frequent ‘what we heard’ reports throughout the update assures the community that the community plan team is actively listening, and invites constructive criticism on completeness, wording and presentation.

Ask diverse questions—Questions such as “What does community mean to you?” encourage community members to identify underlying values. Asking “What does the community look like in 100 years?” pulls community members out of their day-to-day to consider long-term possibilities. “What concerns you about the community today?” allows participants to voice frustrations they may have day-to-day. And asking “What solutions can you think of to address those concerns?” draws out action ideas and puts responsibility back on the community members to be a part of positive community change.

What does this all mean for planners who work with Indigenous communities? It requires planners to reframe their own understanding of planning. Planners often have a set of values from policy, experience and best practice that they use to

substantiate recommendations, with the thinking that balancing these values leads to outcomes that reflect the public interest.

Experience at Six Nations shows a community coming together to define its own unique set of planning values and approaches that can govern the development of the community. It requires a shift from fundamental understanding of “planning expertise,” as the balance of planning knowledge and power is shifted from western-trained planners, to the community members who are the planners.

Stephanie Burnham, Cayuga Nation, Wolf Clan, is the community plan and engagement facilitator, Six Nations of the Grand River Development Corporation, and MSc Rural Planning and Development student at the University of Guelph. Jake Bastedo is the community plan coordinator, Six Nations of the Grand River Development Corporation, and student member of OPPI. Sheri Longboat, Mohawk Nation, is an assistant professor in the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development at the University of Guelph.

Endnotes

- 1 <https://danceforallpeople.com/haudenosaunee-thanksgiving-address/>
- 2 <https://www.haudenosauneeconfederacy.com/ceremonies/>



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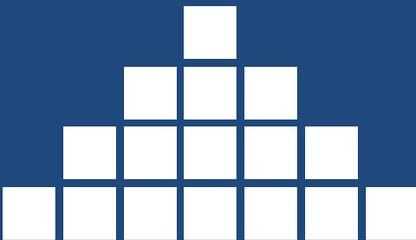
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Commentary

How the Ontario Planning Journal Helped OPPI Redefine Professional Planning

Glenn Miller, RPP & Philippa Campsie

When John Livey, OPPI's first president, asked me to establish a professional practice magazine for the Institute in 1986, I had no idea that my involvement with the *Ontario Planning Journal* would continue for the next 25 years! With a supportive Council and the participation of an engaged membership, the *Journal* matured along with OPPI, as membership grew from fewer than 1,400 in 1986 to nearly 4,000 in 2011, when Lynn Morrow took over as editor. The *Journal* played an important role in the evolution of professional planning discourse in Ontario, open to the views of beginning planners and veterans alike.

A typical issue today is 28 pages, full colour, professionally designed and printed and is also available digitally. But the *Journal* grew from humble beginnings!

The first six issues were laid out by hand in word-processed strips held down with glue and printed on a glorified photocopier. For the first few years, we spent more on postage than production! A key step—justified by a healthy flow of high quality editorial content—was persuading Council to hire Steve Slutsky as the *Journal's* first art director. In addition to dramatically improving the appearance of the *Journal* and helping steer the transition from newsletter to magazine, Steve's unique contribution was to develop software that estimated the size of each issue in one step, based solely on the word count of submitted articles and accompanying graphics. This was not only a huge timesaver at a point when desktop publishing was in its infancy but ensured that invaluable volunteer time could be focused on generating content instead of worrying about production.

About eight years in, Philippa Campsie joined me as deputy editor while she was still a planning student at U of T. Given her background as a book editor, she contributed to the magazine's content and improved quality control to position the *Journal* as the definitive voice of planners and planning in the province.

From the outset, the core of the *Journal's* appeal was built around expert commentary from a roster of contributing editors on topics ranging from 'management' (John Farrow) to 'environment' (Tony Usher, who would later take a turn as OPPI's president), to urban design (Anne McIlroy and other colleagues, whose passion for the topic led to the formation of

a working group that became a regular at OPPI conferences). Philippa's Communications column evolved into custom-designed workshops for members.

Another essential building block was space devoted to District news and events. The District pages not only illustrated the depth and breadth of volunteer activities across the province but supported the *Journal's* desire to avoid a Toronto-centric perspective at a time when membership was still highly concentrated in the GTA. Long-time members may also recall that Eastern District did not immediately integrate with the newly formed OPPI in 1986, so the District pages offered an important outlet to report on all local initiatives.

Journal archives also provide a window into OPPI's first 25 years as the Institute grew in stature. We covered the move to establish the RPP designation in 1994, as well as critical policy issues of the day, from municipal amalgamations to

the Greenbelt to the evolution and eventual reform of the Ontario Municipal Board, as well as the roller coaster ride from Smart Growth through to the first *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe*. Through the administrations of David Peterson, Bob Rae, Mike Harris, Ernie Eves and Dalton McGuinty, we reported on a growing range of provincial legislation that affected planning. As planning became increasingly complex, the *Planning Act* was no longer the only statute defining professional practice!

Feature articles from non-planners (health professionals, lawyers, architects and journalists etc.), contributions from prominent practitioners from outside Ontario and opinion



Glenn Miller



Philippa Campsie



1995

IMAGE COURTESY OF GLENN MILLER



OPJ charting the progress of the profession

pieces from the leaders of sister professions provided *Journal* readers with a healthy diet of diverse opinion. We knew we had hit a nerve when there was a spike in letters to the editor, positive or negative. An article by Jane Jacobs in 1993 suggesting that planners were “brain dead” got readers’ attention, as did a critical article on what was then called Neo-Traditional Planning (now known as New Urbanism), which elicited a spirited response from Andres Duany.

There were also hard-hitting editorials, with commentary on the impact of 9/11 (skylines are meant to evolve, not explode), the response of planners to ice storms, catastrophic floods, the 2008 financial meltdown and more. But it was not all doom and gloom: we had some fun with buzzword generators and planner-ese and enjoyed coming up with titles and captions containing puns or allusions.

A high point came in summer 1995, when the American Planning Association brought 5,000 members to Toronto for its annual conference. With the help of an OPPI member who worked for the company responsible for bus shelter

advertising, attendees were treated to a blow-up of the front cover (which featured an image of former Metro Toronto chairman Fred Gardiner) displayed on a bus shelter at the intersection of Bay and Queen close to the conference hotel.

In addition to literally hundreds of members who contributed articles over the years, two other individuals deserve mention: our first and only printer, Mike Eisen, who will continue to print the new magazine; and Brian Smith, who deftly took over the design reins from Steve Slutsky and was responsible for successfully managing the introduction of a digital edition.

As the curtain falls on the *Ontario Planning Journal*, we look forward to reading and contributing to the new publication. We hope you will give it the same support as you did for the *Journal*.

Glenn Miller, RPP, MCIP and Philippa Campsie handed over the editorial responsibilities to Lynn Morrow after 150 issues in January 2011.



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Ground-related housing supplies

By Victor Doyle, RPP

Numerous articles and extensive media coverage have alleged the Growth Plan and Greenbelt plans have constrained the supply of ground-related housing, thereby causing a dramatic increase in housing prices. These claims have been refuted by various authors.

Opinion aside, the factual evidence reveals that the Growth Plan and Greenbelt plans have not adversely affected the supply of land or planned supply of ground-related housing. Overall, the housing mix resulting from the implementation of these plans will barely shift between 2006 and 2041, yet even this minor shift is critical, given affordability issues in the region. Furthermore, existing ground-related housing freed up by an aging population will create an oversupply of ground-related housing over the next two decades in relation to population growth.

A number of factors are increasing housing prices in southern Ontario, with the Growth Plan and *Greenbelt Plan* playing, at best, a minor role.

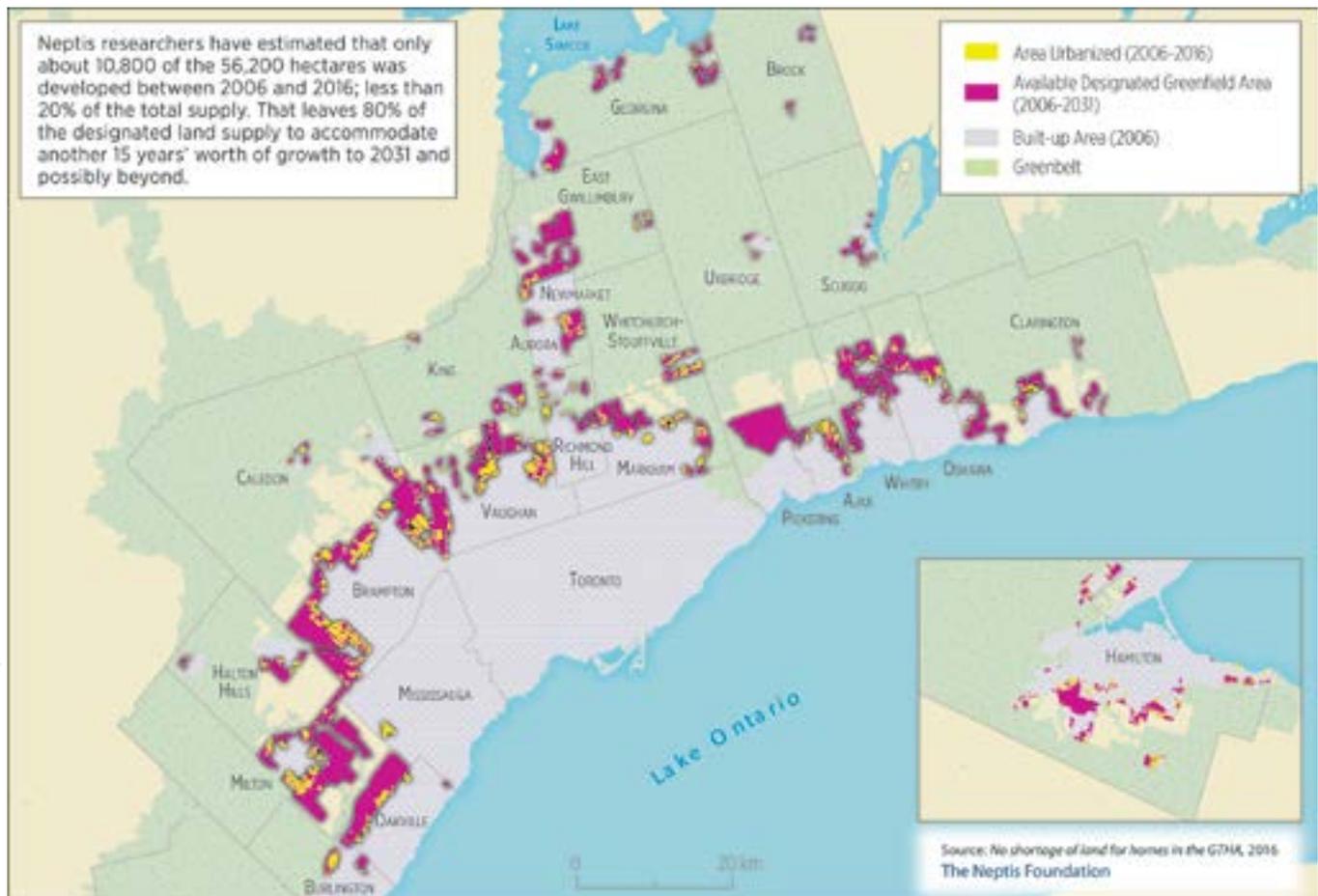
Land Supply

Neptis Foundation research documents that 1,250 sq. km (1,250 ha) of greenfield land has been approved to accommodate growth to 2031. However, only 20 per cent of that land was developed between 2006 and 2016. The map below reveals the extent of approved but undeveloped land in the GTHA and shows that it is contiguous to existing urban areas.

Neptis found that land is being urbanized at a much slower pace than was previously the case. Between 1991 and 2001 the urban footprint of the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area grew by 24 per cent to accommodate 1.1-million people while between 2001 and 2011 it only grew by 9 per cent to accommodate 1-million people.

Planned ground-related units⁴

Municipal land budgets completed as part of the first round



There's no shortage of land for homes in the GTHA (2016)

of conformity reviews identified the number of each type of unit needed to accommodate growth. About 800,000 ground-related units (GRUs), including 540,000 single-detached units, were planned by Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) municipalities to accommodate growth from 2006 to 2031⁵ (excluding Toronto); 503,000 of these units were in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA).

Subtracting GRU completions between 2006-2017, inclusive, as reported by CMHC, from the planned GRU supply reveals that there are more than 484,000 planned GRUs unbuilt in the GGH, including more than 286,000 in the GTHA. This includes 331,350 single-detached units, 171,680 of which are located in the GTHA (see Table 1).

Table 1

	GGH GRUs	GTHA GRUs
Planned units 2006 - 2031	798,374	503,000
Completed Units 2006 - 2017	313,743	216,848
Remaining Planned Units 2018 - 2031	484,631	286,152

Source: Municipal Land Budgets/CMHC

Assuming three persons per unit, these 800,000 planned GRUs could accommodate 2.4 million people or 83 per cent of the Growth Plan's 2031 growth forecast for the GGH (excluding Toronto).

This explains why every appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board of GTHA municipal land budgets/Growth Plan conformity exercises, seeking more land for ground-related housing, failed.

Unanticipated supply

In a May 2017 report, York Region estimated that 52,100 single-detached units remained in the region's planned housing supply. However, after subtracting the 45,221 completed single-detached units (as of the end of 2016) from the original land budget figure of 82,380, York Region should only have 37,159 remaining. This demonstrates that York Region can actually accommodate almost 15,000 more single-detached units than anticipated.

This same trend applies to townhouses, where York Region has capacity for 15,300 more units than originally anticipated in its land budget. Similar trends will likely be found throughout the GGH as lots become smaller, more infill occurs and more townhouses and semi-detached units are built—all of which help address affordability issues.

Housing mix

Although the Growth Plan is designed to shift the mix of housing units, the overall housing mix for the region will barely shift by 2031—with apartments increasing from 34 to 35 per cent of the stock, while single-detached units decrease from 51 to 48 per cent. This reveals that the shift in housing type is being incrementally and responsibly phased in—particularly when one considers affordability, demographic trends and locational preferences.

Even more supply...

We have also entered a unique period in relation to the aging of the population. Statistics Canada data reveals that in 2006 there were 700,000 GRUs owned by those 55 years and older. Most are in built-up urban areas with infrastructure and closer to transit, jobs and amenities than new greenfield units (see Table 2).

In 2006, 370,000 of these units were owned by people 65+. The youngest of these will be 90 years old in 2031, so virtually all these units will come to market by 2031.

By 2041, the youngest of those 55+ in 2006 will be 90, so almost all the remaining 330,000 units will come to market by 2041. At three people per unit, these 700,000 units could accommodate another 2.1-million people.

In 2017, the Canadian Centre for Economic Analysis estimated there were 5-million "spare" bedrooms in the GGH—2 million in the Toronto area alone—of which 70 per cent were in homes owned by persons 65 and over. This finding corroborates the age-of-household data. Further, the centre's report documents the "stark" reduction in population density in post-Second World War suburbs where most of these units exist and comments on the capacity of this stock to accommodate significant new population.

Table 2

Age Group	GGH GRUs		GTA GRUs	
	Total	%	Total	%
55-64 Years	333,280	47%	204,510	50%
65-74 Years	204,485	29%	117,745	29%
75+ Years	164,000	23%	89,740	22%
Total (55+ Years)	701,765	100%	411,995	100%

Adding it up

Combined with 800,000 planned GRUs, these 700,000 units owned by older households creates an overall supply of 1.17-million units by 2031 and 1.5-million units by 2041 (not including additional ground-related units that may be planned by municipalities to accommodate growth between 2031 and 2041). At three people per unit, these 1.5-million GRUs alone could accommodate 4.5-million people—recognizing there are hundreds of thousands of apartment units being planned and built as well.

The Growth Plan forecasts growth of about 5-million people in the GGH between 2006 and 2041. Deducting Toronto's share means the rest of the GGH will grow by about 4.1-million people. The planned and existing supply of GRUs coming to market can therefore house more than all the forecast population growth to the year 2041 (excluding Toronto).

Housing completions

Data from CMHC show that single-detached completions in the GGH have dropped by 44 per cent from about 35,000 a year in 2002 to about 19,000 a year in 2017. Meanwhile, apartment completions have grown by 300 per cent from about 6,000 a year to about 23,000 over the same period.

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This trend began well before the 2006 Growth Plan, and long before its implementation. This is therefore a market trend, not a policy-based trend, driven primarily by changing demographics and the historic and growing disconnect between regional household incomes and housing prices whereby multi-residential units are more affordable for the majority of households.

Victor Doyle, MCIP, RPP, is a member of OPPI and former manager in the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing where he oversaw municipal land budgets and research on housing. This article synthesizes key elements of a report he released in May 2017 called "The Growth Plan and the Greenbelt Plan – Setting the Record Straight."

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Endnotes

- 1 "An update on the total land supply: Even more land available for homes and jobs in the Greater Golden Horseshoe," Neptis Foundation, 2017.
- 2 "Understanding the fundamentals of the Growth Plan," Neptis Foundation, 2015.
- 3 No shortage of land for homes in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area, Neptis Foundation, 2017
- 4 "Ground-related housing" is defined by government and industry as single-detached, semi-detached and row dwellings – typically all having at least 3 bedrooms and private outdoor space.
- 5 The number of GRU's comes from municipal land budgets prepared as part of Growth Plan conformity exercises.

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Diversity Beyond Ethnoculturalism

By Michael Romero

Canadians are proud of the country's multiculturalism. It's an identity of diversity that can be seen in the social and urban fabric of cities across Canada. However, planners must become better attuned to the complex lived experiences that migrants bring to the planning process, specifically during public participation.

My major paper for the Masters in Environmental Studies program at York University raised the following question: How does multicultural urban planning respond to the complex transnational lived experiences of recent immigrants to Toronto? In it I postulate that planning does little to address immigrants' complex lived experiences, while

being overly focused on their ethnocultural characteristics.

Immigrants to Canada carry their experiences of trauma from their cities of origin, but how is this recognized in the planning participation process? Does the planning participation process recognize that some immigrants come from diverse places around the world where access to democracy is severely limited or restricted? Does the planning participation process recognize women's experiences of marginalization in everyday life and democracy? Does the planning participation process recognize how legacies of colonialism continue to plague Indigenous people and communities across the globe? Finally, does the planning participation

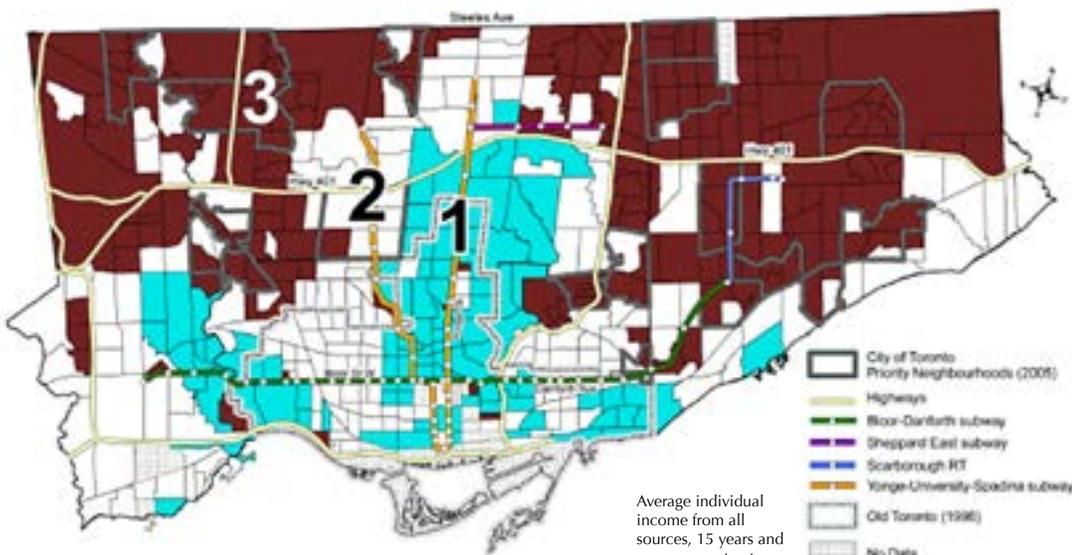


Figure 1. This 2005 census image shows Toronto to be a city where place of residence and access to major transit infrastructure is dictated by level of income

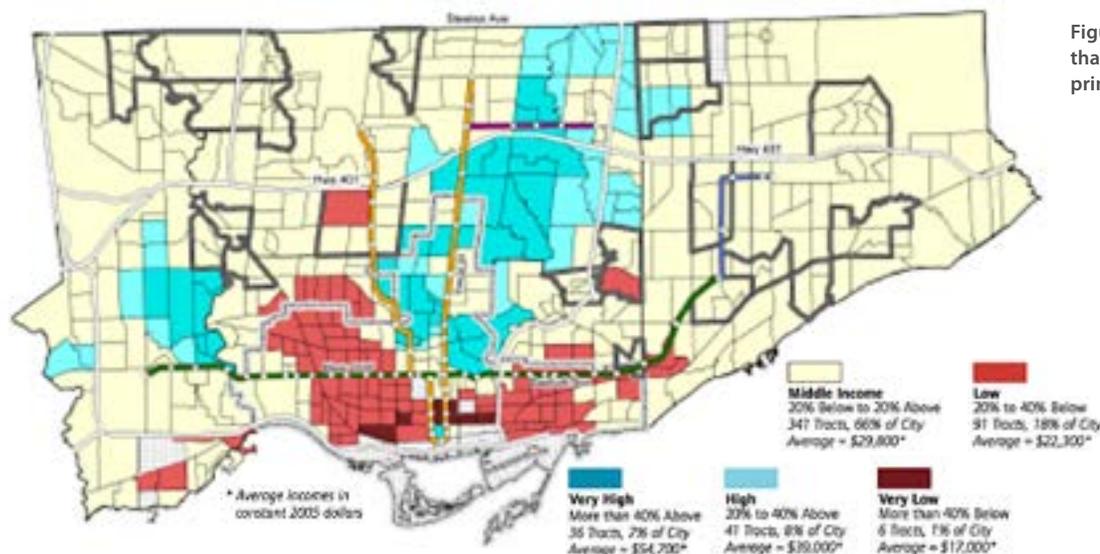


Figure 2. The 1970 census illustrates that the City of Toronto was a primarily a middle-class city

process recognize that many immigrants arriving in Canada are now increasingly coming from rural areas where access to democracy and services is severely out of reach?

Toronto recently passed the 50 per cent threshold for those who identify as visible minority in the city.¹ Yet obtaining a greater representation of diverse residents remains a challenge in the planning process. The City of Toronto looks to address this issue with the creation of the Toronto Planning Review Panel.⁴ The panel is a “unique way for residents to become engaged in city planning processes. [It is] a 32-member advisory body consisting of residents selected through a randomized process called a Civic Lottery. This process helps to ensure that the members of the [panel] represent the diversity of Toronto’s population, while broadening engagement by bringing new voices into the planning process.”⁴

We must continue to develop innovative ways to involve struggling immigrant populations in the planning process. Changes to the economic and political landscape have only exacerbated the challenges faced by immigrants, particularly since the 1970s.

In 1970, Toronto was, for the most part, a middle-class city, but since then it has steadily become divided into three distinctive cities. This trend has been well documented by University of Toronto professor, David Hulchanski, in his well-recognized report titled *The Three Cities within Toronto*.³ To summarize, Figure 1 documents a trend across the city of Toronto where average income levels in (predominantly) Toronto’s 416 suburbs (City #3), dropped 20 per cent or more between 1970 and 2005. Immigrants, more often racialized, have increasingly found home in City #3. Income levels of residents in City #1 have increased 20 per cent or more, while income levels of residents in City #2 have fluctuated 20 per cent between an increase and decrease. City #1 is increasingly gentrifying and pushing racialized populations into City #3. Meanwhile the number of middle class residents has decreased citywide.

UCLA scholar Ananya Roy⁵ invites us to consider a transnational approach that is “constituted through borders and yet trespass across borders.” Adopting culturally sensitive approaches is not enough, because peoples’

experiences of their former home city are deeply connected to interlinked factors of economics, politics, trauma, patriarchy, geography, among many others.

For example, one interview for my major paper highlighted Tibetan advocacy as it stretches from Tibet and into Toronto during March 10 to commemorate the 1959 Tibetan Uprising and to support Tibetans who continue to struggle for state sovereignty. This person points out that Tibetans in Toronto do not usually engage in political and planning processes, but become heavily involved in advocacy on March 10. Planners must find ways to (re) ignite this political activism to enable a greater public participation by finding what remains close to immigrants’ hearts within our borders.

My major paper does not intend to disregard the tremendous work currently done by planners in all sectors of the field. Rather, it is intended to begin to analyze diversity beyond ethnoculturalism, and to broaden the role of planners in bringing forward a transnational framework.

Michael Romero is a recently graduated student from York University’s Masters in Environmental Studies Planning program with an interest in transnational planning with diverse communities.

Endnotes

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Restructuring First Nation housing need through community driven metrics

By Dr. Shelagh McCartney, Chief Elizabeth Atlookan, Courtney Kaupp, Wanda Sugarhead & Ron Missewace

Does supporting a system that has made little progress in the past three decades sound rational? No. However, this is the case for the First Nation housing systems in Canada. Self-determination allows communities, like Eabametoong, to address their specific housing issues, and, through locally developed metrics, to measure the effectiveness of their changes, no longer relying on a uniform solution we all know isn't working.

Eabametoong First Nation, located 350 km northeast of Thunder Bay, has been rebuilding its housing system through a series of projects aimed at improving the planning, design and governance of housing. Faced with urgent housing need—limited building lots, a growing housing waitlist, and short house lifespans—Eabametoong leadership has worked to reframe the conversation around housing from one of minimum standards of acceptability to one about how locally generated housing solutions can contribute to greater community well-being.

In Eabametoong First Nation, core housing need metrics reveal 65 per cent of housing is reported as inadequate and 36 per cent is non-suitable, while across Canada 7 per cent of houses are considered inadequate and 5 per cent non-suitable.¹ A recent report completed by the Auditor General of Canada on the socio-economic gaps on First Nations reserves stated that First Nation people on reserves experience lower socio-economic outcomes than Canadians and that current measures are not adequate or comprehensive enough to assess First Nations well-being.² While the recommendations for improved measures are addressed to the federal government, they have broad implications for other agencies and professionals, including planners, working with First Nation communities. The existing indicators are convenient for top-down approaches to national policy and programming, but they do not recognize the diversity of First Nation communities or the role metrics-creation can have in community self-determination.

As part of the redevelopment of the housing system, Eabametoong, in partnership with Ryerson University's Together Design Lab, completed a housing needs assessment to capture high quality, local data on the state of housing. The assessment provided an opportunity to learn about the lived

experiences and housing preferences of its members in order to better inform community planning. The assessment tool, developed locally, addresses housing from multiple perspectives using community-created metrics, focusing on distinct priorities within the community, moving beyond the standard market-based approach.

Eabametoong First Nation's community-led housing needs assessment expands the metrics used for analysis by shifting to a stronger occupant focus.

Developing partnerships and working with local, bilingual facilitators to survey and host workshops reduced barriers to participation. Local facilitators bridged gaps in cultural understandings through their expert knowledge and connected with people who may not typically participate in community planning.

Workshops provided an opportunity for Ryerson team members to learn about the community in greater depth, while allowing community members to collaborate in visioning alternative futures. Workshops and meetings took place two to three times a day over each trip of four to five days to the community. Workshop participants included elders and groups of elementary school age children. Further outreach was coordinated with local facilitators to involve typically unheard voices, such as those who are housebound, those who are uncomfortable speaking in large

public meetings and those with many responsibilities and not enough time.

The framework of the survey and its outcomes are unique to Eabametoong, but the process provides an example how to work in partnership and support the creation of locally developed and relevant housing indicators. Key elements to address are inclusion, lived experiences, and scale.

Inclusion—Housing data collection typically focuses on heads of households, narrowing the diversity of respondents and limiting understanding of housing need. Allowing for survey responses from any, or multiple, members of a household and diversifying the age and gender of respondents can reveal a different set of perspectives leading to more responsive solutions. In Eabametoong, the majority of houses are three and four bedrooms, designed for growing young families but leaving few options for singles, couples or young



Shelagh McCartney



Wanda Sugarhead



Elizabeth Atlookan



Ron Missewace



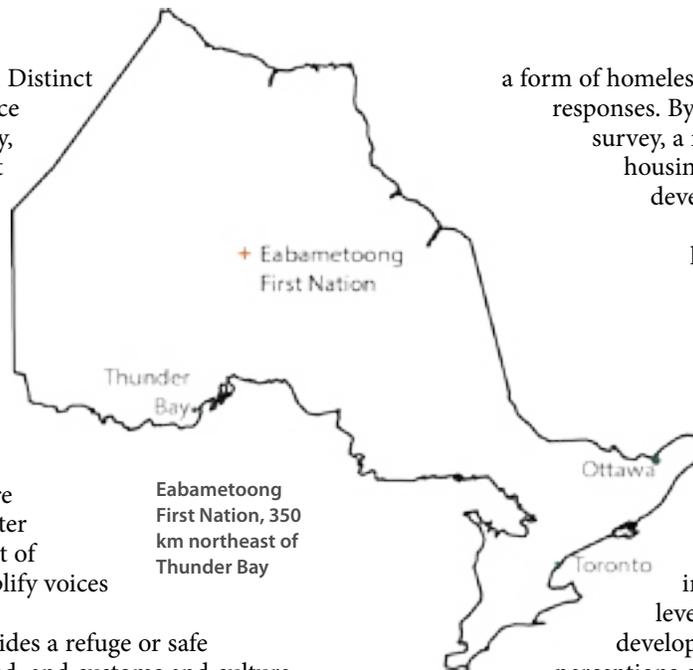
Courtney Kaupp

people looking for their own space. Distinct demographic populations experience identical living situations differently, by understanding specific occupant outcomes a greater understanding of existing situations can be created.

Inclusion also extends to the language and framing of questions. Formal or technical surveying language can create a barrier to meaningful participation. Open ended and follow-up questions provide respondents an opportunity to share their perspectives and provide greater context for responses. A broader set of questions can create a space to amplify voices not usually heard.

Lived Experience—Housing provides a refuge or safe place where relationships are formed, and customs and culture practiced. Core housing need metrics frame need as an issue of physical condition and housing supply, a narrow focus that ignores the history and broader social, and psychological impacts of housing to individual and community well-being.

A priority issue in Eabametoong, is understanding how the housing shortage manifests as different forms of homelessness. Multigenerational family living, family doubling and insecure sleeping arrangements that result from a shortage of housing is



a form of homelessness and requires a range of responses. By shifting to an occupant-focused survey, a more nuanced understanding of housing and its impacts can be developed.

Scale—The assessment examined housing at different scales from an individual housing unit to the community level. Scale-related questions focused on the natural environment, space between houses and community layout. The focus on housing as a single unit creates a disconnection from the immediate environment.

Previous government intervention had cleared and levelled land for neighbourhood development, which influenced the perceptions of the environment surrounding the house and the wider public realm. Through the survey the importance of integrating housing and neighbourhoods with the natural environment was shared by the majority of respondents.

When undertaken through a community-led process, housing need assessments and other similar planning measures are more than a report, they are a record of collective knowledge. Like the process, the final report and recommendations are developed

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Eabametoong, October, 2017

collaboratively. The resulting report is action oriented, building on the strengths and experiences of community members towards the creation of community goals and plans to address housing and housing-related needs. Community-identified metrics allow for newly developed plans to be tested against relevant local priorities, contributing to a process of self-determination.

Supporting a community-led process requires shifting project timeline expectations, dedicating greater time to face-to-face relationship building, training and working in the community. Partnering with a population that has been alienated from planning processes and disconnected from the design of even the most personal spaces presents a difficult challenge to measuring outcomes. After generations of inadequate housing and enforced intervention, immediate participation and trust in planning processes cannot be expected but must be earned.

Planners have the opportunity and expertise to question and enhance standard metrics when carrying out housing needs assessments and similar projects. Collecting data, particularly in marginalized communities where decades of existing reports have detailed deficiencies with little change, must demonstrate a clear objective for further evaluation. Evaluations must lead to action and provide clear ways forward to improve future outcomes.

Together, our goal should be to assist in the development, collection and implementation of community-based metrics—listening and learning with partners and not relying on standards. Self-determination allows communities, like Eabametoong, to plan for and address their specific housing issues, and through locally developed metrics measure the effectiveness of their changes, no longer relying on a uniform solution we all know isn't working.

Dr. Shelagh McCartney (D. Des, MRAIC) is an assistant professor at Ryerson University's School of Urban and Regional Planning. As director of Together Design Lab, McCartney partners with First Nation and other marginalized communities in addressing housing issues. Courtney Kaupp is a research associate with Together Design Lab at Ryerson University and is a graduate of Ryerson University's School of Urban and Regional Planning. Chief Elizabeth Atlookan is serving her third term as Chief of Eabametoong First Nation. Wanda Sugarhead is serving her first term as a Councillor of Eabametoong First Nation and holds the housing portfolio. Ron Misewace is Eabametoong First Nation's Housing Manager and oversees capital projects for the First Nation.

IMAGE COURTESY OF THE AUTHORS

Endnotes

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- 2 Auditor General of Canada. (2018). Report 5 – Socio-economic gaps on First Nations Reserves- Indigenous Services Canada. 2018 Spring Reports of the Auditor General of Canada. Retrieved from http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_201805_05_e_43037.html

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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Planning in Rural Ontario

This issue brings a focus to rural Ontario. While rural, northern and small town Ontario was home to only 10 per cent of the province's population in 2016, it occupied virtually all of the province's geographic area. Moreover, with nearly 1.4 million of the province's total population, it represents an important economic and cultural component of Ontario. Residents of rural and northern communities are also stewards of the vast majority of Ontario's land and water resources.



Rural Ontario, however, is facing differential growth pressures—some communities are growing while others face decline. This is particularly challenging for planners. In some rural and small town communities, planners face incredible growth pressures, while in others the challenge is one of attracting people and economic

opportunity to help counteract the loss of population.

Many rural communities beyond the influence of large urban centres tend to share some common struggles: population decline, loss of young people to urban areas, lack of immigrants, aging populations, lack of services, aging infrastructure, and limited employment opportunities. For those in close proximity to large urban centres growth management is often fundamental to practice.

Rural Ontario comprises a diversity of landscapes, and economic opportunities are shaped by proximity to urban markets, weather patterns and seasonal variations, access to

both jobs and workers, and availability of services. The overall challenge is to work with appropriate planning tools and apply them to the various geographies that exist.

For planners in rural and small town communities it is important to carefully assess the needs of the communities they live and work within. Solutions to issues will be as variable and diverse as the communities themselves. Visions need to be established and regulatory and non-regulatory tools need to be selectively applied in a way that benefits the community and helps to achieve goals of sustainability and enhanced quality of life.

It is important that our profession continue to develop the capacity to serve the communities, residents and interests that comprise rural Ontario.

This November/December issue marks the last issue of the Journal. I want to extend my thanks and appreciation to OPJ's first editor Glenn Miller, and its current editor Lynn Morrow. In the new year, OPPI is launching its new publication, *Y Magazine*. It will focus on the issues with which our members are involved and the solutions they are working towards. It will raise awareness of the importance of RPPs to stakeholders beyond the planning profession. I invite you to engage in the dialogue.

Jason Ferrigan, RPP

Jason Ferrigan, RPP, is OPPI President and director of planning for the City of Greater Sudbury.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Reflecting on the Future

By Robert Voigt, RPP, contributing editor

It has been years since my practice, and that of many fellow professional planners, shifted with the evolution of what was then being called web 2.0. This was the time of the transition of how web-based information flowed. What was new and transformational a little over 10 years ago, was the ability of the internet to afford people the opportunity to participate and collaborate directly with those producing content, and adding, amending, and augmenting the content themselves.

Subsequently, realtime commenting, blogs, social networks, video posts, wiki mapping and information resources, have all become technological tools adapted for urban planning. For those of us willing to be early adopters and embracers of

change, this created an interesting and positive paradigm for the future of how we could do planning work.

In these early days of this new technology, we were creatively jury-rigging these tools in hopes of improving or correcting challenges for our professional work, such as poor community participation in planning initiatives and limited data availabilities. Over the years, these tools have become more mainstream and even specialized to our planning needs. This has also become true of 3D visualization, open data, crowdsourcing, global imaging and mapping, realtime surveys, virtual and augmented reality, and Artificial Intelligence driven programs of all kinds.



A little more than a decade later, and we are now at a time in our profession where a typical day can just as likely include a traditional public open house meeting as it can include

gathering site images via drone, or showcasing virtual reality design scenarios online. Add to this the scale of truly global social media platforms such as Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn, and professional planners now solve challenges and communicate in ways never before possible. Jury-rigging technology is mostly a thing of the past as purposefully designed planning-oriented tools are commonplace. When used with insight and skill, these technologies improve the way planners address core competencies of the profession, such as community engagement, spatial and socio-economic analysis, and envisioning future scenarios for our built environments.

Unfortunately, our reliance on technology has now created different potential problems and drawbacks. One critical example is our extensive use of social media platforms. To broaden our communication and influence planners often leverage these online platforms to underpin planning projects. However, by using the available social media and not specially designed platforms we are giving up control of important project parameters.

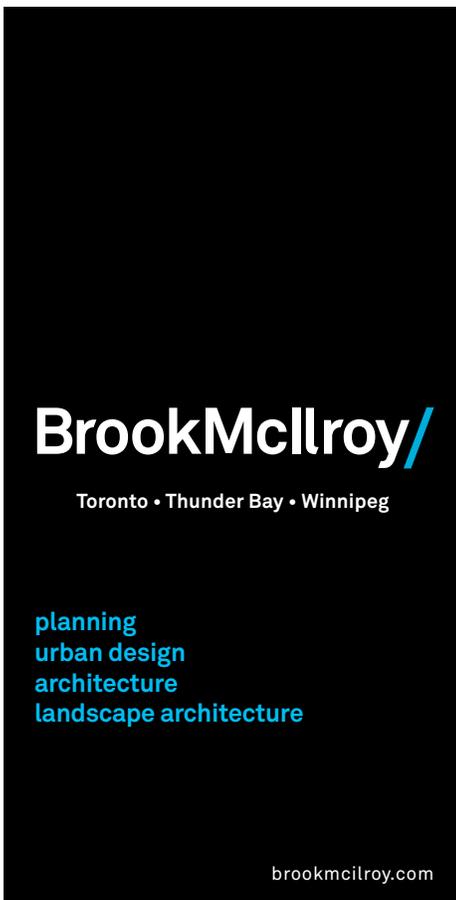
By doing this, we are not accessing people in an open community or public forum, we are contacting them through privately owned networks. We are in effect corralling the public into curated assemblies that are monetizing their knowledge, and, in fact, the characteristics of their personal identities. Inherent in these platforms are the algorithms through which they function. These are designed to use peoples' information for specialized, individually targeted, marketing and influence solicitation. Of additional concern with monetization of public engagement, are the increasing problems with sales and data breaches of sensitive personal user information.

I am concerned that as professional planners we have not fully contemplated the impacts of new technologies. We don't know how they will affect our efforts as community builders and stewards. We use these tools for their benefits without knowing how they work, let alone what their flaws might be. I have no standardized list of actions to recommend that could solve this problem. No examples of best proven practices to highlight that would illustrate better tactics and methodologies.

The past decade has brought more technological change than was previously seen within a lifetime. And more is coming, for example, with the full impact of Artificial Intelligence, the networking of our physical environments, and massive-scale automation on the near horizon. With their benefits will come unforeseen challenges. We must not stumble into their use without critical assessment.

I believe we have an ethical responsibility to reconcile how to capitalize on the benefits of technologies, without undermining or risking the public through our own professional ignorance of potential problems. Therefore, as professional planners we must participate in regular and purposeful reflection on the full scope of impacts that new technologies bring before we integrate them into our work moving forward.

Robert Voigt MCIP, RPP is a professional planner, artist and writer, recognized as an innovator in community engagement and healthy community design. He is the Director of Planning for Parkbridge Lifestyle Communities Inc., board member for EcoHealth Ontario, and publishes Civicblogger.com. Contact: @robvoigt, rob@robvoigt.com.

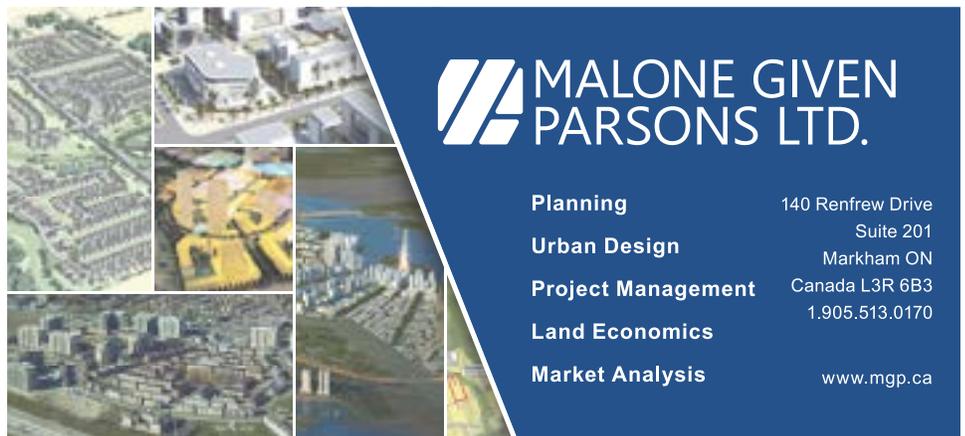


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Planning: Enabling Choice Over Chance

By Kevin Eby, RPP, contributing editor

This is my last column for the *Journal* and I want to use it to reflect on two observations that have become even more important to me as I get to the end of my career as a professional planner. The first is that change is constantly happening and we cannot stop it. That is particularly true in a rapidly growing region like the Greater Golden Horseshoe. The best we can hope for is to grow by choice rather than by chance.



The second important realization I have had over the years is that good planning results from a series of decisions that result in a best fit, rather than an attempt to achieve perfection. The road to a best fit is not always obvious and in many cases can get sidetracked by otherwise good intentions. One current example is municipal consideration of potential expansions of the greenbelt into the area commonly known as the white belt. While well intentioned, it may have serious unintended consequences.

Change is constant

During the Region of Waterloo official plan Ontario Municipal Board Hearing in 2012, the appellants' land economists said that the 1995 Projection Methodology Guideline should be used rather than the rules laid out by the policies of the Growth Plan to determine future land needs. The guideline required planners to look backwards to determine past trends and then extrapolate them forward to predict future land use patterns. The problem then, like today, is that the future we face doesn't look anything like the past.

Changing climate patterns, economic conditions, housing preferences for both young and old, as well as decaying infrastructure and mobility challenges faced by an aging population dictate that things have to be done differently. Who would have thought 20 years ago that reurbanization, which was barely on anyone's radar at the time, would account for almost half of all the residential development that is now occurring.

Back then, brownfield sites were huge liabilities that no one wanted to talk about. Today they are often important potential assets within a community because of their proximity to infrastructure and other uses. Who would have thought 20 years ago that roundabouts would become a commonly used solution to transportation issues, that water resource protection would be a fundamental determinant of the location of land uses or that climate change would be a primary consideration in the creation of land use plans. These are just a few examples of the changes that few, if any, could have anticipated.

What we can predict with some accuracy is that change is constant, is occurring at a rapidly increasing rate, and is threatening to overwhelm many municipalities' abilities to respond to it. While arguably it still requires some fine tuning, the Growth Plan has helped set the parameters for municipalities as they head down the road to addressing these challenges. The Growth Plan is not about creating change. It is about ensuring that municipalities are in a position to facilitate and manage the change that has occurred, is occurring, and has yet to come.

Unintended consequences

I have always been a strong advocate for the Greenbelt and support expansions where the inclusion of the additional land helps to deliver the broader planning objectives associated with the Places to Grow initiative. I have also participated extensively in the debates around the future of the white belt, but until recently have never really appreciated the role the white belt plays in protecting the Greenbelt.

Possibly the most important function of the white belt is not that it serves as a potential future area for urban expansions, but rather that it serves as a barometer of how things are changing. The rate at which the white belt has and will be absorbed over time provides a clearly visible and easy to understand indication as to whether or not efforts to reduce the rate of urban expansions are working.

As long as the white belt continues to exist, it is clearly the policy frameworks associated with intensification and density targets, not the Greenbelt, that are the real restraints on the form of growth preferred by some developers. Even the recent C.D. Howe Institute [report](#) "Through the Roof: The High Cost of Barriers to Building New Housing in Canadian Municipalities" recognized that "the primary cause [of higher housing prices] is not the Greenbelt, but because suburban municipalities are not enabling development on land between the existing urban boundary and the Greenbelt."

The day the white belt disappears is the day the real threat to the Greenbelt begins. When that happens it will not matter whether it has disappeared as a result of urban expansions or by becoming part of an expanded Greenbelt. At that point the Greenbelt is under threat. People need to think very carefully before they propose wide-reaching Greenbelt expansions into the white belt. In the end, short-term successes in expanding the Greenbelt may well result in long-term losses.

Given that a fairly strict policy framework exists to protect key environmental features within the white belt, not everything has to be in the Greenbelt to be appropriately protected. In the world of best fit versus attempts at perfection, this may very well be one of those situations where good intentions have unplanned for consequences.

Kevin Eby, B.Sc, MA, RPP is a member of OPPI, the OPJ provincial news contributing editor and the former director of community planning with the Region of Waterloo. He previously worked on secondment to the province to help with the formulation of the original Places to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

Technology and Rural Planning

By Eldon Theodore, RPP

When thinking about design and emerging built form, one of the greatest influencers of change in the built environment including in rural areas is technology. Our ability to leverage all

forms of technology to enhance placemaking efforts is directly related to making those resources widely available to our members across the province.

When we refer to technology, we are including all forms of technology members have access to and rely on to practice their profession. Examples can include use of smart devices (e.g., smartphones and tablets), software for document processing, presentations, graphic design or 3D modelling/rendering, social media platforms, public consultation tools, Geographic Information Systems, drone technology, and more.

In a recent survey, OPPI found there are disparities between rural and urban communities, which directly impact members practicing in rural communities. The biggest barrier related to new technology being cost prohibitive, followed closely with members having a hard time keeping



up, and organizational reluctance to try new technology.

This disparity across Ontario means that rural communities tend to be the last to receive investments in new technology infrastructure, such as fibre-optic technology for ultra-fast internet. This has implications for our rural members' ability to take full advantage of emerging technology and restricts options to utilize emerging applications, and efficiently access data and other services and tools.

Rural municipalities tend to have fewer resources to acquire technology and train staff. Similarly smaller planning firms do not have the economies of scale necessary to make the adoption of new technology affordable and timely.

There are ways to overcome the urban/rural technological divide. One approach includes pooling and sharing of resources among organizations—this can mean sharing services between upper and lower-tier municipalities, or sharing a technology hub among planners in different private practices. This offers advantages in providing greater capacity to tackle costs of applications and/or equipment, and staff training. Another approach is to optimize existing infrastructure available in the area. For example, utilizing cellular networks to overcome the lack of ultra-high speed services, or finding free online training courses or webinars to educate planners on new programs.

While technology is always evolving, seeking to make things easier and more cost effective for people to access information, tools and services anywhere, at any time, a focus is needed on achieving rural parity for planners working in Ontario's smaller communities.

Eldon C. Theodore, RPP is a professional planner, urban designer. He is a partner at MHBC's Woodbridge office and a Director on OPPI Council.

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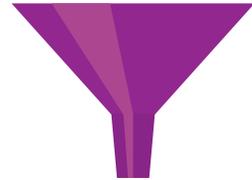
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