

SPRING 2010, ISSUE 4

AACIP PLANNING

Alberta Association, Canadian Institute of Planners

# Journal

## Aging in Place

Promising Practices for Municipalities

- ✚ **2009 AACIP Annual Report**
- ✚ **Spruce Grove's Sustainable Future**  
Journey to the Municipal Development Plan
- ✚ **TOD in Greenfield Edmonton**  
A story of collaboration, compromises and success



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The *AACIP Planning Journal* offers opportunity for publication of original works that are both community-based and research oriented, and relevant to Alberta, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. Types of submissions include case studies, analysis of events and/or trends, profiles of notable planners, projects or programs, overviews of best practices and guidelines, book reviews or excerpts, and opinion pieces for our "Commentary" section.

The *AACIP Planning Journal* Committee is anxious to hear your feedback. Please submit any comments you may have about this issue to [aacip.planning.journal@gmail.com](mailto:aacip.planning.journal@gmail.com). Your comments, suggestions and feedback are critical for the *Journal's* continued improvement and for us to provide the best possible publication that meets the expectations of our readers.



## Journal Submissions

We are always looking for articles for future issues of the *Planning Journal*. Below are some examples of topic areas you may be interested in submitting an article for:

- sustainability initiatives
- member accomplishments
- member research
- community development projects
- urban design
- student experiences
- innovative ideas
- successes

and any other areas that would be of value to the planning community. Watch for upcoming call for submissions. For more information, please contact the *AACIP Planning Journal* Committee at [aacip.planning.journal@gmail.com](mailto:aacip.planning.journal@gmail.com) or 780-644-4542.

## Volunteer with the *Journal* Committee!

We are looking for people who are interested in volunteering with the *Planning Journal* Committee. If you are interested in becoming a member of our team, or finding out more about the *Planning Journal* Committee and what we do, please contact us at [aacip.planning.journal@gmail.com](mailto:aacip.planning.journal@gmail.com).

## Acknowledgements

The *AACIP Planning Journal* Committee would like to acknowledge and thank the AACIP Administrative Staff, MaryJane Alanko and Vicki Hackl. Your continued assistance is greatly appreciated! We would also like to thank all of the contributors to this *Journal*. Your willingness to share your knowledge is what makes the *Journal* great! The *Journal* would also like to thank Doug Kelly for allowing us to interview him.

## Advertising Opportunity!

The *AACIP Planning Journal* now provides businesses the opportunity to advertise. The *Journal* offers advertisers:

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SOURCE: City of Calgary



SOURCE: City of Spruce Grove



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# 2009 AACIP Annual Report Summary

## President's Report

REPORTED BY Gary Buchanan ACP, MCIP



It is my pleasure to report to you Council's activities on behalf of our members from across Alberta, the Northwest Territories and Nunavut for 2009.

Guiding changes is our business and 2009 was, if nothing else, a year of substantial change. The decline in the global economy was reflected in a slowdown in Alberta, but perhaps not to the extent experienced by other provinces. Expectations were for a decline in membership as people moved away or lost employment. However, while membership did dip through the year, 2009 saw more members at the end of the year than at the beginning. This growth reflects the fact that more and more practicing planners value the importance of belonging to a professional association, and have chosen AACIP to be that organization. The desire for membership in AACIP is especially noticeable with younger planners. This positive growth trend has continued into 2010.

To assist provisional members in becoming full members of AACIP the Professional Practitioners course was designed and implemented. Providing the course to members continued in 2009. This weekend course has been highly successful in assisting provisional members complete the written exam component of membership. Since 2004, approximately 100 members have participated successfully in the course. We thank the many volunteers who give their time to teach the course, mark the written exams or portfolios, and who administer the oral exams.

Along with the growth in membership is the change in the AACIP itself. Through the year, substantial progress was made in our professional review culminating in the vote by members on the name change and new bylaws for the Association late in the year. The results were overwhelmingly in support of the bylaws and the name change. It is expected that by mid 2010, AACIP will be reborn as the Alberta Professional Planners Institute (APPI). The designation for members will change from Alberta Community Planner (ACP) to Registered Professional Planner—RPP. Along with our official name change, we may all have to get new business cards.

With the new name and designation there will also be a new logo and a revamped website. Council has devoted much time and effort in developing both. The logo will be representative of the breadth of our affiliate – Alberta, Northwest Territories, and Nunavut. The revamped website will embody our new name and will also allow for a wider variety of services including electronic business.

For the first time our annual conference was held in Fort McMurray. Attendance exceeded expectations, with over 170 delegates registering for the conference. Many of which were 'walk-ins' over the three-day event. The conference committee worked very hard to ensure that the learning was matched with the recreation. A personal highlight was the small group mobile tour to Fort Chipewyan. The tour not only included experiencing history

and development in a remote Alberta community, but provided a context of the immense activity of oil sands development. As with every conference we took the opportunity to recognize and honour the very best work of our colleagues.

As follow up to the highly successful symposium on climate change in Iqaluit on the shores of Frobisher Bay in 2008, we have continued to work with CIP and Nunavut on climate change. Two of our members have participated in a climate change 'train-the-trainers' workshop to facilitate work with our Association at events, seminars, and conferences. In addition, a portion of the surplus from the symposium has been left with the organizers to start a scholarship for future students.

Membership activities and events were another highlight of the year. Volunteer committees in Southern Alberta, Calgary, Red Deer, Edmonton, the North, and Yellowknife organized a number of learning opportunities. While these 'lunch and learns' qualified for learning credits for members, the events also served as social events in recognition of the need for us to play as well as learn. In addition, Council continued to hold student / practitioner 'mixers' prior to Council meetings.

A special first this year was Council's first meeting in one of our constituencies, the Northwest Territories. Taking advantage of the hospitality of the City and enthusiasm of Councilor Kersten Nitsche, our representative from 'the North', Council conducted one of our regular meetings in Yellowknife. The opportunity was also taken to hold a 'mixer' and meet with the planners in Yellowknife and area. Attendance by local planners was very high.

On the matter of planning education, AACIP continued to meet throughout 2009 with representatives of the provinces post secondary institutions regarding the creation of an accredited undergraduate degree program in planning. Three universities have indicated strong interest in setting up a program but none have been able to do so to date. AACIP continues to advocate the creation of an accredited planning program in Alberta and has created the Professional Education Committee, chaired by Councilor Don Schultz, to coordinate and continue our efforts in this area.

In addition to education at the local level, a major project that has been underway at the National level in which AACIP has participated is the complete review and revitalization of standards and qualifications of education institutions and professional planners, not only in AACIP's jurisdiction, but across Canada. Chaired by AACIP member Greg Hofmann, the Planning for the Future (PFF) task force worked hard throughout 2009 on this initiative.

Participating in continuing education is the individual responsibility of professionals. Providing opportunities for continuing education is AACIP's responsibility and has also been one of our key activities. Education opportunities have been provided to members through the Annual General Meeting, the annual conference, at regular local events, World Town Planning Day, other special events, and through partnerships with other organizations, conferences, and workshops. Members are encouraged to record their learning units on the AACIP or CIP websites.

AACIP has continued its advocacy for good planning throughout the province. In 2008 we commented upon the Province's Land Use Framework. While leaving the details aside, AACIP commented upon the completion of the City of Calgary's and the City of Edmonton's Municipal Development Plans. We recognize that these were major multi-year, high profile, municipal planning initiatives that involved the hard work of many of our members.

This year saw the renewal of the AACIP Planning Journal. Through the efforts of a group of hard working volunteers, AACIP produced three top quality editions of the Planning Journal. The breadth and quality of the articles shows the variety of work that our members do and they are a reflection of the fine work that many of you are engaged in. We extend our thanks to the editors.

In providing service to you we always wonder what you want. A simple way to find the answer was to ask you. In the fall of 2009 we engaged Framework to survey the membership. Half of you participated in the online survey. The overall result was that most of you are generally happy with AACIP and the services provided but that there were specific areas for improvement. Council will incorporate the results into an updated strategic

plan and will work to improve the areas identified for improvement. Over the next year, more of the details of the survey will be released.

Many of you know our extremely dedicated administrative staff MaryJane Alanko and Vicki Hackl. Through answering your emails and phone calls, keeping members informed of activities and events through the weekly e-news, and through scores of other tasks, you know that MaryJane and Vicki carry much of the work to make our Association run smoothly and efficiently. Their commitment, professionalism, customer service, and hard work are greatly appreciated by Council.

In addition to our highly capable staff though, AACIP is still a volunteer-based organization. We depend heavily on the selfless contribution of you, our members, to carry out many activities and services. Many of you dedicated your time, knowledge, and energy to help with an array of chores, large or small. Whether greeting at a reception line, administering exams, or drafting position papers, your efforts make our Association a success and are greatly appreciated.

In 2009, Council continued to recognize a few of those volunteers through an awards program. Works of art were presented at the conference in Fort McMurray to three volunteers nominated by their peers. They are few, however, they represent the spirit of service given so freely by many of you. To each and every one of you who freely contributed your time and effort in the interests of your peers - thank you.

One of the more demanding volunteer positions is service as your representatives on Council. I thank the following individuals who worked hard and helped build a great team on your behalf. Councilors retiring this term are Cory Armfelt, Kersten Nitsche, Gerry Melenka, and Cathy Taylor. Cory, from Southern Alberta, stepped in mid-term, took over the Operations Portfolio and oversaw the short and long term operations of the Association. Kersten, our Yellowknife host and Northwest Territories member looked after the Communications Portfolio and spent a great deal of time overseeing the development of the new logo and website. Gerry, one of our Calgary representatives, did double duty as Treasurer and looked after the Awards and Recognition Portfolio.

Also leaving this term was our student member, Cathy Taylor. Even though the EVDS program at the University of Calgary is winding down, Cathy was our primary link with the student community at the Universities of Calgary and Lethbridge. To all of our departing Councilors, thank you for your service to the Association.

Councilors continuing on in 2010-11 are Kalen Anderson, Don Schultz, Peter Yackulic, Brian Kropf, and our Public Member Perry Kinkaide. In addition to supervising the Membership Portfolio, Kalen also supervised the preparation of the Association's new strategic plan. Don supervised the Professional Development and Education Portfolio, spending a lot of time on developing an advocacy policy and working toward getting an accredited planning program re-established in Alberta. Peter looked after the Events Portfolio, ensuring that all events meet the needs and interests of Members. Perry, our Public Member appointed by the Province, continued to offer his expertise and insightful wisdom to Council. Brian moved from President to Past President. In so doing, Brian took on the Elections and AGM Portfolio as well as becoming our representative on National Council, thereby doubling his workload. To our remaining Councilors, thank you for your commitment to the Association.

Joining Council for the 2010-11 term are Cam Lang, Erin O'Neill, John Lewis and our new President Elect, Beth Sanders.

2010 is shaping up to be another year of significant change. As mentioned above, it is hoped that by Fall the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council has approved a new Professional Planners Regulation. With the approval, we will have a new name, a new logo, and a new designation. We are organizing another great conference in October this year in the mountain community of Lake Louise. Planning is already underway for the next National planning conference to be held in Banff in 2012. The economy shows a turn around and the planning job notices are sprouting all over. Opportunity is the scent this spring.

In closing, I thank you for your confidence and support as your President. Much has been accomplished and much remains to be done. With your assistance and support, the work that yet remains will be completed successfully. ■



# Treasurer's Report

REPORTED BY Gerry Melenka ACP, MCIP

The following is a summary of the unaudited financial statements for the Alberta Association of the Canadian Institute of Planners for the period January 1, 2009 to December 31, 2009. Even as Alberta and the rest of the world continue to persevere through the recent global recession, the Association has been able to pull through and continues to be in a position of strength as we head into 2010.

In 2009, the Association saw excess revenue over expenses in the amount of \$39,777. As a result of the surplus, all general operating costs, Association initiatives, member services and reserve funds were fully funded in 2009 without having to draw upon our operating account. The total revenue for 2009 was \$605,174 compared to \$586,741 in 2008. The excess revenue realized in 2009 compared to 2008 is primarily due to ongoing increases in our membership revenue (12.8%), as well as a successful annual conference (264%). The total expenses in 2009 were \$563,397 compared to \$545,744 in 2008. The excess in expenses compared with 2008 was due mainly in part to an unbudgeted increase in administration fees (14.7%), reduction in advertising/job posting revenue (26%), and an increase in Council expenses (78%).

All reserve funds were topped up in 2009 bringing the total to \$220,000. In March, Council conducted a review of the current reserve fund structure, which resulted in the reserve fund total for 2010 being increased to \$250,000. This took into

account the creation of a new sustaining reserve fund (strategic plan and implementation fund). The various reserve funds allow AACIP to cover emerging initiatives relating to communications and marketing initiatives, professional development and continuing education as well as the national CIP/AACIP conference. A number of special reserve funds are also in place to address key areas such as operating, discipline, research and the annual AACIP conference. In addition to the various reserve funds, there is \$69,441 secured for the purpose of the Centennial Legacy Fund and the Student Scholarship Fund. All of the above-noted funds are placed in rotating guaranteed investment certificates.

Looking forward, Council approved the 2010 operating budget in March. Of note is that Council approved a 3% increase in membership fees for 2010 in addition to the increase imposed by CIP. Some of the key expenditures/initiatives for 2010 include a membership database upgrade (\$15,000), consulting fees to conduct a strategic planning exercise (\$40,000), additional funds to ensure three issues of the Planning Journal (\$6,000), and ongoing website improvements (\$7,500). Some key cutbacks include Council spending and a reduction in expected revenues from exam fees. The approved budget, if realized, will result in a shortfall of \$84,011. Any shortfall will need to be covered by monies in the general operating account. To put this in perspective, Council approved the



2009 budget with an expected shortfall of \$43,881, yet saw revenue exceed expenses by \$39,777 at year end. There are adequate funds in the general operating account to cover such a shortfall if it is in fact realized at year end.

In summary, AACIP continues to be strong financially, due to the fact we have a large membership base and continued success in our annual conferences. Being my final term on Council and as Treasurer, I would like to thank fellow Council and administration for their diligence over the past year and to Penny M. Fair & Co. for preparing our unaudited financial statements. ■

For the full version of the 2009 AACIP Annual Report visit our website at [www.aacip.com](http://www.aacip.com)



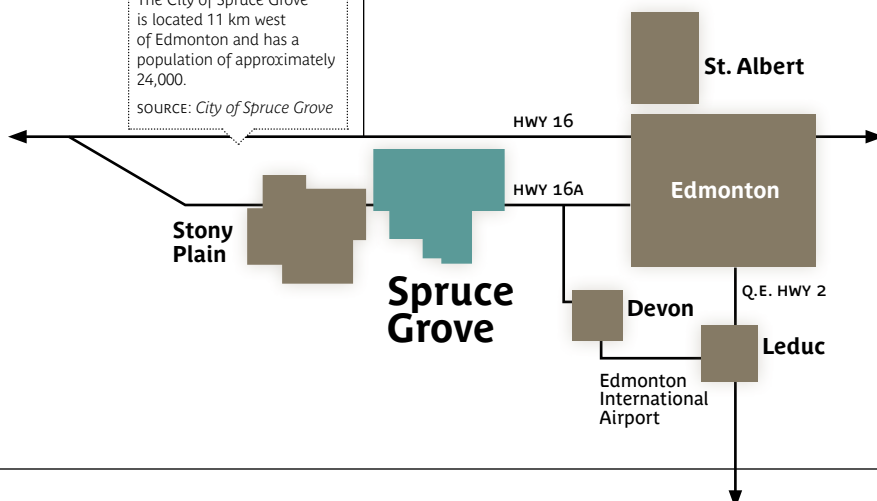


# Spruce Grove's Sustainable Future

Aerial Image of Spruce Grove.  
SOURCE: City of Spruce Grove

## Journey to the Municipal Development Plan

The City of Spruce Grove is located 11 km west of Edmonton and has a population of approximately 24,000.  
SOURCE: City of Spruce Grove



### A NEW APPROACH

In 2005, the City of Spruce Grove began crafting a new Municipal Development Plan (MDP). Our goal was to adopt a holistic plan that would involve the entire organization as well as the community. Traditionally the MDP is considered a land use document, but we wanted the entire organization to feel a sense of ownership for the new MDP. We intend the MDP to serve alongside the shorter-term Corporate Strategic Plan, and for both plans to work in tandem to guide decisions, projects and daily operations. This article provides an overview of the process we used to broaden our approach from basic land use planning to comprehensive community sustainability planning.

Complementary to our MDP process is the on-going Capital Region Board (CRB), planning exercise (refer to Component Plans on page 13). Through participation in the regional process, we worked to align project timelines and objectives with those of the Capital Region Growth Plan to ensure our MDP works for both the community and the region.

## MUNICIPAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN REVIEW – BACKGROUND REPORT (2006)

The first step we took was an assessment of the current policies within the City of Spruce Grove. We proposed a comprehensive MDP, following a systems approach to create a community plan for physical, social and economic development. To achieve this, it was critical to assess all of the documents that direct both day-to-day business and strategic corporate and community planning.

The *Background Report* contains an analysis of the City's policy framework; from there most of the discussion focuses on each individual policy, outlining a summary, the implications of the policy and the challenges associated with its implementation. Each area of the City's operations, from Public Works to Family and Community Social Services (FCSS), was asked to compile a list of goals for its area which could be inserted directly into the future MDP. While the goals were not copied and pasted into the final document, it is startling to note how similar the end product in our MDP is to the aspirations stated in the *Background Report*.

The MDP process started with the Parks and Open Space Master Plan.

SOURCE: City of Spruce Grove.

## PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MASTER PLAN (2006)

The legacy of Spruce Grove, as stated in our name, lies with the generous swaths of forest within our urban boundaries. Council and senior administration agreed that it is our green spaces which are the basis of our urban form. In order to lay the groundwork for our most important layer of infrastructure, green space, the *Parks and Open Space Master Plan* (POSMP) was the next stage in the MDP process.

Spruce Grove was the first community in Alberta to prepare an open space plan in 1972, and we believe we are also the first community in Alberta to use an open space plan as a basis for our MDP. We worked with Dillon Consulting and Sandalack + Associates from Calgary to craft a new open space plan.

The POSMP used the technique of townscape analysis to determine the location and quality of the important green space in the community, both before and after development. Building on the results of the townscape analysis, the POSMP outlines an inventory of open space and tools to analyze future needs for parks and open space by both type of use and location.

The last section of the POSMP deals with implementation of the plan's vision, including a number of approaches for acquisition of desirable land. In addition, the plan details strategies for managing our existing spaces in order to ensure they are environmentally, socially and financially sustainable.

## SPRUCEGROVEQUEST (2008)

With the POSMP firmly established, we knew it was time for an in-depth public process to find out what kind of city residents wanted Spruce Grove to become. We contracted Envision Sustainability Tools to run a workshop based on their MetroQuest software. MetroQuest is an interactive computer model that simulates growth in a community over a period of 40 years. Participants are given a series of choices about housing types, commercial and industrial development, transportation and environmental programs. Based on the choices, the program demonstrates how the community will grow and how sustainable it will be in the future.

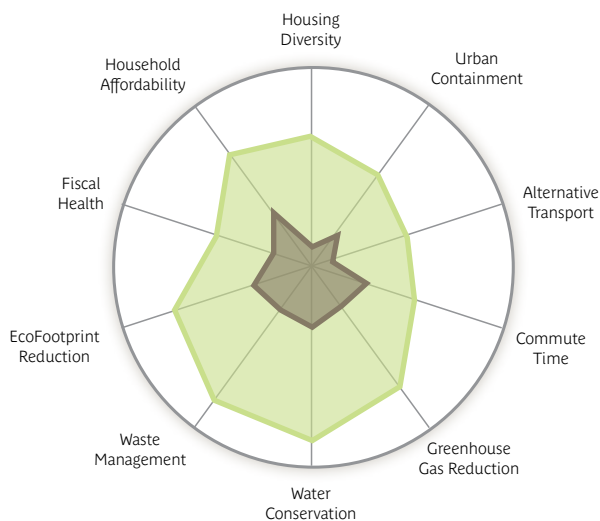




#### Scenario Summary by Key Indicator

- Our Vision
- Current Trend

SOURCE: MetroQuest



During the first stage of the public consultation, we ran a web based survey to gather information on values within the community, which garnered about 500 responses. For the second stage, we held three interactive workshops. The results demonstrated that key priorities for residents of Spruce Grove are neighborhood safety and protection of the natural environment. We also discovered that while residents prefer detached homes with large yards, they understand that the greatest benefit to the community and individuals occurs by encouraging compact residential development. The detailed outcomes of the *SpruceGroveQuest* process are contained in a report titled *Our Bright Future*.

#### SUSTAINABLE SPRUCE GROVE (2008)

The next step in the process was to create the City's integrated municipal sustainability plan based on the results of *SpruceGroveQuest*. We took this plan further than the required Building Canada Fund guidelines set by the Province and used it as an opportunity to articulate a framework for the MDP. *Sustainable Spruce Grove* became a bridge between the community vision and values articulated through *SpruceGroveQuest* and the new MDP. In essence, the required integrated municipal sustainability plan evolved into the City's MDP, strengthening our commitment to community sustainability.

*Your Bright Future unites economic, environmental, and social elements and provides a community sustainability based framework to direct future growth and development.*

#### YOUR BRIGHT FUTURE (2010)

*Your Bright Future* is the new MDP for Spruce Grove. Our plan recognizes that our municipality's ability to provide a high standard of living and service to its community members depends on our ability to adapt and respond to challenges and opportunities. *Your Bright Future* unites economic, environmental, and social elements and provides a community sustainability based framework to direct future growth and development. Integral to the plan are the concepts of balance and adaptability, which are woven through six themes: Governance, Environment, Form and Infrastructure, Economic Development, Community Life, and Regional Partnerships.

The plan's extent is 2020, but the community vision looks to 2040. The difference in timeframes allows for a long-range vision while recognizing the constraints of planning in continuously changing conditions.



Pedestrian-oriented development in the City Centre.

SOURCE: City of Spruce Grove

While *Your Bright Future* contains all the required elements of an MDP, the community sustainability base of this plan required the inclusion of a strong governance component. The Governance section covers 'Good Governance', 'Sustainability and Decision Making', 'Civic Engagement and Communication', and 'Fiscal Sustainability'. The last component entrenches the principles of our Sustainable Development Charter within the MDP and effectively links community sustainability principles with the decisions and day-to-day operations of the City.

We recognize the role of regional partnerships as another essential element for an MDP based on community sustainability. The Capital Region Growth Plan as submitted to the Minister should lend added weight to many of our sustainability principles, and provides a framework for greater efficiency and integration in several areas such as infrastructure, transit, housing, information management, and land use.

#### IMPLEMENTATION AND MONITORING

The City developed a detailed implementation plan to ensure *Your Bright Future* is used to its full potential. The implementation plan identifies initiatives that are both City driven and partnership based. It is essential that a clear link exist between the City's corporate and community planning processes to ensure the goals of the MDP are aligned with resources within the organization.

We anticipate the indicators will be refined over the next few years, but will help us measure our progress in achieving our community sustainability goals. Part of the process includes identifying data gaps and strategies to fill these gaps. The indicators will provide the basis for an annual 'State of the Community' report for Council and the public to track progress on the MDP.

#### CHALLENGES

The first hurdle we encountered while developing a broader approach to the MDP was to get City staff to buy into the idea. Asking for wide-spread participation during the initial background report met with a range of responses, including excitement, but also incredulity and annoyance.

The link between participation in planning and daily operations became clearer during the POSMP process, when departments could see where their work fit into the plan.

The approach paid off and by the time we had a draft MDP, managers and supervisors were keenly aware of how their department fit into the overall plan.

A related internal issue was the difficulty of communicating the difference between the corporate planning and community planning processes and defining what the link between these complementary processes looks like in day-to-day operations. The integrated approach of the MDP was a challenge in terms of organizing the conversation and structuring the document; decisions about which section should include or exclude a certain topic were at times difficult to make.

Working in the context of the Capital Region Board regional planning exercise had many positive elements for the City's MDP process, but its changing timeframes and evolving priorities and requirements also posed a challenge to the MDP project team. The fluidity of the regional approach was compounded for us by the fact that the City's process was attempting to shadow the CRB's process to ensure its plan met regional and local growth objectives.

*It is essential that a clear link exist between the City's corporate and community planning processes to ensure the goals of the MDP are aligned with resources within the organization.*

As part of the implementation plan, a major re-write of our Land Use Bylaw exploring innovative zoning tools and community design best practices will be starting in 2010. Also, currently under development is a collection of indicators and targets that shadow the six themes of the MDP.



The last challenge was our project team's difficulty in engaging members of the public in the dialogue. A variety of engagement techniques (e.g. workshops, web surveys, open houses, informal meetings, MetroQuest process) and advertising strategies were used through all stages of the process. Turnout, however, was disappointing despite the importance of the outcomes of this process to the community's future.

### LOOKING FORWARD

The MDP will be going to public hearing and second reading in May 2010 followed by CRB referral and third reading. Spruce Grove is excited about the type of community it is becoming. We are embracing the future while building on our past. Spruce Grove is at a crossroads in development. The lengthy process of writing our new MDP strengthens our community and gives us some key tools to move us toward becoming a more sustainable community. ■

The **Capital Region Board** is a provincially mandated regional decision-making body for the Alberta Capital Region with representation from each of the twenty-five municipalities that make up the region. The Capital Region Growth Plan provides a vision for the Capital Region in the future. Four component plans were required as part of the Growth Plan:

- |   |   |   |  |
|---|---|---|--|
| <b>1</b> A comprehensive, integrated regional land use plan | <b>2</b> A regional intermunicipal network transit plan | <b>3</b> A plan to coordinate geographic information services | <b>4</b> A plan for social and market affordable housing |
|---|---|---|--|

The Growth Plan was accepted by the Minister of Municipal Affairs in April 2009. Outstanding elements from the Land Use plan were accepted in March 2010.

**Lindsey Butterfield**, ACP, MCIP and **Amber Nicol**, ACP, MCIP are planners with the City of Spruce Grove. Together they guided the community, the organization, and the project team through the different stages of this process.

# Aging in Place

## Promising Practices for Municipalities



Until recently, planning and development practices in North America have followed principles that encouraged the separation of land uses, emphasis on the automobile and the prominence of suburban development. This has produced a physical environment that often creates significant barriers to an aging individual, potentially reducing quality of life and limiting the ability to remain in one's home and neighbourhood.

As a follow-up to the 2007 *Aging in Place: A Neighbourhood Strategy* by Community Consulting Services, the City of Edmonton's Community Services Department decided to explore strategies to meet the needs of the City's growing seniors population. They retained Armin A. Preiksaitis & Associates Ltd. to research and identify aging in

place practices and principles for new and infill community planning, which resulted in a January 2009 report entitled *Aging in Place: Promising Practices for Municipalities*.

People over 65 are one of Canada's fastest growing demographic groups. In 2006, nearly 12% (86,700) of Edmonton residents were 65 or older. This ratio will increase considerably over the next decade as the baby boomers age. This demographic shift will have huge implications for cities as servicing demands change. Canadian research suggests that an 'aging in place' approach is a less costly alternative to conventional residential care for older seniors.

*Canadian research suggests that an 'aging in place' approach is a less costly alternative to conventional residential care for older seniors.*

Aging in place refers to the opportunity for people to remain in their homes or neighbourhoods for as long as possible rather than moving to a new community that may better service their needs. In order for seniors to age in place, they require both services and physically planned neighbourhoods that allow them to maintain their independence.

While many Edmonton seniors currently live in mature communities where a range of services and amenities already exist, a large number of senior citizens housing complexes are being constructed in suburban greenfield sites. The 2007 *Aging in Place: A Neighbourhood Strategy* reported that three-quarters of Edmonton seniors own and live in their homes. Older seniors may be reaching the point of having to decide whether to move into a care facility or stay in their homes and it can be assumed that most would prefer to do the latter.

The research for the 2009 *Aging in Place: Promising Practices for Municipalities* study used a three-step methodology:

- 1 Web research and a literature review of current aging in place practices and strategies. The World Health Organization's *Checklist of Essential Features of Age-friendly Cities* was particularly valuable.
- 2 A survey of 12 North American municipalities to identify best municipal practices and approaches to creating aging in place communities.
- 3 Roundtables with local experts and stakeholders knowledgeable in the area of age-friendly planning and development to explore challenges and solutions.

Although no one municipality has a comprehensive one-stop approach to age-friendly planning and development, a number of North American cities have adopted planning principles and practices that support the development and redevelopment of communities that are 'livable', 'sustainable', 'complete', 'new urbanist' or 'intergenerational'. The planning principles used to create these communities are considered to be universal, as they benefit all abilities and ages, not only seniors. They encompass many aging in place principles and are working to make cities more age-friendly.

Research identified the following eight planning principles as most relevant to the physical planning, design and development of aging in place communities and infill projects.

- 1 Diversify the Housing Stock Available for Seniors
- 2 Promote Mixed Use Development
- 3 Locate Seniors Housing Close to Facilities and Services
- 4 Provide Barrier-Free Design and Visitability in Buildings
- 5 Provide Public Transit that Recognizes the Needs of Seniors
- 6 Encourage Walkability with Attractive Pedestrian Environments and Navigation
- 7 Recognize the Needs and Wants of Seniors in the Design and Programming of Outdoor Spaces and Gathering Areas
- 8 Use Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) to Enhance Community Safety for Seniors and Others

The City of Edmonton in recent years, through its plans and programs, has started laying the groundwork for age-friendly design. Housing choice, mixed use development, improved mobility and walkability, universal design, and safe and accessible community parks and facilities are addressed in a number of initiatives, including:

- *Proposed Municipal Development Plan* (addresses age-friendly, universal and family-friendly design)
- *Transportation Master Plan—The Way We Move*, 2009
- *City of Edmonton Urban Parks Management Plan*, 2006
- *Edmonton Cornerstones Plan* 2006-2010
- Edmonton Zoning Bylaw Amendment to Increase the Opportunity for Secondary, Garage and Garden Suites, Bylaw 15036
- *Residential Infill Guidelines: A Manual of Planning and Design Guidelines for Residential Infill for Mature Neighbourhoods*, Final Report November 2008
- *Sidewalk Strategy* 2009
- *New Neighbourhood Design Guidelines* (underway)
- Walkability Strategy (underway)

The 2009 *Aging in Place: Promising Practices for Municipalities* study made recommendations to the City of Edmonton in the six areas below.

These recommendations could potentially be considered by other municipalities interested in age-friendly planning.

- 1 Incorporate aging in place planning principles and practices into new or amended area structure plans and area redevelopment plans.** (The City of Edmonton plans to amend Terms of Reference for Area Structure Plans and Neighbourhood Structure Plans to incorporate aging in place principles.)
- 2 Include aging in place planning principles and practices into design guidelines for new neighbourhoods.** (The City of Edmonton Planning Department will be incorporating aging in place principles into its New Neighbourhood Design Guidelines currently under development.)
- 3 Review zoning regulations to remove barriers and streamline processes to facilitate the development of various forms of seniors housing.** (City of Edmonton Zoning Bylaw amendments have been completed to include expanded opportunities for secondary suites, and are underway for parking regulations and a Pedestrian Commercial Shopping Street Overlay. Other changes will be considered in future Zoning Bylaw reviews.)
- 4 Encourage shopping centres to complete site audits and introduce age-friendly improvements.** (The Alberta Council on Aging is willing to provide Senior Friendly™ training and resources, including site audits, to interested shopping centres.)
- 5 Consider a pilot or demonstration project to ensure that public realm improvements consider visitability and age-friendly neighbourhood design.** (The City of Edmonton Community Services Department, as part of its Neighbourhood Reinvestment Program, is exploring a demonstration project and has submitted funding proposals to the Province.)
- 6 Collaborate with seniors' groups,** such as the Edmonton Seniors Coordinating Council, to educate organizations like the Urban Development Institute, Canadian Home Builders' Association, Alberta Association of Architects and Alberta Association of Landscape Architects on the importance of aging in place planning principles.

#### REFERENCES:

Armin A. Preiksaitis & Associates Ltd. prepared for City of Edmonton. *Aging in Place: Promising Practices for Municipalities*, 2009.

City of Edmonton Planning & Development Department report *Aging in Place Progress Report*, October 27, 2009, presented to City Council.

City of Edmonton Community Services Department report *Aging in Place Study Integration and Best Practices*, February 17, 2009 presented to City Council.

Community Services Consulting Ltd. prepared for City of Edmonton. *Aging in Place: A Neighbourhood Strategy*, 2007.

Communities that are conducive to aging in place are generally considered to be more livable for everyone. Achieving age-friendly neighbourhoods, buildings and public spaces will involve the collaboration of policy makers, industry organizations, design professionals, developers, builders and non-profit groups. ■

For more information on the City of Edmonton's aging in place studies, contact Brenda Wong, Seniors Coordinator with the City of Edmonton Community Services Department at 780-944-0462 or [brenda.wong@edmonton.ca](mailto:brenda.wong@edmonton.ca).

**Mary-Jane Laviolette** is an Associate with Armin A. Preiksaitis & Associates Ltd., an Edmonton planning and design firm. She has a special interest in livable communities and helped research and write the *Aging in Place: Promising Practices for Municipalities* report.

About the Author





COMMENTARY

# On Planning and “Related” Degrees

Our professional forefathers saw planning as a very broad discipline. CIP Membership originally extended to artists, sculptors, surveyors, and lawyers, for example. Likewise, many individuals recognized at the forefront of the planning field have been members of other professions, including architecture, landscape architecture, sociology, and journalism.

AACIP’s logbook guidelines also leave room for interpretation. The specific focus areas of Subject Matter considered suitable for submission as “responsible, professional planning experience” are comprehensive enough to include the fields of engineering, economics, business, environmental studies, geography, and more.

Despite this, Members with “related” degrees, as suggested above, are not always recognized by AACIP’s Registration Committee. This currently means the difference between four years of Provisional Membership, and six. With Planner postings in Alberta increasingly favouring Full Members, particularly for higher-level positions, this is a matter of concern for our entire membership to understand and discuss as the CIP membership reforms progress.

The Journal is proud to feature the debut of our new Commentary section in this issue. It is our hope that by featuring opinion pieces submitted by members we will spark conversation and debate and engage members in dialogue about emerging issues that are important to them. The opinions featured in this section do not necessarily represent the views of the AACIP Council, Administration or the Planning Journal Committee.

- 1 Neither AACIP nor CIP have an appeal mechanism to deal with membership issues, although other professional associations do. Our Registration Committee, like any Committee, makes mistakes; however provincial law gives AACIP’s Registration Committee “sole jurisdiction” to administer AACIP’s membership qualifications.
- 2 Neither AACIP nor CIP have a formal position on the fundamental purpose of Provisional Membership, beyond that of an arbitrary period of logging experience before progressing to Full Membership.
- 3 Every application for Provisional Membership is reviewed on a case-by-case basis by AACIP’s Registration Committee, independently of past decisions. Two virtually identical submissions can face completely opposite outcomes.
- 4 Unsuccessful applicants are typically informed only that their submission is “not good enough”, without being given any specific details about the deficiencies in their application. This makes it very difficult for applicants to respond, for example, by taking adequate additional coursework.
- 5 AACIP’s current membership practice review lacks transparency. Revisions to a system which affects the entire Membership are taking place without adequate communication and opportunities for constructive comment by the Membership-at-Large.
- 6 Consequently, AACIP may be putting its reputation on the line. Even a perceived failure by the AACIP to ensure an objective and transparent decision-making process within the context of its membership reviews may put the reputation of our Association and its Members at risk.

## SUMMARY OF AUTHORS’ CONCERNS

## CONCLUSION

We, as planners, must appreciate that planning is not inherently a profession unto itself; much of its success comes from its very multidisciplinary roots.

To better support its Members, and to align with the supports extended in other professional associations, we believe the AACIP needs a third-party appeal process, and a formal position on the fundamental purpose of Provisional Membership.

In our opinion, more transparency and clarity about AACIP’s processes, requirements and expectations surrounding “related” education are also needed, because Members are being inadvertently stalled on the basis of vague requirements which are open to interpretation.

AACIP membership is both a privilege and a responsibility. Let us work together to clarify the responsibilities involved with the membership process so that all of us can better exercise the privilege of membership. ■

**Myron Belej**, ACP, MCIP, AICP is a Planner for the City of Edmonton, and manager of [www.cityplanner.ca](http://www.cityplanner.ca).

**Imai Welch** is a Municipal Affairs Planning Intern at the Town of Whitecourt.

## About the Authors

If you have an opinion on current planning issues we’d love to hear from you! Watch for our next call for submissions to put forward your point of view or email [aacip.planning.journal@gmail.com](mailto:aacip.planning.journal@gmail.com) to tell us what you think of this commentary or our new section in general.



# Infill Housing Sustainability Analysis

SOURCE: City of Calgary

As a part of the drive towards measuring sustainability in urban form, room is opening up for a finer level of detail to answer questions about more minute areas and their current and potential sustainability. Planning Analysts are coming to the forefront in presenting Geographic Information System (GIS) analysis and analytical methodology that may not be otherwise formulated. With an open policy in their division of the City of Calgary's Land Use and Policy Planning Department, they are encouraged to gather data that might assist in analysis. They can then go forward to analyze the data to answer questions posed by planners as the planners consider their policy objectives, allowing tentative answers to be presented to the planners' thinking. Planning analysts are answering more and more questions in the realm of urban sustainability as more data becomes available and they carry out analyses that help stimulate policy discussion and debate.

One measure of sustainability, the ecological footprint (EF) calculated for Calgary by Global Footprint Network (GFN) uses Statistics Canada's annual Consumption/Spending survey to define

the footprint for the entire city—a top down calculation. Another measure of sustainability, the Calgary Energy Map (see AACIP Planning Journal Winter 2009/10 Issue 3), part of Calgary's new Municipal Development Plan uses gas and electric energy and building square footage to calculate energy use in gigajoules per hectare (GJ/ha) on a citywide map – a ground up measure. Planners prefer a ground up source with its connection to local variation and its availability to the influence of policy. As well, the ecological footprint expressed in global hectares (gha) retains units of land area familiar to planners as well as a local measure connected to its resultant global impact.

As a part of an attempt to measure sustainability at a micro level, both ATCO and ENMAX were approached to obtain energy use. Requests to each were submitted for measurement in the more relevant units of energy consumed rather than dollars spent (as sourced by the GFN from Statistics Canada's Spending survey) and at the finest level of detail that would be released. ATCO data was available in GJ while ENMAX

maintains records in kilowatt hours (kWh), both units of energy that can easily be converted back and forth using a simple conversion factor. Both utility company sources agreed to supply energy data to the City of Calgary at a six digit postal code level or approximately one city block. Data from the City of Calgary Assessment Department also was available at a household level of detail. With Assessment household data aggregated to postal codes, the Housing component of ecological footprint can be calculated at a scale comparable to each blockface across the city. This bottom up measure of energy use and materials consumed expressible as Housing ecological footprint presents well to urban planners.

of gas heating energy had decreased significantly (by 23.4%) likely due to improved building standards and the associated improvement in insulation as well as more efficient heating units in spite of an offsetting increase in building size. Housing square footage had changed the most (54.7% increase) reflecting the largest change in Housing footprint for each household. The increase in house size offset any gains in insulation and furnace efficiency and left the total Housing ecological footprint of infill housing 11.0% larger than that of pre 1945 stock housing according to this GIS analysis.

In one broader context, debate continues as to whether technology or efficiency improvements will solve or assist in alleviating an increasing human pressure on the global natural economy or the environment. In this situation, the argument that growth (in building living space in this case) will override efficiency gains (improved building insulation and heating systems in this case) has played itself out.

Planners, when presented with this first tentative answer in a formal meeting, asked for further comparison between Greenfield housing and infill housing (see Figure 2). The same GIS analysis procedure was followed. Results show very little difference between Infill housing and Greenfield housing; a difference of 1.6% (see Table 2). What was also intuitively considered for this analysis was the Mobility component of the ecological footprint. It would be expected that those living in Greenfield developments farther from the city centre and with less public transit available would commute to work and make other trips by automobile, increasing their Mobility component compared to inner city residents. For the Mobility footprint, ground up data was not available at a level of detail comparable to that available for the Housing footprint (yet). So back to a top down method, using Statistics Canada's 2006 Census data at a Dissemination Area (DA) or what might be called Statistics Canada Village (mean population in Calgary is 670) level, the mode of travel to work was used to estimate a 36% increase in the Mobility footprint for Greenfield housing.

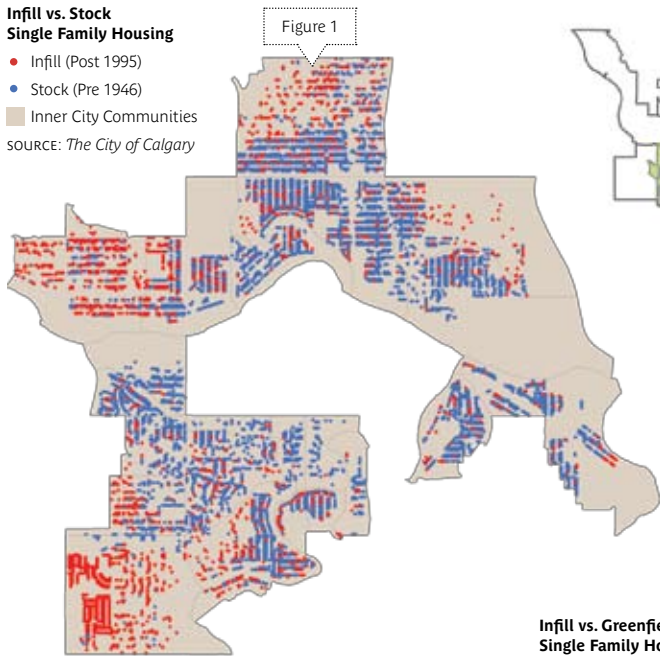
### *What would the environmental impact of an infill house in the inner city be compared to the original stock housing?*

A question posed by a planner in an informal conversation on sustainability was: what would the environmental impact of an infill house in the inner city be compared to the original stock housing? This is the type of question that can be addressed by a planning analyst through the use of GIS (see Figure 1). To find an answer, infill housing data was selected from the Assessment database within inner city communities only where the entire postal code was made up of houses with an Assessment built date between 1996 and 2006 and that were classified as houses or duplexes. The same search was done for houses and duplexes with a built date before 1945 within developing communities. The 68 postal codes in the 1996–2006 category which would be Infills can be analytically compared to the 223 postal codes with original housing stock in the pre 1945 category (see Table 1).

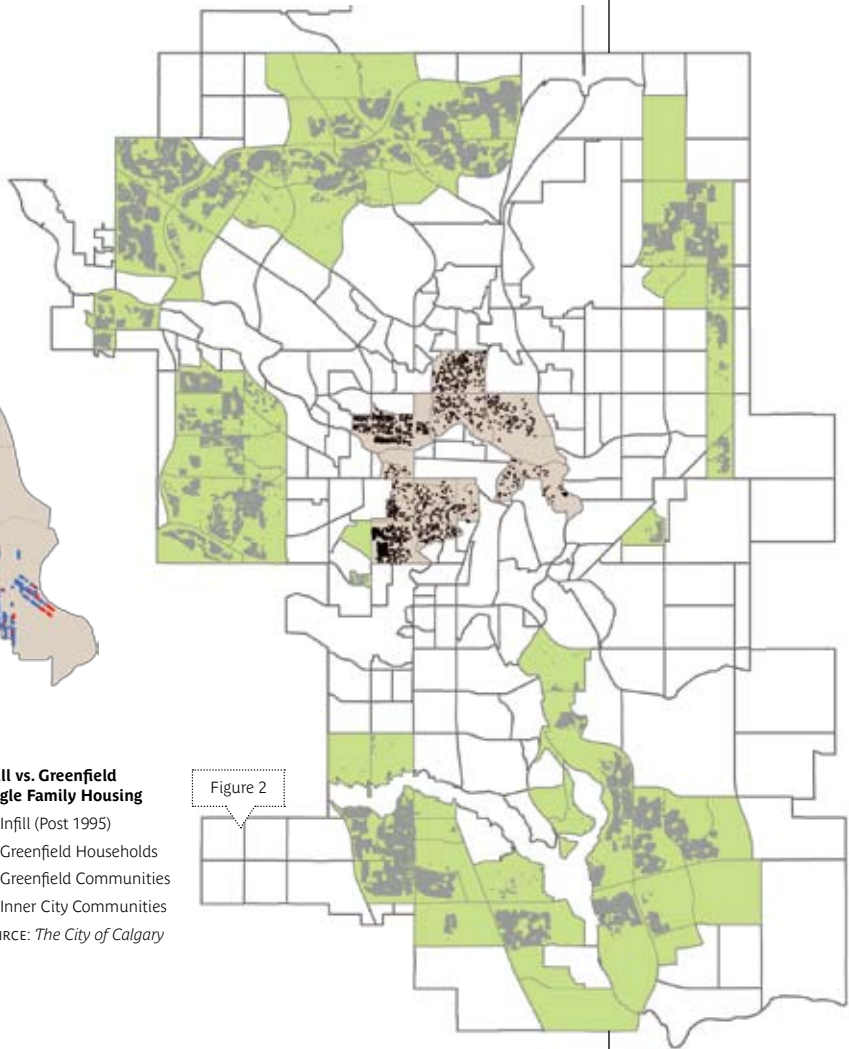
With this data classified and then analyzed, a tentative answer to the question was presented. It turns out that between 1945 and 1996, changes had been occurring in the global hectares consumed by housing. Use of electric energy had changed very little by each household while the use



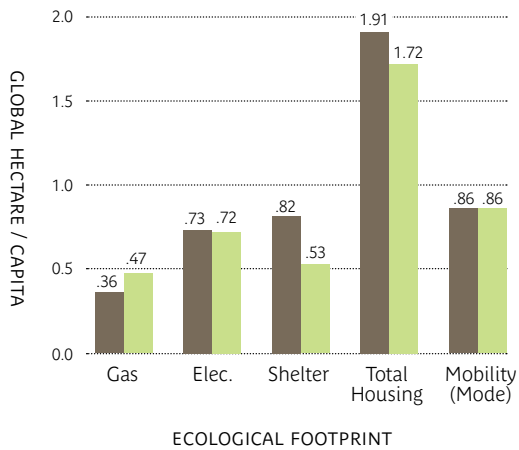
**Infill vs. Stock Single Family Housing**  
 • Infill (Post 1995)  
 • Stock (Pre 1946)  
 ■ Inner City Communities  
 SOURCE: *The City of Calgary*



**Infill vs. Greenfield Single Family Housing**  
 • Infill (Post 1995)  
 • Greenfield Households  
 ■ Greenfield Communities  
 ■ Inner City Communities  
 SOURCE: *The City of Calgary*



**Table 1**  
**Inner City Infill vs. Stock Housing**  
 ■ Infill (1996–2006) Complete Postal Code Count : 68  
 ■ Stock (Pre 1946) Complete Postal Code Count : 223



**Table 2**  
**Greenfield vs. Infill**  
 ■ Infill (1996–2006) Complete Postal Code Count : 68  
 ■ Greenfield (1996–2006) Complete Postal Code Count : 1,649

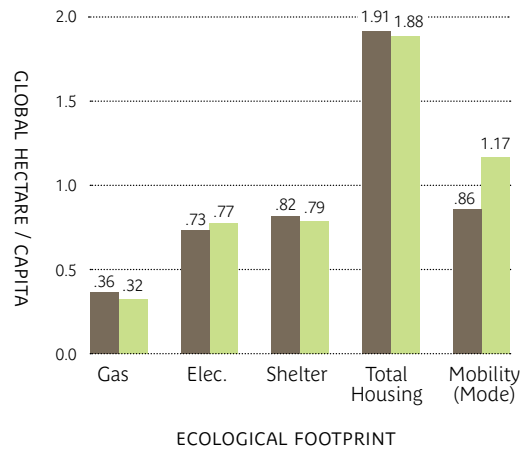
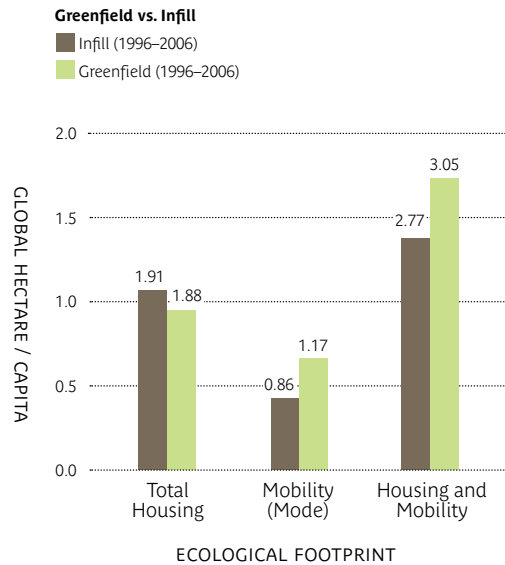


Table 3



It is of interest to note here that from Calgary's 2009 Global Footprint Network ecological footprint CLUM (Consumption Land Use Matrix), the Housing component makes up 18.5% and the Mobility component makes up 11.0% of the total ecological footprint per capita. Totalling the Mobility and Housing components of the Infill and Greenfield housing, the difference comes out to 9.2% (Table 3).

The answers to the question(s) then, are that Infill housing consumes more global hectares than stock inner city housing when based only on the Housing footprint of an ecological footprint. When inner city Infill housing is compared with Greenfield housing, they consume about the same number of global hectares. So where a house is built in the city has little influence on its ecological footprint by this measure. If the measure of Mobility is assumed to have the same accuracy as the Housing measure (from a top down source), the total Housing and Mobility components of ecological footprint show

a trend in the intuitively expected direction and an associated 9.2% decrease in global hectares consumed if a house is infill rather than Greenfield. Clearly this analysis does not include a cost analysis of underground facilities and roadways development in the Greenfields nor the tendency of Infills to develop on subdivided lots with the associated increase in density. Perhaps further questioning will arise from planners on these issues.

Planning Analysts carrying out GIS analysis based on data collected by a bottom up method can create results that when presented to planners may stimulate debate and inform policy decision making. Policy on infill housing and Greenfield housing may be improved by a GIS sustainability analysis that can now be carried out at a household level of detail. Further GIS analyses based on such data as an improved Mobility bottom up source, may provide decision support to planners in this and other challenging situations. ■

## About the Author

**Les Kuzyk**, Associate Member AACIP, works in the Business and Technical Services (BTS) division of the Land Use and Policy Planning (LUPP) department for the City of Calgary as a Planning Analyst carrying out GIS support work for policy planners. This article was written in support of a BTS initiative to promote GIS analysis in general and in this case, as a self initiated promotion of the measurement and analysis of sustainability in GIS using the ecological footprint with units of global hectares. He will be attending the "Footprint Forum 2010" in June in Italy to present a GIS-based method of ecological footprint measurement based on income (results still in global hectare counts).



# TOD in Greenfield Edmonton

SOURCE: City of Edmonton

## A story of collaboration, compromises and success

Transit-oriented developments (TOD) have gained increasing popularity since the concept was first introduced by Peter Calthorpe in the late 80s. Most TODs incorporate intensified development around transit stations, a mix of land uses, some civic use component, and improved multi-modal accessibility to transit within the TOD area.

The Heritage Valley Town Centre ("Town Centre") project, located in a greenfield area in Edmonton, Alberta, provides an excellent example of the issues and challenges planners are faced with in designing a TOD neighbourhood in a suburban setting. This project was promoted by the private land owners in the area and Stantec provided the planning and design consulting services for approval of the plan.

### **HERITAGE VALLEY SCDB**

The Heritage Valley Servicing Concept Design Brief (SCDB) provided the basic planning and servicing framework for the Heritage Valley area. The Heritage Valley SCDB occupies an area of approximately 2,100 ha and consists of twelve neighbourhoods including the Town Centre. The SCDB envisioned the Town Centre as a dynamic, mixed-use, pedestrian friendly and transit-oriented community that functions as the social and economic heart of the entire Heritage Valley area. To ensure the plan achieves the vision, the planning/design team applied innovative ideas and strategies to ensure that the project's short and long term development feasibility was maintained.

## THE DESIGN CHARRETTE

Although preliminary planning and testing of design options for the Town Centre began early on, the project gained momentum with a design charrette. This, two-day, multi-disciplinary charrette was organized by the Planning and Development Department (P&DD) of the City of Edmonton (City) and was co-led by a TOD consultant the City had retained. Several individuals, including the land owners/developers, planning/design team for the Town Centre, leaders of various City departments, and stakeholders, participated in the charrette. Because a TOD model was not congruent with conventional suburban development patterns in Edmonton, participants were encouraged to think “outside the box” when brainstorming design ideas. Through the design charrette, the participants derived a basic transportation and land use framework for the neighborhood, including a grid-based “network” of streets. This framework was based on the idea that a large number of narrow streets will provide multiple route options and disperse traffic in an efficient manner. These streets should be designed to facilitate pedestrian and bicycle movement to create a very permeable TOD area with excellent multimodal access to a light rail train (LRT) station. Accordingly, the LRT station was placed in the heart of the Town Centre and surrounded with different land uses such as main street retail, mixed-use, commercial, civic/institutional, and medium density residential. A majority of these uses were located within 400 m of the LRT station.

The design charrette was a valuable exercise to “kick-off” planning for the Town Centre. However, the framework was very preliminary and it was evident that there were several implementation issues that needed to be sorted out through the course of the plan-making exercise. This marked the beginning of an 18-month long collaborative exercise, primarily between the proponents of the project, the developers and their planning/design team, and the City. Throughout this time, the group aimed at reconciling the City’s long-term vision of the Town Centre as a transit-oriented, mixed-use, and pedestrian friendly neighbourhood with the project’s economic/development feasibility. This plan-making exercise was especially challenging

because the City was not planning to construct the LRT to the Town Centre in the near term, meaning the “T” in the TOD was missing!

## RETAIL MARKET

As conceived, the project included a significant retail/commercial component. It was critical for the commercial site to meet the current and future commercial needs of the Town Centre and the surrounding neighbourhoods. If not, these needs would be met elsewhere and thus compromise the vibrancy of the Town Centre.

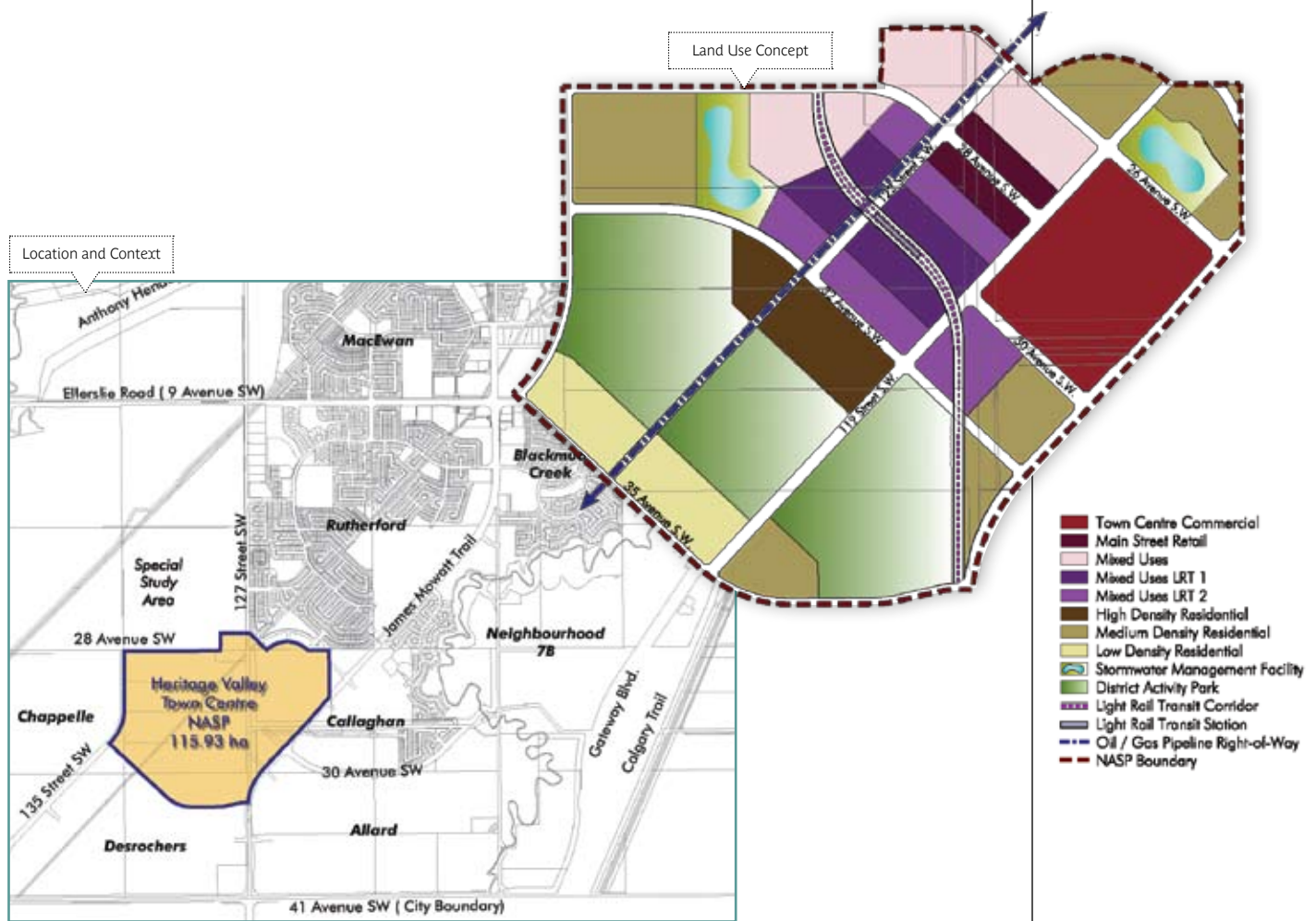
The commercial development was affected by suburban land economics because of the absence of LRT. On the other hand, it was also expected to be an integral part of the TOD development. Due to these constraints a hybrid framework was adopted for the site. The site was sized and designed in consideration of location (i.e. adjacent to arterial roadway, excellent visibility, access, provision of adequate parking) and market (i.e. allow for clustering, presence of an anchor store). At the same time, this site maintained strong pedestrian connections with the LRT, which would reinforce the commercial development when the LRT was constructed.

Several urban design policies were applied to the site to ensure that the development “form” was in tune with the overall TOD theme of the neighbourhood. These policies incorporated strong pedestrian connections across the site and to the surrounding areas, active building frontages, pedestrian-friendly streetscapes, prohibition of “chain” architecture, smaller and dispersed parking areas, and higher landscaping standards.

## LAND USE MIX AND DENSITY

Over the long term the City of Edmonton was planning capital expenditure of millions of dollars to eventually extend the LRT to the Heritage Valley Town Centre. In order to protect and maximize the City’s investment dollars, the Planning Department’s inclination was to specify minimum density requirements within 400 m around the LRT station. However, there are risks associated with prescribing minimum density requirements. First, there would be no market for such higher density



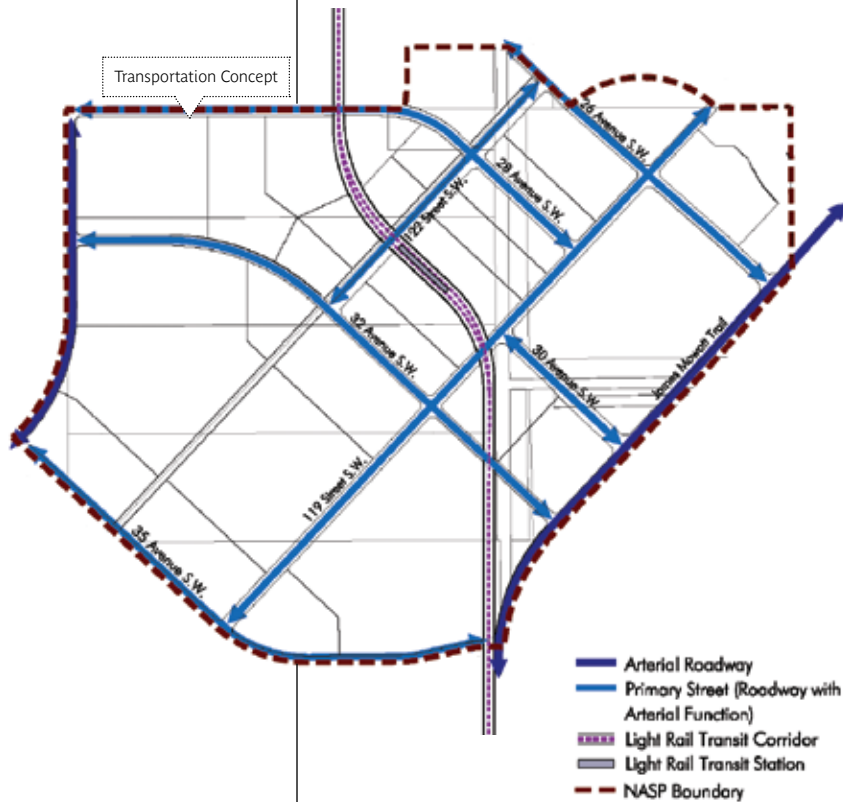


apartment buildings in the absence of LRT, leaving that area economically unfeasible for development until the LRT was built. Second, provision of higher minimum densities would result in higher traffic generation numbers and, as a result, require more and wider roads within the neighbourhood, which is not desirable for TODs.

To overcome these potential problems, the plan used a strategy combining maximum density thresholds with form-based regulations. Within 200 m around the LRT, the plan specified a maximum density of 275 units per hectare. However, the minimum building height allowed within this area was only four storeys, up to a maximum of eight storeys. Progressively lower, density and building height combinations were applied further away from the LRT station. For example, within 200 m to 400 m around the LRT, the plan permitted a maximum density of 225

units per hectare and the building height ranged from four to six storeys. This approach ensured that even if the development complied with the minimum building form requirements, it would result in significant concentration of units within walking distance to the LRT station. Besides, these types of low-rise apartments would not be much different than other apartment sites in suburban Edmonton. This type of framework provided enough flexibility to allow for more intensified uses as the land economics changed and the market matured/evolved.

Provision of mixed-uses, an essential component of transit-oriented development, was also included within the Town Centre plan. To ensure that uses immediately abutting and within 200 m around the LRT station developed as mixed-use buildings, the City's preference was to prescribe a specific mix of retail, office, and



residential uses. However, developing mixed-use areas in the traditional sense posed some challenges. First, residential, retail, and office uses have different rates of absorption. Retail uses require a critical mass and typically develop within a relatively short timeframe based on immediate demand. On the other hand, office and residential uses have smaller and more defined absorption rates and accordingly develop over a longer time frame (Beyard et al. 2003). Therefore, mixing these uses within single buildings is difficult. Second, prescribing a specific mix of retail vs. office vs. residential is not a rational approach since it is very difficult to estimate future market demand. Therefore, the mixed-use designations within the plan did not prescribe a specific mix of uses, but simply provided opportunity for retail, office, residential, and civic/institutional uses. In addition, an emphasis was placed on the “form” of the development. Therefore, urban design policies were applied to all mixed-use sites to



ensure a built form that is desirable within TOD developments. Some of the main features of these guidelines include direct pedestrian connections to the LRT station, requirement for retail uses to be street-oriented or oriented towards the LRT, incorporation of active building frontages along the streets and pedestrian walkways, provision of public plazas integrated with pedestrian walkways, and higher standards of landscaping.

#### **CITY'S STANDARDS vs. TOD REQUIREMENTS**

Through the emphasis on the form and character of the built form, the Town Centre plan included many features and elements that were quite unique, given the suburban Edmonton context. For example, the streets—referred to as primary streets—within the TOD area were wider (approx. 24 m) than a standard collector roadway (20 m) but narrower than an arterial roadway, which are typically wider than 37 metres. The primary streets were intended to promote pedestrian movement and support/interact with the adjacent land uses. Accordingly, these streets featured elements such as wide sidewalks, traffic-calming elements, street trees, pedestrian-oriented lighting, and other furnishings. The plan also intended to reduce off-street parking requirements within the TOD area. However, all these features did not meet the City's "blue book" standards. Therefore, the Transportation Department utilized this plan—once adopted as Bylaw by Council—as a tool to provide direction to the City Administration to permit and implement alternative development standards for streetscape design, parking, landscaping, and other features within the plan boundary.

#### **IMPLEMENTATION: URBAN DESIGN**

The plan placed an increased focus on regulating the intended form and character of the development. Therefore, all uses within the TOD area were designated as "Special Areas" and comprehensive urban design policies and guidelines were applied these land uses. The urban design policies and guidelines were intended to inform the Special Area zoning for these areas to ensure the neighbourhood developed in accordance with the Vision of the plan.

#### **THE FINAL PLAN**

The final plan achieved an effective balance of incorporating sound planning and urban design principles while maintaining a solid economic foundation. To start, the plan created an accessible grid-based street network to get the "bones" (i.e. streets) in place, as they are relatively fixed once development occurs. At the same time, however, the team made sure that the plan is flexible enough to allow the development (and re-development) pattern to evolve and mature over time, within a comprehensive form-based design framework for the area.

The final plan was well received by Edmonton City Council and is perceived as a progressive and unique TOD plan for suburban Edmonton. This plan was the outcome of a long, collaborative, and oftentimes frustrating, process among the developers, the planning/design team, and the City administration. Compromises were required from all parties to make progress. In spite of, or perhaps because of, such compromises, it developed into a "solid" plan that every team member is proud to be a part of. ■

Om Joshi, B.Arch., MCP, ACP, MCIP, a planner at Stantec Consulting Ltd., provides consulting services on a range of community planning and design projects, including regional plans, neighbourhood plans, redevelopment plans and transit-oriented development. Om continues to volunteer with the Planning & Development Committee at the Edmonton Chamber of Commerce to assist the Chamber in developing policies/positions pertaining to various municipal and provincial plans and initiatives.

About the Author

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# An Interview with Doug Kelly

## Author of \$100,000 An Acre



Author Doug Kelly

*In your preface you state that a veteran developer remarked to you that someone should write a book about our development industry and what was happening. Can you expand on that statement in terms of why you wrote the book and how it came about?*

In 1972 I started working for Melton Real Estate, which later became Melcor Developments. The industry was very active at that time and there was lots going on. This senior developer, I recall, mentioned that "Someone should write a book"... about all that was happening at that time. Well that thought stuck with me all these years and since no one had written a book, I thought I might as well do it. In the 70's there were lots of deals being made, many new communities were being created and that history was never recorded. It was a different era then, free wheeling, far less corporate and bottom line driven when compared to now. I wanted to bring out the characters of the 50s, 60s, and 70s; the real entrepreneurs, the people who were motivated and would put their life's fortune on the line to create a visionary community,

something special. It [the book] is a history of the industry in Alberta, which is really a part of Alberta's culture and heritage.

*Why is the book significant for planners today?*

It gives them a sense of the history of the industry and for the young it can help them appreciate how community development evolved through that post war period.

*In what ways would you say land development in Alberta has improved from the 60s to the present?*

Technology, for one thing, in creating infrastructure. In the 60s there was no stormwater management. It was all piped. There has been an increase of wetlands and ponds and developments are more environmentally friendly. Developers are more conscious of not wasting land. Subdivisions are more efficient and yields have increased. In the 50s and 60s it was primarily large lot single family dwellings at about 4 dwelling units/acre. Today most communities achieve 8 dwelling units/acre.

***In what ways would you say that it hasn't?***

The loss of the entrepreneurial spirit and the visionaries. Development decisions are more bottom line driven. Also the length of time of approvals is a hindrance and lends to an increase in cost of the product. The public meeting process and the public hearing process has become way too arduous. Politicians listen to the public way too much and are too easily swayed by NIMBYism.

***How do you think the development process can be improved today?***

Streamline the process and make getting approvals less complicated, particularly for good projects. Make fast tracking a reality when the administration and the developer agree that the project should go ahead, even though, for example, not all aspects of the application meet bylaw requirements. Many planners in the municipal approval field are hung up on process.

***What has been the biggest influence on land development in Alberta from the 60s to the present?***

The birth of the Industry was following the birth of the oil industry. With the tremendous influx of people to Alberta after the Leduc discovery, municipalities could not keep up with the demand for serviced lots. This gave rise to land developer entrepreneurs who stepped up to fill the unsatisfied demand for serviced lots. In Edmonton it took a little longer than in Calgary for private development to get started because after the great depression the City of Edmonton had inherited over 70,000 unserviced subdivided lots due to non payment of property taxes.

***You take a hard stance about land development in your book stating that "rural should be rural and land development should be left to urban municipalities where it belongs". Can you expand on this?***

In 1995 the Provincial government eliminated the *Planning Act* and put all law concerning land development into the *Municipal Government Act*. The Province also gave equal power to all municipalities (rural and urban) to have the same kind of development, i.e. urban style development.

This was a big mistake. It has led to animosities between rural and urban municipalities to the detriment of good planning. Now they compete for development and efficiencies of infrastructure servicing, for example, has gone by the way side. Contiguous development has now fallen prey to helter skelter development. The Planning Act should've been left alone, it was good legislation.

***What do you think about the Province's decision to create the Capital Region Board? Will it work?***

In theory it's a good idea. It goes back to politics. The Province has not played a strong enough role in the Region's growth. I'm in favour of a strong centralized city rather than what has occurred in the Edmonton Region. The central city, i.e. Edmonton, gets shafted when satellite cities are allowed to grow to the boundaries and stifle growth in the central city. The Province made a huge mistake in the early 80's by not allowing the City of Edmonton to annex St. Albert and Sherwood Park. The Capital Region Board has come about out of necessity due to the mess that was made from past Provincial decisions, or non-decisions.

*Developers should also ask themselves two questions: Would I like to live in my development?*

*Will my development stand the test of time?*

*If the answer is no..., then they shouldn't be making the application.*

***What do you foresee for the future? Where do you see the land development process going?***

Unfortunately we are not going back to the way it was in the 50's, 60's or 70's. Land development is going to get more complicated due to the increase of concerns amongst the public and elected officials. Concerns over air pollution, commuter distances, the loss of agricultural land, etc., will make approvals for suburban development more difficult. On the other hand the North American dream of a young family owning their own single

family home on a relatively large lot remains as strong as ever. So we can't just say no more suburban growth. We can't put an iron belt around Calgary or Edmonton and say no more suburbia. That just forces the people wanting a large single family home further out to even farther flung satellites. So what have we solved? Each municipality has to provide a balance of single family housing as well as infill opportunities to offer choices to people.

***What advice can you give to Planners and to developers?***

I would encourage innovation to developers and municipal planners. Both sides often have the same goal and should not get discouraged by the process. When a good development is brought forward it should be recognized and the process streamlined to make it happen. Developers should also ask themselves two other questions: Would I like to live in my development? Will my development stand the test of time? If the answer is no to any of these questions, then they shouldn't be making the application.

Also, "Good" in this context doesn't have to mean expensive, or high priced, but it should be pleasing to look at and well designed.

We should celebrate the planners who contributed to land development in Alberta throughout its history. Planners working in the development industry have the toughest job in the world; trying to satisfy two masters, the client and the approving authority, and they are often torn between the two. ■

Doug retired at the end of 2007 after spending 36 years in the land development industry, primarily in Alberta. The main focus in his career has been on residential land development where he was responsible for the development of over 20 neighbourhoods in Calgary and Edmonton resulting in the production and sale of over 10,000 building sites for single and multi-family dwellings. In addition Doug has been responsible for the production and sale of over 400 acres of industrial sites and several hundred thousand square feet of retail commercial development. Doug has extensive experience in land acquisition, the approval process, land planning and engineering, construction and marketing.

In 2008 Doug embarked on writing a book on the history of the land development industry in Alberta, entitled: *\$100,000 An Acre*. The book was published in 2009 and is available at [www.100000anacre.com](http://www.100000anacre.com).

About Doug Kelly





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**What if we  
aren't planning  
to survive?**

**... and who is  
planning our  
future anyway?**

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- explore how to renew and sustain resilient communities
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- create new connections and relationships
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**Contact Beth Sanders: [beth@populus.ca](mailto:beth@populus.ca)**

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