

AACIP PLANNING

Alberta Association, Canadian Institute of Planners

# Journal

Winter 2009 | Issue 1



## Okotoks

Staying within its limits



The Membership Continuous Improvement Project: An Update/Progress Report

Rural vs. Urban? Or, Rural + Urban?

How old is AACIP?

## AACIP Council

### PRESIDENT

Brian Kropf ACP, MCIP  
briankropf@hotmail.com

### PAST PRESIDENT

Jamal Ramjohn ACP, MCIP  
jramjohn@dillon.ca

### PRESIDENT ELECT

Gary Buchanan ACP, MCIP  
countyadmin@vulcancounty.ab.ca

### TREASURER

Gerry Melenka ACP, MCIP  
gerry@alpineplanning.com

### SECRETARY

Michael MacIntyre ACP, MCIP  
mmacintyre@cityofgp.com

### PUBLIC MEMBER

Perry Kinkaide  
pkinkaide@rogers.blackberry.net

### COUNCILLOR

Maureen Gaehring  
mgaehring@lethbridge.ca

### COUNCILLOR

Bob Priebe ACP, MCIP  
priebe@strathcona.ab.ca

### Councillor

Peter Yackulic  
yackulic@cablerocket.com

### Councillor

Kersten Nistche  
knitsche@gmail.com

### STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE

Alexandra Rowse  
alexandra\_rowse@hotmail.com

## Administration

Vicki Hackl & MaryJane Alanko  
aacip@aacip.com | www.aacip.com  
TEL: 780-435-8716  
FAX: 780-452-7718  
1-888-286-8716

Alberta Association,  
Canadian Institute of Planners  
P.O. Box 596,  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2K8

## AACIP Planning Journal Editor

Riley Welden ACP, MCIP  
welden@strathcona.ab.ca

Publication Agreement  
Number 41795020



**ALBERTA  
Association**

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PLANNERS**

The *AACIP Planning Journal* is a professional publication featuring articles that provide insight into contemporary planning from a variety of perspectives. Its objective is to provide a forum for people in the profession to share their experience, expertise and insights. This allows AACIP members, decision makers, government officials and others involved in planning to stay informed of the current and innovative planning and development practices across Alberta, the Northwest Territories, Nunavut and abroad.

The *AACIP Planning* publication has a new name and a new look, so we are anxious to hear your feedback. Please submit any comments you may have about this issue to [aacip@aacip.com](mailto:aacip@aacip.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.



### CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

We are currently seeking articles for the next edition 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.

For more information, please contact the AACIP Office at [aacip@aacip.com](mailto:aacip@aacip.com) or (780) 435 8716 or Riley Welden, *AACIP Planning Journal* Editor at [welden@strathcona.ab.ca](mailto:welden@strathcona.ab.ca) or 780-464-8079.

### ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The *AACIP Planning Journal* Editing Team would like to acknowledge and thank the following people for their assistance in the development of this edition of the *Planning Journal*:

- Ron Barr
- Carol Bergum
- Gibby Davis
- Daniel Leckie
- Christine Orlovski
- Meredith Walker
- the AACIP Administrative Staff, MaryJane Alanko and Vicki Hackl

Your 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!

### VOLUNTEERS NEEDED!

AACIP currently has positions available for the *Planning Journal* Editing Team. If you are interested in becoming a member of our team, or finding out more about the available positions please contact the AACIP Office at the information provided.

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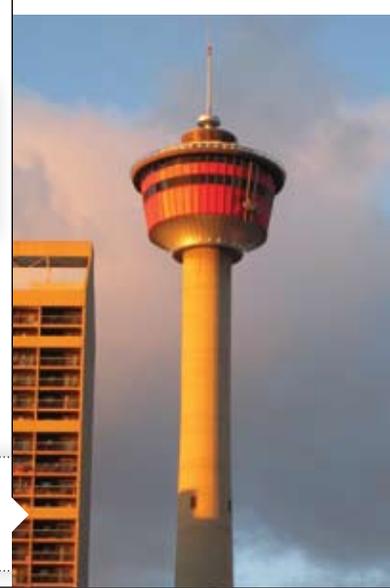
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## A Message from the President

You have before you the most recent edition of the official publication for professional planning and planners in Alberta, Northwest Territories and Nunavut. I encourage you to take the time to read it and reflect on its messages.

All across our region, our members report they are fully occupied in responding to the extraordinary demands for their services, judgment and sound advice. There is no question that planners have been challenged, even stretched to the limits, over the past few years in fulfilling those expectations. Equally so, there is no question that this is a particularly exciting period for our association – one of growth, rising profile and opportunities for innovation and leadership.

It is through *AACIP's Journal* that we are able to inform each other about what we have accomplished, what we should celebrate, and more so, what we can learn and pass on to our peers to make sure our community of planning practitioners remains current and up to the tasks expected of us. As a regulated profession it is our duty in the public interest to maintain a high standard of competency and demonstrate, individually and collectively, that we continue to have the qualifications, skills and body of knowledge necessary to carry out our assigned responsibilities in the face of constant change.

Continuing professional learning therefore is a constant requirement of each and every regulated member of AACIP. To help, the Association offers a variety of learning experiences. They range from annual conference presentations and workshops for assemblies of several hundred people over many days to short 1-2 hour seminars for small groups of local planners held frequently throughout the year. In July 2008, AACIP in partnership with the Canadian Institute of Planners, the Federal Government and the City of Iqaluit expanded those options by bringing together planners, scientists, elected officials, engineers and other professions

from across Canada and other nations to a symposium on the implications of climate change on planning urban and rural settlements. The learning experiences include forms of volunteer service, structured sessions, critical viewing and self-directed reading. *AACIP's Journal* is one of the primary vehicles available to all members for continuing professional learning.

While readership is an obvious and major objective, the *Journal* offers an even greater opportunity for professional learning. That is the writing of original articles. AACIP relies on the voluntary development and contribution of worthy articles that raise awareness, stimulate the imagination and encourage “pushing the envelope” in our practices. The articles also celebrate our unique regional innovations, successful case studies and improved processes—all of which are essential to ensuring planners remain up-to-date and prepared to confront the future. To those who have contributed to this edition of the *Journal*, we all owe a debt of gratitude. You have not only enriched the learning opportunities of your peers but your own as well. Congratulations to the authors, and especially to the editorial and publishing team, for your valued efforts.

To the members of AACIP, this is your publication. It reflects your unique part of the world. Read it. Critically evaluate what you read. Discuss and debate conclusions with your co-workers. Learn and grow. Above all, enjoy it.

Brian J. Kropf ACP, MCIP  
President

Alberta Association, Canadian Institute of Planners



With the completion of a challenging annexation in January 2007, the City of St. Albert updated its Municipal Development Plan. Among a number of updates, direction for development of Smart Growth Guidelines for the annexed areas was incorporated:

- Mixed-use, pedestrian-oriented neighbourhood activity centres
- Modified grid street pattern
- Housing choices
- Transportation choices
- Pedestrian orientation and connectivity within and between neighbourhoods
- Energy efficient housing and neighbourhood design
- Efficient use of infrastructure
- Preservation of open space and natural areas.

# THE COMMUNITY IMAGE SURVEY:

## Getting At People's Perceptions

Respondents rated this the worst walkway, rating it lowest in the whole survey at -1.9.

SOURCE: C. Bergum

Many of these elements are a significant change from past developments.

St. Albert has a rich history and a flourishing cultural community. This community is adjacent to Edmonton with tree-lined boulevards flanking the streets and intersected by a river valley park and trail system. In the river valley there is a quaint, albeit struggling, downtown area.

This vibrant community has neighbourhoods of curvilinear streets with larger single-family lots. The proportion of multi-family housing is fairly low, and industrial uses are scarce. The commercial development sector consists of strip-malls and big-box developments, which are set far back from the six to eight lane St. Albert Road running through the middle of the city.

The first step in developing the Smart Growth Guidelines was to consult the residents about these new concepts and approaches.

### Community Image Survey

The Community Image Survey is a powerful planning and public participation tool that helps both decision makers and residents. The Survey provides clear, visual images of alternative developments, patterns or environments. Participants are proactively involved in identifying the types of places where they desire to live, work, shop and play. This approach allows us to better assess people's perceptions of actual development. We felt people would feel freer to express their opinions and not be overshadowed by the vocal few that often dominate various public forums.

The survey consisted of 61 pictures showing a variety of different elements and developments. Participants viewed the pictures quickly, assigning each a rating from -5 to +5 to indicate how negatively or positively they felt about the image. Zero was a neutral rating.

The real challenge was finding and selecting the most appropriate pictures. There are a number of factors that can influence people's reactions to the pictures, such as the season in which it is taken and the perspective or the presence of people. We asked survey participants to keep in mind the season in which the picture was taken as this could be an influencing factor.

### Conducting the Survey

The survey was carried out in three parts. Two focus groups used a keypad voting system to take the survey. Votes were instantly tallied and participants then took part in discussion groups about selected images, some positively and some negatively rated. These discussions provided greater insight into people's perceptions about the images.

The survey was made available electronically on the City's website. As well, a workbook format of the survey was placed in a variety of public places around the city or sent to targeted groups.

A total of 163 respondents completed the survey over a four week period. Overall results provide a margin of error no greater than  $\pm 8.9$  percent at the 95 percent confidence level or 19 times out of 20.

It was interesting to note people were far more willing to rate pictures strongly when they had positive feelings about them. The six most positively rated pictures were rated either +4 or +5 by over 50% of the respondents. However, the four most negatively rated pictures were rated either -4 or -5 by less than 35% of the respondents. This suggests there may be a greater tolerance for poor urban environments and design. People under 35 tend to rate images more positively or more negatively.

The Community Image Survey, as anticipated, proved to be a contrast to more traditional forms of public consultation in which people are far more likely to express strong negative opinions and positive opinions are seldom heard.



### Survey Results

#### COMMERCIAL

Respondents generally preferred commercial oriented streets over the big box and strip mall developments. The three most positively rated pictures in this category were street oriented retail with higher buildings. Over 85% of respondents rated these positively. Nearly 60% rated strip malls negatively, although they preferred a strip mall built close to the sidewalk with parking behind. Comments suggested that people want places that are accessible by various means of transportation, but they also want plenty of parking.

#### RESIDENTIAL

Of the four pictures rated positively by over 80% of respondents, three were unexpectedly multi-family housing forms. Multi-family developments in St.

One of the most positively rated residential forms was these rowhouses, rated +2.5.

SOURCE: J. Bergum

Albert, even if well-designed, have traditionally been met with strong public opposition. While two-thirds of the respondents rated attached front-garage-style homes positively (St. Albert's predominant style), more people preferred houses with garages in the back. Twice as many respondents rated the front-garage-style negatively.

Ratings and initial reactions to high-rise residential were rated negatively. However, during discussions, residents suggested that downtown, or other selected areas where high rises are appropriate, would provide a greater density of people to support businesses and other activities.<sup>1</sup>

Lack of good design was often cited in discussions as a key contributing factor to negative feelings about a residential development. Discussions demonstrated residents recognize good design.

#### PEDESTRIAN WALKWAYS

People liked well-designed retail streets where clear, uncluttered sidewalks are lined with multi-storey buildings. They also preferred walkways with a sense of security from elements such as residential buildings overlooking the walkways and well-maintained properties.

Contrary to the ratings, a couple of comments were *"it's just a sidewalk, a necessary evil [to get to the business]"* and *"sidewalks [are not pedestrian walkways, they] just keep you out of the traffic."* This suggests a level of tolerance for poor pedestrian facility design but, more importantly, that sidewalks are not being developed in a way that establishes their important role in the public realm.

Respondents like well-designed public spaces that welcome people to walk, sit, visit and enjoy. They rated this picture +3.8.

SOURCE: J. Bergum



#### PUBLIC SPACES

People preferred well-designed public spaces. The top three positively rated pictures were all urban public spaces full of people. These are all well designed, multi-purpose spaces in highly urban contexts. A comment about one of these pictures was *"it fits my image of St. Albert."*, yet St. Albert has no public space like any of these.

#### TRANSPORTATION

People prefer clearly marked bike lanes but disliked bikes mixed with traffic, both from a cyclist's and driver's perspective.

Residents were very positive about a highly urban arterial street with larger, well designed buildings set close to the sidewalk providing a strong sense of enclosure and less positive about the wide thoroughfare of St. Albert Road.

Respondents were most positive about light rail transit and less agreeable to other alternative forms of transportation. A busy street with cars and taxis received neutral ratings. One participant said *"we chose St. Albert to avoid this,"* yet cars are the predominant form of transportation in St. Albert.

#### Conclusion

The results from the Community Image Survey are now influencing the development of the City's Smart Growth Guidelines. The Survey showed many residents recognize and want good design, and places that are walkable and connected. The convenience of a car is still a dominant force that must be acknowledged and incorporated.

The ability to communicate Smart Growth principles will be facilitated by these images and their ratings. Real images help residents, Council, developers and others understand what is meant by terms like connectivity, housing choice or pedestrian-orientation. It also helps illustrate the types of smart environments the Smart Growth Guidelines are intended to create. Hopefully, St. Albert residents will see more +5 ratings in future developments. ■

<sup>1</sup> In May 2008, St. Albert Council approved a downtown mixed-used development including five 19-storey residential towers.

# Urban Design Inquiry Tool

## An Attempt To Fill In The Urban Design Gap

### THE SIX CATEGORIES OF URBAN DESIGN

- 1 Historic Preservation And Urban Conservation
- 2 Design For Pedestrians
- 3 Vitality And Variety Of Use
- 4 The Cultural Environment
- 5 The Environmental Context
- 6 Architectural Values

SIDEBAR

In the Fall of 2007 I began working with The City of Calgary as a Planner in Development and Building Approvals. It suited my career and education experience. My master's thesis attempted to establish a theoretical framework in which to analyze spatial authenticity. Industry would call this visioning; targeting preferential end states and making efforts to preclude certain others. As a development control planner, I don't have the opportunity to vision, so to speak. Instead my art is one of encouragement: dialoguing with applicants to get vision on the street. But there can often be a gap between the aesthetic prescriptions of a regulatory document and what gets built on the ground. The composer has envisioned one end state, but the interpreter reads and potentially approves another. The interpretation of prescriptions or the complete absence of them – the gap between paper and concrete – can

be problematic. What follows is a tool I cobbled together to fill this problematic gap.

### Large Pieces of Paper

My job frequently requires me to open up a large set of plans (often shuffling another set out of the way). I then study the plans, see what our Land Use Bylaw and relevant polices have to say. How many trees? Enough setback? Too much? Is the garbage well screened? How's the parking and landscaping? Somewhere in the recesses of my mind I contemplate sound planning principles, subjective as those are. Triple bottom line development? The creation of paths, edges, districts, nodes and landmarks? Ensuring that people face the street while they drink their coffee and read the morning paper? Whatever the inquiries, I often conclude that the scale of such imaginations is too grand.

Nestled up to these swaths of paper I struggle to apply “urban design” to single parcels of land, a nano-space to visioners. I remind myself to get on the street, to walk the proposed stamped concrete, past parking stalls and 85 mm deciduous trees. I have no idea if these are edges or nodes. Yet still, I have this romantic notion of applying urban design concepts in the review of the plans laid out before me, but I struggle with how to begin my analysis. I need a tool in which to consistently review the qualities of urban design presented on development permit drawings. Some background research is required.

The Institute for Urban Design places urban design into six categories: historic preservation and urban conservation; design for pedestrians; vitality and variety of use; the cultural environment; the environmental context; and architectural values. This is a good place to start; now it's putting these concepts into an analytical framework.

So I went back to the urban design literature. I sat down and re-read some of my books, articles

and random thoughts scribbled down on sheets of paper during my university degree. I talked with fellow planners and went and watched the Subdivision and Development Appeal Board and the Calgary Planning Commission. I listened to what questions board members and the general public were asking about existing and proposed developments. The result was a few pages of notes on urban design qualities. Not what it is, but how it interacts with us. How space speaks to us. How we interpret it. How people can make it. I then cribbed from contemporary urban design vernacular and began placing these concepts and inquiries into categories. What was left was a tool to review development permits more holistically. I had bylaw and polices and now a structured document of sound planning and urban design principles from an on-the-street perspective. Not more prescriptions but rather inquiries into the design of space, and a way to encourage dialogue between applicants and myself in which to offer a consistent service to the customers of development permits.

## The Urban Design Inquiry Tool (UDIT)

SIDEBAR

### THE FOUR CATEGORIES OF URBAN DESIGN INQUIRY TOOL

- 1 General Site Context and Accessibility
- 2 Site Layout
- 3 Visual Appropriateness
- 4 Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design



### The Urban Design Inquiry Tool

Is the bike lockup area in a secure area that offers natural surveillance? Is there a conflict between vehicular and pedestrian pathways? Is the green space accessible? It was these questions that formed the basis of the Urban Design Inquiry Tool (UDIT): a methodology to consistently incorporate elements of urban design in the review of development permits (DP).

UDIT has four categories: General Site Context and Accessibility; Site Layout; Visual Appropriateness; and CPTED (Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design). Each of these “cognitive markers” frames the evaluation inquiries. The document is so designed that after

each inquiry, which directs a certain view of the proposed site plan, a space is provided in which to record comments. For example, if after a review I rationalize that a main entry point in a building is not easily identifiable, my comment, that could be put into the DP review document, would be for the applicant to address this urban design / planning concern. The result is a consistent review of DPs that creates not only a dialogue between myself and the drawings I'm reviewing, but also between the applicant and me. These comments aren't prescriptive, nor are they statutory. Rather, they engage the creativity of the applicant and architect to view their proposal from a potentially different angle. These angles, or categories, are as follows:

**1 GENERAL CONTEXT AND ACCESSIBILITY**

addresses the larger site circumstance such as bike storage and disability access and the development suitability of the site with regards to the grading, slope, phasing and access.

**2 SITE LAYOUT**

assesses the orientation of the building with respect to the street form and the quality of the streetscape. Site permeability and pedestrian connectivity are also analyzed, which looks at how a site can be navigated or moved through and whether automobiles conflict with other forms of mobility through the area.

**3 VISUAL APPROPRIATENESS**

inquires into the aesthetic robustness and viability of the development. Are entranceways easily identifiable? How would the environment affect the sensory realm? Does the landscaping encourage active or passive use?

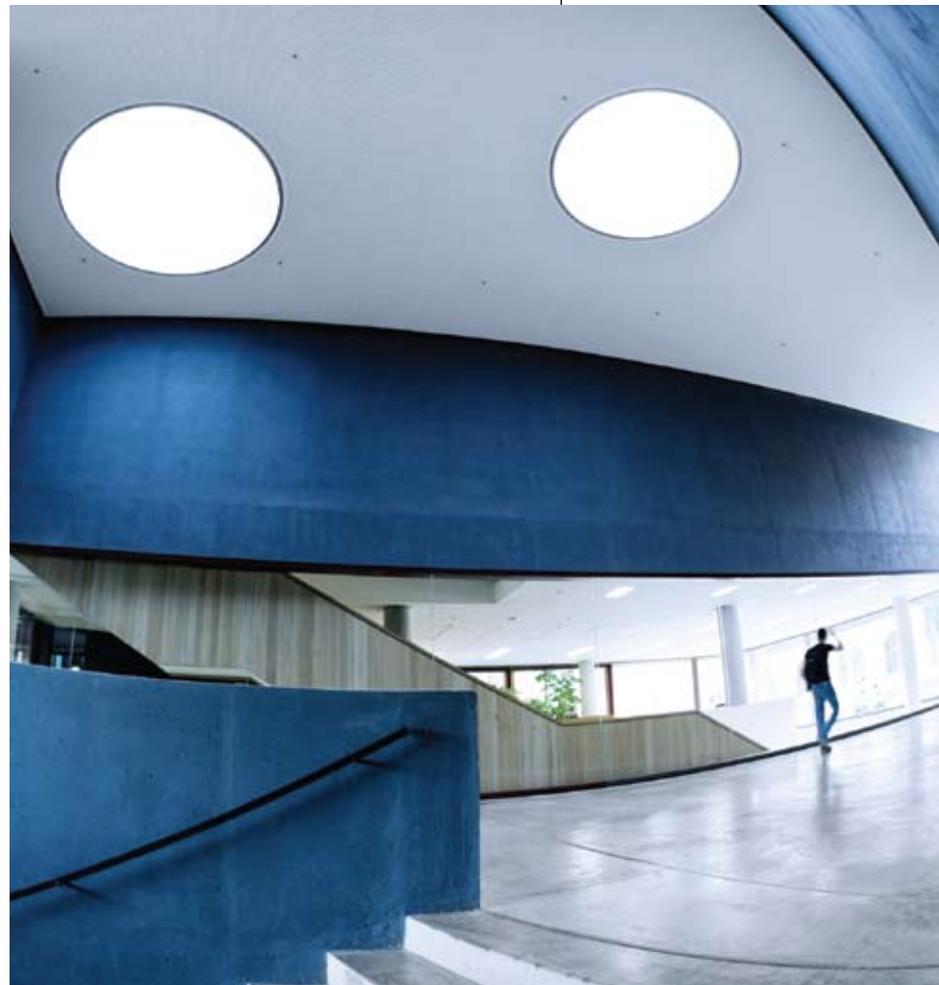
**4 THE CPTED**

category looks at the exterior aspects of the development with regards to Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design. This urban design practice and research area has been gaining grounds in the planning profession as another tool for planners and designers to inquire into the quality of proposed developments.

The result is a four page document that offers a useful tool to aid planners and urban designers in the inherently challenging area of regulating and designing the built form from a pedestrian pace and site specific perspective. Further, the tool has been as useful as I make it. I add inquiries to it; I clarify others; I move some around; I skip one or two or more if they're not relevant to the plans before me. At its best, it nuances the 2-dimensional plane into a place where I imagine wandering about in it. At its less than best, it ensures a review of DPs that is consistent and thus offers high performing customer service.

*Going forward: opportunities and challenges*

Now a moment to confess; I don't know what urban design is. I could ask five urban designers and I would get four different perspectives. Zeroing in on



spatial function—efficiency, economics, aesthetics and environmentally sustainable development seem to be heading in the right direction. But within the domain of urban design these perspectives become challenging if there's no map to navigate the terrain of proposed land forms. UDIT is meant to be a tool to walk with; a tactic to fill a gap in an ever complex career. But this tool would be strongest when it is no longer an individual exercise but integrated into others' review processes, imbued with someone else's evaluative criteria, their urban design views, their inquiry into space. Because if urban design is anything, it's a collection of peoples wandering through spaces trying to make meaning of what surrounds them, wondering if what they experience can be emulated or fixed, or is worthy of a photograph to hang on a wall or words placed in a novel. ■

The Alberta Association, Canadian Institute of Planners (AACIP) has struggled to know how many candles to put on its birthday cakes. This is not because of organizational dementia but because its history has not been well documented.

## HOW OLD IS AACIP?

I became interested when as a member of Council I learned that AACIP did not even have a list of its past presidents. In compiling the list (see sidebar) I discovered a colourful history that planners should understand to better appreciate the profession of which they are a part. This article is a first effort in that regard. It describes the steps in AACIP's establishment the origins of AACIP and pinpoints what I think its birth date is.

The first professionally trained urban planners arrived in Alberta as part of the rapid economic expansion following World War II. Their numbers were few but grew steadily. In 1953 the Town Planning Institute of Canada (TPIC) had just three members in Alberta.<sup>1</sup> By 1955 there were enough planners to have established an informal North West Group of TPIC. Based in Edmonton, the group discussed planner education, planning research and publication and, perhaps at the instigation of British imports prominent in the crowd, the possibility of international conferences.

The group aspired to establish a provincial organization of planners. At a meeting on 15 November 1955, it was "decided that an Alberta division should be organized with chapters in Calgary and Edmonton."<sup>2</sup> This decision proved premature; no such body was established at the time. Limited numbers and volunteer power meant that planner organization stayed close to the brownout level.

TPIC's 1956 annual meeting was held in Banff. Perhaps inspired by this event, the North West Group took a small step forward by reorganizing itself as the Town Planning Institute of Canada, Edmonton Branch on 15 November 1956. Future Canadian planning luminaries Len Gertler

and Harry Lash were acclaimed as chairman and secretary, respectively. The organization considered adopting bylaws and registering under the provincial Societies Act but did neither. Establishing a series of courses to help "students" (people working in planning offices without professional planning credentials) move towards full membership in TPIC was its main preoccupation. Minutes of the Edmonton Branch's meetings were circulated to planners in other parts of Alberta. When Gertler moved to Ontario in 1957, Frank Marlyn took over as chairman in addition to assuming Gertler's day job as Director of the Edmonton District Planning Commission.<sup>3</sup>

In 1958/59, Adolph "Al" Martin, the first planning director at the City of Calgary, served as the first TPIC President from Alberta. A major issue at the time was how TPIC would relate to the newly-formed Planning Institute of British Columbia (PIBC). The decisions made led to the present federal structure of planner organizations in Canada.<sup>4</sup> PIBC thus blazed the trail for other provincial affiliates of the national institute, but it took a scandal for planners in Alberta to strike out along it.

William Hawrelak resigned as Mayor of Edmonton in September 1959 after a Royal Commission headed by Justice M. M. Porter of Calgary found him in serious conflict of interest on land development deals. The Porter report also charged Edmonton's planning director with "complete abandonment of responsibility."<sup>5</sup> With allegations about the conduct of planners making front-page news, the Edmonton Branch felt compelled to defend its members' credibility.

1 Town Planning Institute of Canada. *List of the members of the Town Planning Institute of Canada (1952-53)*. Canadian Institute of Planners fonds, National Archives of Canada. Then, as now, there was no legal requirement for practicing planners to register with a professional organization, so there were more planners in Alberta than TPIC members.

2 Town Planning Institute of Canada. *Minutes of the 1955 Annual Conference (Ottawa: 18-19 November 1955)*. Canadian Institute of Planners fonds, National Archives of Canada.

3 Town Planning Institute of Canada, Edmonton Branch. *Minutes of Meetings*. AACIP files.

4 Don South, "The Formation of PIBC." [http://www.pibc.bc.ca/pdf/PIBC\\_Bylaw.PDF](http://www.pibc.bc.ca/pdf/PIBC_Bylaw.PDF). Retrieved 18 April 2008.

5 *Edmonton Journal*. 9 September 1959, p. 1.

Its first tack was to ask TPIC to publicly respond to what it felt were inappropriate generalizations about planning in Alberta made by Justice Porter. After more discussions it was deemed more politic to spruce up than to attack.<sup>6</sup> How effective would planners be in ensuring public confidence in their vocation without an organization with provincial scope, membership requirements attuned to provincial legislation and a process to enforce adherence to ethical standards? Accordingly the inaugural meeting of the Alberta Association of the Town Planning Institute of Canada (AATPIC) was held on 8 April 1960. A code of professional conduct was adopted at the meeting in addition to draft organizational bylaws.<sup>7</sup>

As its name suggests, AATPIC clearly organized itself under the TPIC umbrella. AATPIC was seen as an organization of Albertans who were already members of TPIC.<sup>8</sup> A lengthy process of TPIC approval of AATPIC's bylaws followed the inaugural meeting. The new organization saw this as more than just a formality. It waited to publicly announce its formation until after this approval was granted,<sup>9</sup> which happened on 19 February 1962.<sup>10</sup>

Having cleared this hurdle, AATPIC began the practical duties of a professional organization. It established membership fees (\$4 for members and \$1 for students) and admitted its first members in July 1962: Cecil Burgess, Noel Dant, Eric Browning, Leonard Milne, Clive Rodgers, Al Martin, Mark Stagg, E. T. Clegg, William Mackay, Rhys Smith, Denis Cole, Dusan "Danny" Makale, Frank Marlyn, H. Toogood and George Gordon.

Although the earliest documentation I have discovered regarding a President of AATPIC dates from 1962,<sup>11</sup> we can safely assume that Frank Marlyn was President from 1960. He had been chairman of the organization's precursor. There is evidence of an AATPIC Secretary-Treasurer (Eric Browning) from 1960, and it is unlikely that there would have been a Secretary-Treasurer without a President.

In 1963 AATPIC applied to incorporate under the provincial Societies Act. The stated reasons for incorporation included to promote professional knowledge, to regulate membership, to hold conferences, to encourage research and "to develop and maintain high standards in the Town Planning profession and to enhance the usefulness of the profession to the public."<sup>12</sup> Incorporation on 2 December 1963 marks AATPIC's official recognition by government but not its actual founding. That should be dated from the inaugural meeting in 1960, the time when planners in Alberta formally associated themselves and started calling their organization AATPIC.

Since the early 1960s AATPIC, which was legally renamed AACIP in 1976, has grown in membership (now close to 800), extent (it now serves the Northwest Territories and Nunavut in addition to Alberta) and complexity. Yet its primary purpose remains the same: promoting excellence in planning.

It can only do so to the extent that planners within its geography support this goal. If we care about planning, we should care about AACIP. As we look forward to its 50th anniversary in 2010, I hope an appreciation of the organization's past will kindle enthusiasm about its future. ■

6 Town Planning Institute of Canada. *Council Minutes (12 December 1959, 7 June 1960 and 8 June 1960 meetings)*. CIP files.

7 Letter from E. C. Browning, Secretary-Treasurer of AATPIC, to Hugh Lemon, Secretary of TPIC. 20 May 1960. AACIP files.

8 At the time TPIC was responsible for admitting its members. Today, through formal agreement, AACIP and the other affiliates of CIP are responsible for admitting members, who then automatically become members of CIP.

9 Letter from E. C. Browning to Hugh Lemon. 28 October 1961. AACIP files.

10 Certified copy of the By-laws of the Alberta Association of the Town Planning Institute of Canada. AACIP files.

11 Letter from E. C. Browning to Hugh Lemon. Undated. AACIP files.

12 *Societies Act* application. 12 April 1963. Service Alberta corporate records.

PRESIDENTS OF AACIP

1960–64 Frank Marlyn	1974–75 Jack Staseson	1984–85 Larry Spencer	1995–96 Brian Kropf
1964–66 Noel Dant	1975–76 Ted Brown	1985–86 John Steil	1996–97 Barb Koch
1966–68 Adolph (Al) Martin	1976–77 Zard Sarty	1986–87 Helen Henderson	1997–98 Pat Maloney
1968–69 Ron Maslin	1977–78 Kim Mackenzie	1987–88 Ian Wight	1998–99 Simon Farbrother
1969–70 No president	1978–79 Bill Shaw	1988–89 Pat Maloney	1999–00 Doug Parrish
1970–71 George Gordon	1979–80 Barry Clark	1989–90 Paul Murette	2000–01 Gail Sokolan
1971–72 Clive Rodgers	1980–81 Keith Driver	1990–91 Ross Sharp	2001–02 Stan Schwarzenberger
1972 Ron Fromson	1981–82 Austin Lawrence	1991–93 Gary Willson	2002–03 David Hales
1972–73 David McCullagh	1982–83 John Steil	1993–94 Wes Candler	2003–05 Wayne Jackson
1973–74 Ron Fromson	1983–84 Paul Fenwick	1994–95 Gary Klassen	2005–07 Jamal Ramjohn
			2007–09 Brian Kropf

One of the largest intermunicipal conflicts in Alberta's history was resolved in 2007. On July 5, 2007, Red Deer County and the City of Red Deer jointly ratified a new Intermunicipal Development Plan (IDP) that followed 18 months of troubled relations and development paralysis.

The IDP set a growth boundary that provides Red Deer with 75 –150 years of growth while Red Deer County maintains two valuable growth nodes. The IDP's dispute resolution process, in addition to annual reviews, ensures intermunicipal problems will be resolved locally and not involve the Municipal Government Board.

# BOUNDARY BATTLES

## CITY OF RED DEER AND RED DEER COUNTY'S METHODS FOR RESOLVING INTERMUNICIPAL DISPUTES

In 1999 the City of Red Deer and Red Deer County agreed to an IDP. Accelerated growth after 2000 quickly rendered the IDP ineffective. In 2004, planners from both municipalities (The City of Red Deer contracts its planning from Parkland Community Planning Services) developed a timeline to prepare a new IDP. However, City administration concluded it would be faster to pursue annexation to replenish the industrial land supply, which was sitting at only 1–2 years. No update of the IDP was undertaken. Instead, both municipalities retreated into their respective planning exercises and produced conflicting growth and land use strategies that accelerated the deterioration of the relationship. *Subsequently, most of 2005 and 2006 were acrimonious and led to complete and permanent paralysis.*<sup>1</sup>

In January 2007 however, the tide turned and by July of that year a new IDP had been adopted. The two municipalities developed a unique process

to develop an IDP in a timeframe very few thought possible. As intermunicipal battles continue to rage throughout the province, other municipalities could learn from the experience of these two municipalities. Already, the Municipal District of Rocky View has employed the technique of joint-council public hearings to help resolve outstanding disputes. From interviews with the key people involved, six suggestions emerged that could help resolve intermunicipal disputes throughout the province. They are:

- 1 Return to the Root of IDP Development
- 2 The Importance of Good Face-to-Face Communication
- 3 Identify a Process to Find a Way Out of Conflict - Interest Based Negotiation
- 4 Regional versus Municipal Perspectives
- 5 There Needs to be Authority to Reach An Agreement
- 6 Every Agreement Needs a Champion

<sup>1</sup> Red Deer Mayor Morris Flewelling

## Return to the Root of IDP Development

There is a lack of clarity surrounding exactly what should or should not be included in an IDP. IDPs are increasingly becoming catchall documents for all kinds of intermunicipal issues.<sup>2</sup> From recreation funding and emergency services agreements to joint infrastructure plans, these issues are not related to jurisdiction. While the MGA permits municipalities to consider many extraneous issues when developing an IDP, there are two reasons why an IDP should not be a catchall document.

First, it's difficult to maintain focus when trying to resolve several different issues. The complexity of intermunicipal agreements is increasing as municipalities grow larger and traditionally rural municipalities develop urban nodes. Also, the people involved are better educated and more experienced. An IDP's primary goal of boundary determination can be obscured.

Second, if an IDP is to solve many intermunicipal issues, it means the people involved assume IDP development is a multi-year process. *Do not take the IDP from a six page document and turn it into a sixty page document.*<sup>3</sup> Further, do not try and figure out land use at that time. *Do jurisdiction first and then work on land use.*<sup>4</sup> It was these sentiments that drove the IDP's completion within 6 months.

## The Importance of Good Face-to-Face Communication

Ineffective communication, by both municipalities, was a huge barrier to a resolution. The County was too introspective during plan development and often referred them to the City only as a matter of process, not to seek real input. *Convincing County politicians to understand the City's perspective was often difficult.*<sup>5</sup> Some Councillors had difficulties empathizing with the City's land shortage predicament adding *the County may be, to a certain degree, naïve about urban developments.*<sup>6</sup>

*The City did not do a good job of communicating its long range intentions once they indicated their desire to cross the QE II (Queen Elizabeth II Highway).*<sup>7</sup>

Crossing the QE II Highway wasn't contemplated by the 1999 IDP or the City's 2000 Growth Study. *For the City to indicate a desire for 8 quarters west of the QE II was like discovering the first leak in a dam. We (the County) understood the City's desire for that land however, we were given no indication of the City's long range intentions if this historical boundary was crossed. It raised alarm bells over the status of Gasoline Alley (immediately south of Red Deer) which was where the County was preparing to invest considerable resources to develop our industrial and commercial tax base.*<sup>8</sup>

According to Rob Coon, interim CAO Colleen Jensen first saw that the City and County were refusing to acknowledge there is more than one way to approach urban development. She asked questions, with both sides in the room, which broke the logjam of misunderstanding. Before, communication had occurred through plans prepared in isolation, reports to respective councils, comments in the media, and email messages, all of which can easily be misinterpreted.

## Identify a Process to Find a Way Out of Conflict

Many Councillors and planning staff reported sleepless nights as the dispute grew. *There was little hope in sight for resolution as each side dug in their heels.*<sup>9</sup>

When the planners met in February 2007 at a meeting facilitated by Michael von Hausen, they used Interest Based Negotiations as the process to resolve their differences. Councillors used the same process when meeting to consider the planners' agreement. In determining the boundaries of the IDP and the areas of City and County growth, interest based negotiation was particularly effective.

Interest based bargaining requires both parties to identify why they have an interest in specific areas before looking at how their interests could be accommodated through a creative solution. Interest based negotiation was vital to moving beyond positions to discovering a municipality's interests, which was the first step in finding solutions and determining boundaries.

2 Former Red Deer County  
CAO Rob Coon

3 Ibid

4 Red Deer County  
Director of Planning and  
Development Services  
Harry Harker

5 Ibid

6 Red Deer County  
Councillor Reimar Poth

7 Red Deer County  
Mayor Earl Kinsella

8 Ibid

9 City Planning  
Manager Tony Lindhout

## Adopt a Regional Perspective versus a Municipal Perspective

Administration and most Councillors credit the shift to a regional perspective as critical to achieving agreement. Just because the Regional Planning system was eliminated by the Province in 1995 doesn't mean the value of regional planning is any less important. A municipal perspective brings more jurisdictional arguments into the discussion. The regional perspective allowed the Councils to look at what is logical in meeting the needs of both municipalities and the region.

### There Needs to be Authority to Reach an Agreement

The political process has a lot of long memories. *Throughout Alberta, personalities are getting in the way of resolving disputes rather than the complexities of the issue itself.*<sup>10</sup> More specifically politicians may not be the best people at the table in a boundary dispute. *Ultimately, politicians are working for their constituents and their job security depends on the perceived quality of any deal they agree too. Therefore councillors are reluctant to accept anything that isn't perfect.*<sup>11</sup>

Early in the dispute, nobody had clear authority to make an agreement. In 2007, politicians gave direction to administration and then stepped aside, some reluctantly, in order to allow the respective staffs to complete a deal. Flewwelling explained that if staff completes an agreement politicians have leeway to tell constituents, "I don't necessarily agree with everything in the deal, but I'm willing to buy the package" adding "I believe the turning point came when we put professional planners and a mediator in charge that didn't have constituents to worry about and could negotiate in confidence." Authority in this case was not explicitly delegated however, the success of the negotiating team was based on implied authority. In other municipalities it may be explicitly delegated with similar success.

## Every Agreement Needs a Champion (From Both Sides)

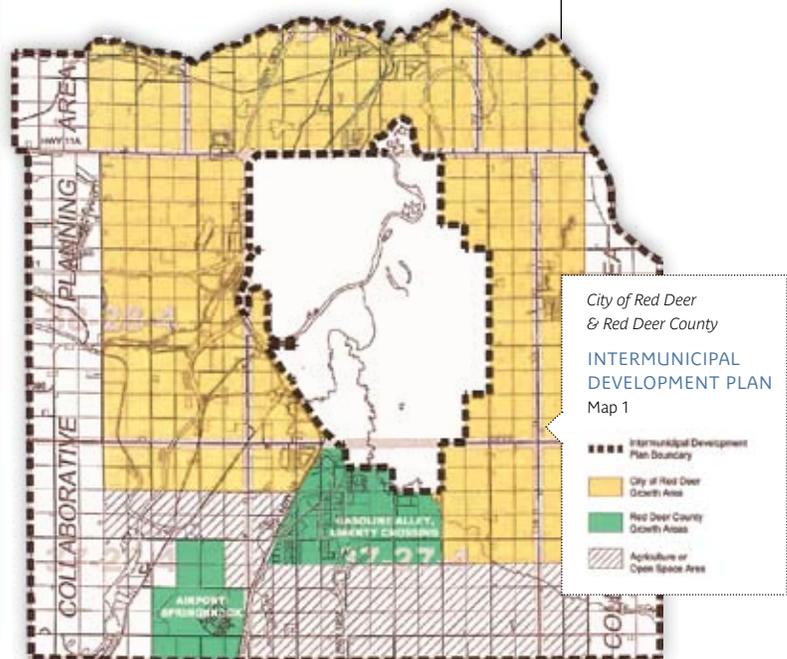
The final component to resolving this dispute was a person(s) who can move between the various groups without being drawn into the bickering and posturing that can kill a negotiation.

In January 2007, Harry Harker and Red Deer Future Directions Project Leader Paul Meyette became the champions of an agreement. Meyette was described as being able to bring people together to look at solutions without prejudicing discussions with his opinion. Meyette and Harker set out a step-by-step process that didn't leave time to dwell on details that could have derailed the process. *There is a risk that good ideas can become bogged down in ubiquitous details over their execution.*<sup>12</sup>

Mayor Kinsella recognized the efforts of Michael von Hausen as the neutral champion of an agreement. *von Hausen kept things moving forward without letting the naysayers rule the roost.*<sup>13</sup>

*Public pressure to get a deal done aided this process, but without champions who believed a deal could be reached within six months, it's almost certain that the annexation and IDP disputes would have ended up in front of the Municipal Government Board. The province will rule on a dispute but that rarely resolves a dispute.*<sup>14</sup> ■

- 10 Former Red Deer County CAO Rob Coon
- 11 Red Deer Mayor Morris Flewwelling
- 12 Former Red Deer County CAO Rob Coon
- 13 Red Deer Mayor Earl Kinsella
- 14 Ibid



Source: Red Deer County and City of Red Deer IDP, July 2007

*“A community — anywhere in Canada — has a right and duty to manage its growth and development in harmony with the wishes and aspirations of its citizens.”* Rick Quail, Municipal Manager

# Okotoks, Alberta

## STAYING WITHIN ITS LIMITS

Kevin Meyers and his family moved to Okotoks, Alta., from Calgary four years ago. He liked the idea of a smaller town that was only a 15-minute drive from the city. He liked the idea of fresh air. He had family living near there. But there was another compelling attraction: “The population cap of 30,000 people was definitely a selling point for us,” he says.

The community is totally dependent on the nearby Sheep River for all its water needs, including drinking water and treating and disposing of effluent. “Thirty thousand people is all that the Sheep River can sustain,” says Kevin. The notion of limiting the growth of a community to what the local environment can handle sounds smart, but Okotoks is one of the first municipalities in the world to have taken this green approach to growth.

This forward thinking was prompted over 10 years ago when the province of Alberta downloaded responsibilities for planning onto smaller municipalities. The residents of Okotoks decided to take a fresh look at their future. “As a town we

asked ourselves, ‘What do we want to be when we grow up?’ and this was the vision,” recalls Rick Quail, the town’s municipal manager. “There was extensive community [discussion] with the citizens of Okotoks, and that formed the basis of our plan moving forward.”

The initiative Quail is referring to is an official municipal development plan, which the town council created in 1998. It limits the town’s boundary and population to what the Sheep River can sustain, which means keeping a close eye on all new development, including housing and infrastructure - from water to sewers to roads to recreation and cultural facilities.

But the Plan does much more than that; with the community’s approval and support, it also outlines many practical ways to keep the town green and preserve its small-town feel. For example, one goal was to reduce the use of cars within the town. The solution? Provide ways for people to work more easily within their own neighbourhoods, or work at home. So, the town, which used to be mainly made

The Big Rock, also known as the Okotoks Erratic  
SOURCE: *The Town of Okotoks*



up of single-family dwellings, is slowly increasing the range of housing styles within its neighbourhoods, such as multifamily homes and commercial-residential buildings.

The sewage plant has been upgraded to turn sludge into compost. New homes are built to environmental codes set by the town, mandating such features as low-flowing plumbing fixtures. Home builders are even voluntarily implementing other water-and-energy –saving initiatives. All of the houses in Okotoks are on water meters, and there is a watering schedule between May and October that is tied to the climate and the water levels in the Sheep River. During drought conditions, there is an outright ban on outdoor watering.

*Recycling within the town has also been ramped up. “You’re allowed to have only three bags of garbage a week, unless you pay for special tags for extra bags, and there are two drop-off areas for recycling,” enthuses Kevin. “We take our recycling there every week. People are always doing it.”*

Since the green plan was put into action, the town has conducted community surveys every three years to gauge the community’s commitment as well as annual surveys with residents. “Our plan contains hard targets,” adds Quail. “For example, water conservation objectives, solid waste limitations at curbside, use of pesticides which are continually revisited and refined in consultation with the citizens.” He adds that as Okotoks grows, the town wants to achieve a 20 per cent reduction in its greenhouse gas emissions. So far, it has been reduced by more than 15 per cent while the population has grown by almost 50 per cent. The town’s population currently sits close to 20,000 or about 67 per cent of its population cap.

To top it all off, in the early 2000s Natural Resources Canada invited Okotoks to be part of a program to show how solar power could be used

in residential communities. The town responded with an enthusiastic yes. Last summer, the 52 new homes in the Drake Landing Solar Community were all tied into the solar-thermal system. In 2005, Drake Landing comprised the largest concentration of solar panels in Canadian history. Solar-thermal panels on the garages are designed to meet a minimum of 90 per cent of Drake Landing’s space heating requirements, storing solar power during the summer in the ground for use in the winter.

Jennie Willings is a resident of Drake Landing, and she is pleased with her new home. “We love the idea and the cost advantages of heating with solar energy.” It seems many others do too – the houses were all scooped up as soon as they went on sale, and they have increased in value.

The community is moving confidently along the green route it has charted. Prime Minister Stephen Harper has called Okotoks “the greenest community in Canada, maybe the world.” Resident Jeanette Rae is more modest when she describes what she thinks about her town and her neighbours: “We have a sense of pride in knowing we are all taking care of our community.” ■

SOURCE: *The Town of Okotoks*



*“Okotoks is the greenest community in Canada, maybe the world.”* Stephen Harper, Prime Minister



SOURCE: Patrick Lucas

# A Volunteer Position

*“A volunteer position? Isn't that a waste of your degree?”* The sarcasm and derision coming from the reporter was palatable through the receiver of the phone. I had just been explaining a recent decision I had made to accept a two year volunteer position with CUSO Canada in the Lao People's Democratic Republic in Southeast Asia after having finished a degree in Environmental Studies from the University of Northern British Columbia. Contacting a reporter from a local newspaper was something we were encouraged to do by CUSO in order to promote our activities and the goals of CUSO to the general public, but it was something I began to regret as I was transferred from one line to the next and was greeted with similar responses or outright indifference.

Taking a voluntary position in a remote area of one of the most impoverished countries in the world was apparently something recent university graduates were not supposed to do. Our expected role was to find a respectable position and start paying back our student loans.

As I would discover in the months leading up to my departure, this viewpoint was not unique to my hometown paper, but one that seemed to be fairly prevalent, if not in a quite so cynical form. Friends and family, concerned about my future, expressed well intended doubts—echoing my own unspoken fears, as to the impact it might have on my career as a planner. Would it prepare me for work in Canada? Or would it simply add another two years onto a resume heavy on education and

*“The only time you know you’ve learned something, is when you realize everything you think you know is wrong.”*

training, but lacking in practical experience? Even former volunteers from within CUSO warned my fellow recruits and I not to expect a warm welcome from potential employers upon our return, impressing upon us that our experiences, though likely transformative and life-altering, would likely hold little value in the job market and we could only expect to start back at the bottom of the ladder.

Despite these concerns I chose to accept the position with CUSO. My reasons for going were many, but essentially it came down to one simple point.

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*I couldn't imagine a career in planning that didn't have an international component, particularly in the developing world, regardless of how "practical" the experience might be.*

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So I packed my bags and boarded the plane to South East Asia with the expectation of not returning home for at least two years.

As it would turn out, the experience was transformative and life-altering. Placed with a Laoation environmental agency in the Oudomxay Province in the far north of Laos, it was my job as a “Community Planning Facilitator” to work with the agency staff implementing community based research and planning initiatives to address a broad spectrum of issues. These included land use, watershed management, clean water and sanitation, spatial planning, special areas protection, economic development, natural resource management, and so on. The amount of challenges and problems facing the communities we worked with were staggering in their scope: severe environmental degradation, soil erosion, biodiversity, wildlife and habitat loss,

coupled with the social dimensions of government resettlement programs, widespread poverty, and the shift from traditional livelihoods to market based agriculture and economics. Through all of this I struggled to learn the language and customs of my hosts culture, their history, politics, and religion. It was equally challenging to understand how to work within an environment rift with inter-ethnic tensions and overseen by a government that is largely underfunded, paranoid, xenophobic, dictatorial, despotic, and only marginally tolerant of foreigners—unless of course you come armed with a hefty chequebook (something CUSO does not provide). The upside of all this, the aspect that kept me in the country, and gave me the motivation to get out of bed each morning, was the people and communities I worked with. Without a doubt, they were among the most amazing and wonderful I have ever had the honour of knowing: humane, intelligent, generous, resilient, and passionately committed to the health and welfare of their communities.

“The only time you know you’ve learned something, is when you realize everything you think you know is wrong.” It was a village elder in one of my target communities who said this to me, and this most aptly summarizes my experiences of working in Laos as a community planner. Everything I thought I knew and understood about community, development, and sustainability was turned upside down and inside out. Issues of sustainability and community take on entirely new meanings when working with people facing cultural extinction or starvation. This is the key lesson one hopes for when working overseas: to have your world perspective torn down, and then learn to pick up the pieces, reassemble them back into some workable form, and carry on. I learned that this is the mark of a good planner; not just practical skills, but the capacity to adapt and integrate new

knowledge and lessons into the challenges and problems that confront our communities. In this respect, my time with CUSO in Laos was similar to that of an ultra-intensive two-year boot camp.

As my contract with CUSO came to an end, I began once again to contemplate the challenge of entering the professional world back in Canada. Though my experiences had provided me with a new level of confidence in myself and my abilities, I still lacked any faith that potential employers in Canada would see its value. As it would turn out, there was one more lesson that would show me that everything I thought I knew was entirely wrong.

Upon my arrival back in Canada, after a short rest period to get over the jet lag and the initial stages of reverse culture shock, I put together my resume and hit the streets of Edmonton, determined that this time around I would get my foot in the door. The reaction from the people I met while dropping in on various engineering and planning firms throughout the city took me completely by surprise. While I tried to downplay the fact that I had just returned from overseas, concerned that people might think I'd been on a two year vacation, it was potential employers who kept pointing it out and raising points about it on my resume with comments like "character building", "cross-cultural understanding", "empowering minorities", "collaborative and participatory planning", and my favourite, "learning how to build, maintain, and coordinate a team in very difficult circumstances". One woman from a reputable planning firm truly brought the message

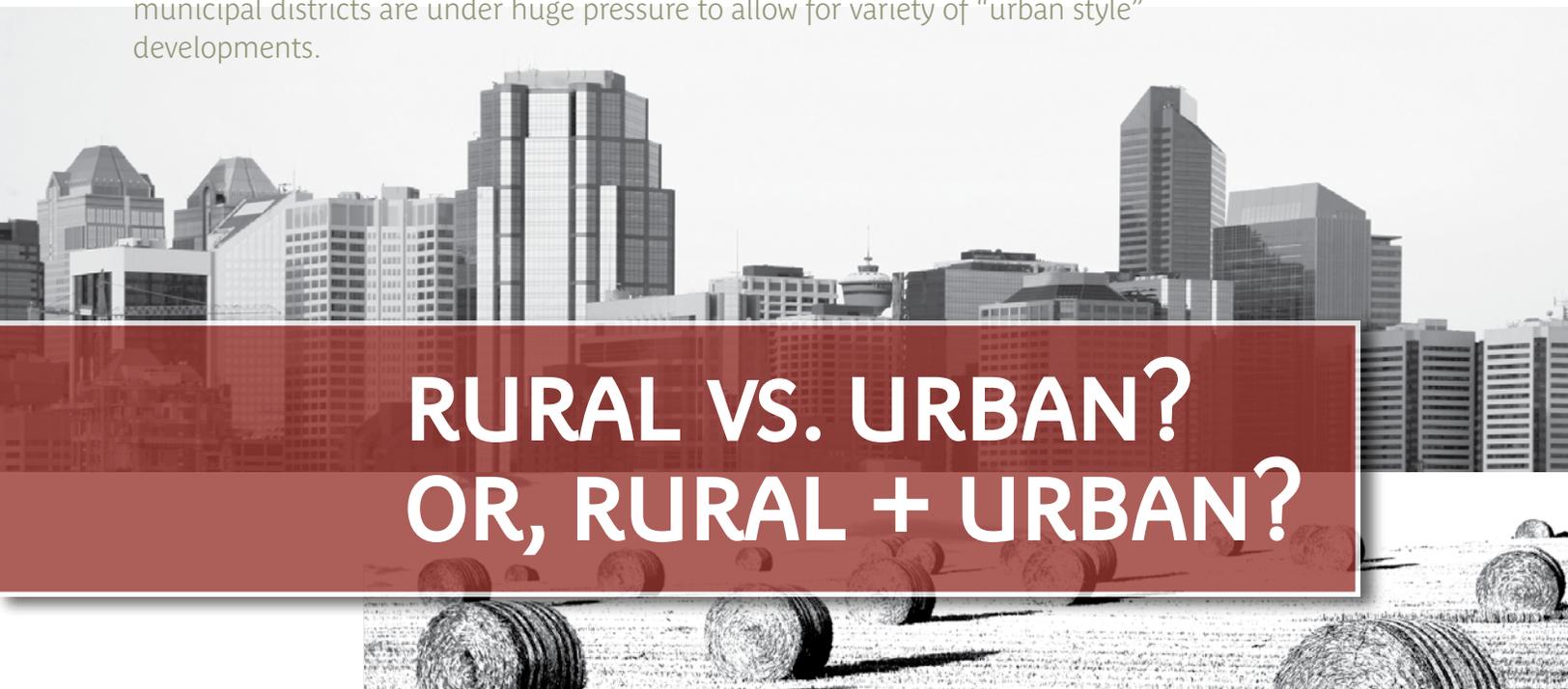
home when she told me I was underselling myself. Every night I returned home and redrafted my resume, providing a better more comprehensive picture of myself as a planner and what I had to offer. This was the key lesson. It was not the inability of the planning profession to value my overseas or volunteer experience, far from it, but my own inability to express and articulate that value that determined how it would serve my chances of securing employment.

Within two months I secured an exciting opportunity as a community planner with an engineering firm in Grande Prairie planning new neighbourhood developments. It was immensely satisfying and relieving to finally find myself in a "planning" job in Canada and to know that my efforts in Laos had played a part in it. Looking back, I can see how misplaced my assumptions about the planning profession and overseas experiences were. The Canadian Institute of Planners, among other agencies in Canada, has strong international components, not to mention the numerous professionals I met while living abroad. Essentially, the challenges I faced as a new planner attempting to enter the profession, are the same for all young planners, whether you have worked or volunteered overseas. Now, as I sit in my new office and the memories of my time in Laos begin to fade, a new challenge confronts me; taking my experiences and the lessons I gained and applying them to my work in building healthier, socially and environmentally sustainable communities right here in Canada. ■



Countryside of Northern Laos

All along the Queen Elizabeth II highway corridor; around the major urban municipalities of Edmonton, Calgary, Red Deer, Grand Prairie, Lethbridge and Medicine Hat; and the approaches to Banff National Park, counties and municipal districts are under huge pressure to allow for variety of “urban style” developments.



## RURAL VS. URBAN? OR, RURAL + URBAN?

These developments include the “hamlet” of Sherwood Park, massive undertakings like the new resort community at Seebe on the former power generation town site, the mega-mall and recreation complex at Balzac, as well as Red Deer County’s new urban community of Liberty Crossing adjacent to Gasoline Alley.

.....  
*Many rural residents have asked, and continue to ask, “Why are rural municipalities allowing these urban types of development?”*  
.....

The answer as you might imagine is not simple. The principles of “sustainability”, with its environmental, economic and social/cultural considerations, play a very large role in why county and municipal district councils are voting to support “urban style” developments in ever increasing numbers. To give you an idea of how these considerations impact on political decision, let’s take a minute to explore

some of the aspects of sustainability that Red Deer County Council has considered as it reviewed plans for new developments in Liberty Crossing and the adjacent Gasoline Alley commercial/industrial neighbourhoods.

Environmental sustainability is addressed as the key and over-arching set of policies in the County’s Municipal Development Plan (MDP); the document that provides the policy framework for all County development, be it urban or rural. The MDP speaks to the conservation of “natural capital” (farmland, wildlife habitat, wetlands, and similar landscapes) by directing development to land that is more suitable; i.e. of lower value for these purposes. To implement these policies County Council has directed that the traditional 2 acre to 5 acre “country residential” developments be replaced with clustered residential developments, expanded hamlets and new “urban centres”; i.e. Liberty Crossing. By following this direction the County has planned for the 8,000 persons, whose residences in the traditional subdivision pattern

would have consumed 70 to 80 quarter sections of prime farm land or wildlife habitat, to live in a walkable, well defined, mixed use community on 4 to 5 quarter sections. Liberty Crossing, designed to reflect the latest trends in low impact, reasonably priced infrastructure, will offer easy access to shopping, services, schools and recreation.

On the social sustainability side, Liberty Crossing offers a small town community environment that is rarely found in most large lot subdivisions. Increasingly, all across North America, former urban residents are moving away from faceless, car dominated suburbs to the friendly environs of either existing or new “small towns.” They are searching for communities where neighbours meet on the street, share common values and live more lightly on the landscape.

While the above two sustainability realms are very important, what can’t be overlooked is how compact, mixed-use “urban style” development can play a significant role in maintaining the County’s economic sustainability. As was demonstrated by the County’s 2005 Cost of Community Services Study, some land uses “pay their way” while other do not. Specifically, commercial and agriculture land uses were essentially “break even”; i.e. the County’s annual expenditures to service those land uses were roughly equal to the tax revenues that they generated. Industrial land uses, however, are major revenue generators that require only \$0.14 cents of service for every tax dollar received. Residential land uses, made up almost entirely of traditional country residential parcels on the other hand, demand a \$1.60 worth of resources and services for every \$1 of tax revenue. Clearly, traditional country residential land uses are not financially sustainable in the long term.

.....  
*So the question then becomes,  
 “Is a more compact form of housing  
 more sustainable, and why?”*  
 .....

Again using Liberty Crossing as an example let’s look at a key servicing cost ... road maintenance. The reason we’ll only look at

maintenance is because a developer in Red Deer County is required to front end 100% of the cost of installing the roads regardless of whether they are paved and urban, or gravel and rural. In other words, development of roads has a net zero impact on the County’s capital bottom line. Operation and maintenance of roads, however, is where the costs kick in. As a comparison let’s look at the length of road required per unit, just within the development.

If we assume that a 3 acre parcel is the average size of traditional country residential lot; we have approximately 300 feet of frontage for each lot. Since this frontage is usually shared with another parcel, the dedicated frontage road per lot is 150 feet. By comparison the average frontage for a townhouse in Liberty Crossing will be 30 feet, and, likewise this road frontage is shared by at least another unit across the street. Based on this, the dedicated road frontage for a townhouse unit is 15 feet, or one tenth of the road required by a country residential lot. From a maintenance perspective, both require snow plowing, but once the snow is gone the paved urban street is essentially maintenance free for many years. The gravel rural road, however, requires grading, re-graveling, ditch maintenance, etc. What this basic comparison suggests is that urban density development is likely much closer to break even, or perhaps revenue positive.

What does all this mean to rural residents? First, it means the landscapes they love are much more likely to remain unchanged with clustered, mixed use development. Second, each of the new communities that are created by this type of development is likely to offer rural residents social and commercial services that presently aren’t available. And last, new urban style developments are likely not only to pay their own way, but in fact, they should be revenue generators that allow the municipality to bring more services and better infrastructure to the rural areas.

In the future, the issue for Alberta’s rural municipalities shouldn’t be a question of “urban vs. rural” development, but rather how can urban development help maintain the elements of the rural landscape, rural way of life, and natural capital that we all consider important. ■

Edmonton's historic Walterdale Bridge is in its last decade of life as a vehicle bridge, according to a May 2002 Edmonton City Council Committee report. The report referenced an existing bridge assessment, and depending on when the decade started, there may be as few as six safe years left.

# Bridging the Gap

Improving Traffic, Tourism and Civic Identity in Edmonton's Core



Walterdale Bridge, North Saskatchewan River  
SOURCE: *City of Edmonton Archives, EA-10-325*

Built in 1913, the bridge has forged a place in Edmonton's history, postcards and skyline. It cannot simply be cast aside. Thus a group of planners, designers, engineers and architects gathered for an Urban Design Salon on the weekend of March 7 - 8, 2008 to discuss the structure's options and potential fate. Although the initial aim of the meeting was not consensus, consensus on the majority of points was reached.

First and foremost, the Walterdale Bridge should be preserved as a pedestrian crossing and a new vehicle bridge should be built parallel to it. For a variety of reasons, refurbishing the existing bridge again for vehicle travel is not practical. Closing bridge access completely in this location offers an interesting opportunity to force south end

commuters to take mass transit (buses or light rail) into downtown. Unfortunately, the transit network is unlikely to improve sufficiently within the limited time available to make this a reasonable option.

Most of the people driving across the bridge do so during peak hours when traffic is an issue. To a certain degree, "rush hour" traffic is common and should be expected. At the same time, no bridge will ever take out more cars than it brings in. Therefore traffic levels have a potential to worsen if additional commuters decide to drive this "new and improved" route into downtown. On the plus side, Edmonton's downtown has yet to reach a critical mass of people or saturation point of activity, so there are advantages to encouraging more people (but not their cars) downtown.

*Developing a Walterdale Pedestrian Bridge with amenities has the benefits of providing cover from the elements and car effects, as well as creating a destination and comfortable place to rest.*

There is a traffic bottleneck created at the existing two-lane bridge by a larger number of lanes feeding into it. It is possible that increasing the size of the new bridge to at least three lanes could help to facilitate smoother traffic flow. However, many of the Salon participants raised concerns about the bottleneck moving only a few hundred metres up the road from the bridge entrance to the first set of traffic lights beyond it.

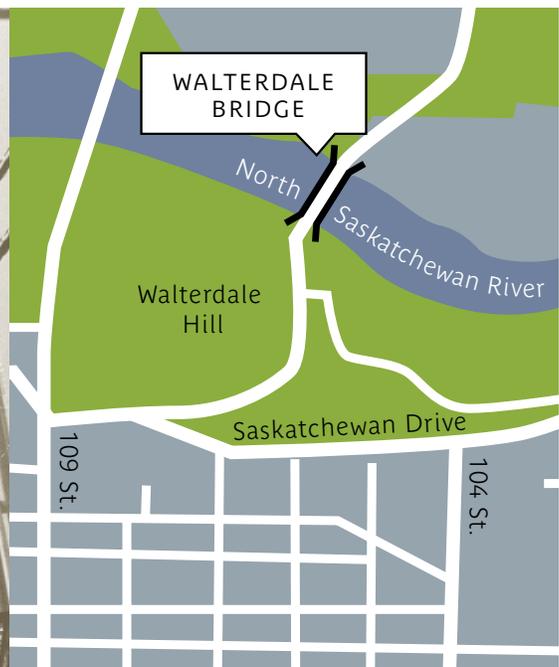
Crossing the Walterdale Bridge has become an ordeal for walkers frustrated with the dirt, noise and wind effects created by car traffic. An additional frustration is created by the fact that both sides of the bridge offer relatively similar trails, leaving little incentive to cross. With the current setup, a degree of necessity must be present to cause a person to effectively leave the park system, to suffer through the bridge, before re-entering the park on the other side. There is no convenient place for people to stop on the bridge at the moment, thus reuse of the existing bridge should be sold as a park connector to appeal to the public sensibility of sustainability.

Walterdale Bridge, Circa 1953  
SOURCE: City of Edmonton  
Archives, EA-10-305

Developing a Walterdale Pedestrian Bridge with amenities has the benefits of providing cover from the elements and car effects, as well as creating a destination and comfortable place to rest. Much needed amenities include a café/restaurant and public washrooms, and certain amenities are able to offset construction costs. Precedence for a restaurant on a Canadian river crossing has been set by the recent development of the Esplanade Riel pedestrian bridge in Winnipeg.

If security were raised as a concern, perhaps an office for park security staff could be created on the pedestrian bridge. It is likely that a platform or other structure could be suspended from the upper tier to create a mezzanine level, with potentially even a third upper level built up on top.

Nearby communities and neighbourhoods need to be involved in the discussion, particularly those surrounding Whyte Avenue, one of Edmonton's biggest tourist attractions and strongest pedestrian corridors. In approaching the communities, they should be encouraged to recognize that living so close to downtown implies a certain assumption of traffic. Further, the effort of constructing a new vehicle bridge would be done with the intent of improving the entire city, not negatively impacting a specific neighbourhood. Early public support is important for such a venture



and clear facts combined with significant tangible benefits, such as the amenities discussed, can make the bridge an easier sell.

Even though cost is a major issue, the bar needs to be set high for this to be a successful project. Logically, a certain amount of money is required to build a basic bridge; however, this would be Edmonton's first urban context bridge. Recognizing that there is no way to cover up a bad bridge, particularly one built in the middle of the city, the pressure is on for Edmontonians to work toward something spectacular here. It is worth noting that the cost associated with building support for pedestrians and bicycles into a new vehicular bridge can be avoided if the existing Walterdale Bridge is reserved for this function.

Beyond cost, at this stage, the major barrier to a quality product is time. Construction alone could take years. Winnipeg's newest vehicular bridge, completed in 2003, took over 2 years to build. Factoring in soil testing, environmental reports, geotechnical testing, engineering reports, requests for proposal, tendering processes and public consultations, available time begins to disappear very quickly. We will be encouraging groups such as MADE (Media, Art & Design Exposed) in Edmonton and the Edmonton Design Committee to promote an ideas competition and design competition for the bridge. The fact these competitions will require additional time points to the need to start this process as soon as possible.

The participants of the Urban Design Salon believe there is real potential here to create a masterpiece that draws more attention, tourism and pedestrian traffic to the city of Edmonton. They also see this as a legitimate opportunity for the city to enhance its urban image and reach out to challenge other urban centres in Canada and beyond.

Urban Design Salons are gaining popularity within the Congress for the New Urbanism and offer a relaxed forum for the discussion of urban issues. Focus is placed on giving everyone a chance to participate, flush out ideas and action items, develop solutions and communicate them to the appropriate parties.

An Urban Design Salon can serve the role of a think tank, sounding board and expert debate panel. Increasingly, planning and design decisions are being made in a vacuum, with individual departments, even sections within departments, affecting change in the public realm without considering the full impact on other departments, the community, or the environment over the long term. An Urban Design Salon creates a medium for non-partisan and unbiased, as well as knowledgeable and well-intentioned, discussion with the big picture in mind. Every urban centre can benefit from having such a group.

In Edmonton, specifically, many members of the Salon have traveled widely, yet many have also lived in the city for a number of years. Collectively, the group has a grounded understanding of local issues, framed within a larger context of cities in general. Edmonton's Urban Design Salon has the capacity to take a big picture view of the Walterdale Bridge issue, propose alternatives, focus public consultation efforts and advocate for a landmark solution which citizens can be proud of. For certain, whatever is built will change the face of the city for decades, if not centuries, to come.

It is critical that the right decision is made regarding this landmark, because there is likely only one chance to do so. Members of the Salon are hopeful that with time, community groups and various levels of government will grow to trust their collective abilities and trained input on this and other major urban planning issues in the city. ■

For more information on the results of this Urban Design Salon, and to hear a summarized podcast of the discussion, visit [www.cityplanner.ca](http://www.cityplanner.ca).

As Co-Chair of the National/Affiliate Membership Committee (N/AMC), a position I'm honoured to share with Professor Ron Keeble, RPP MCIP, I would like to update AACIP members concerning the advances we're making with the Membership Continuous Improvement Project (MCIP).

# The Membership Continuous Improvement Project

## An Update/Progress Report

The MCIP initiative is a comprehensive overhaul of CIP's membership standards and processes. It is being undertaken in collaboration with all seven affiliates within the federation, all of whom share and administer these standards at the provincial level.

### Rationale

This review was necessary, in part, because CIP's membership processes and standards have not been intensively reviewed since the mid 1980's. More fundamental, however, is the need to ensure that our membership standards are rigorous, consistent and fairly applied. Increasingly, other professions in Canada and the world over are reviewing and upgrading their requirements for achieving and maintaining professional credentials, with specific attention to codes of ethical and professional practice and a commitment to continuous professional learning.

In addition, international and interprovincial agreements have mandated the removal of barriers

to labour mobility. The N/AMC and CIP have worked hard over the years to ensure its members are able to practice their profession anywhere in Canada. More recently, reciprocity agreements with planning institutes in Australia and New Zealand have been instituted to facilitate international mobility. An important aspect of the MCIP initiative relates to maintaining and enhancing this professional mobility while assuring that professional standards are being observed.

The MCIP initiative will lead to improvements that will enhance professionalism and strengthen CIP's and the Affiliates' abilities to develop and implement standards that are truly rigorous, consistent and fairly applied as well as ensure that membership policies and processes are transparent, timely, uniform and efficient. The expectation is that these improvements will not only position the profession to meet today's needs, but build a stronger sense of professional community by raising the bar and positioning the national and affiliate organizations to meet and exceed our professional needs for the future.

## Process Outline, Who's Involved, What it's Costing and What to Expect

The N/AMC spearheaded the MCIP initiative and is now overseeing the work being completed. While the N/AMC has experience with administering our current membership standards and processes, and knows the struggles involved all too well, the N/AMC viewed the use of external expertise as being critical in successfully advancing our standards and improving our processes. The N/AMC clearly saw the need to secure the services of someone with specific expertise in professional associations in Canada, up-to-date knowledge of best practices across the country, familiarity with international and interprovincial labour issues, and so forth. Jim Pealow with Association Management, Consulting and Evaluation Services has been invaluable in formulating the review framework we're following as well as facilitating the professional planners who are serving on the various task forces and work groups assembled to undertake this important work.

Three task forces have been struck thus far. Over the past year, experienced and dedicated planners representing all of the affiliates as well as the N/AMC have come together to draft, for the first time, competency standards for the professional practice of planning in Canada. Others have updated our ethical standards and charted a new course in terms of our certification standards.

The Ethical Standards Task Force Report has been endorsed by the N/AMC and is now with the affiliates for their review and response. The Competency Standards Task Force Report will be presented to the N/AMC very shortly for their review and endorsement and it too will be circulated to the affiliates. The Certification Standards Task Force Report is currently being reviewed by the N/AMC and is expected to be in a position to circulate it to the affiliates by the end of August, 2008.

The Ethical Standards Task Force Report has been posted on CIP's website and all members are strongly encouraged to examine it carefully. It is comprehensive and represents the state of the art in this area. The efforts and expertise of everyone involved in drafting this report are appreciated with particular credit going to our PIBC colleagues. As soon as the Competency Standards and the

Certification Standards Task Force Reports have been endorsed by the N/AMC, they too will be posted on CIP's website for members to review.

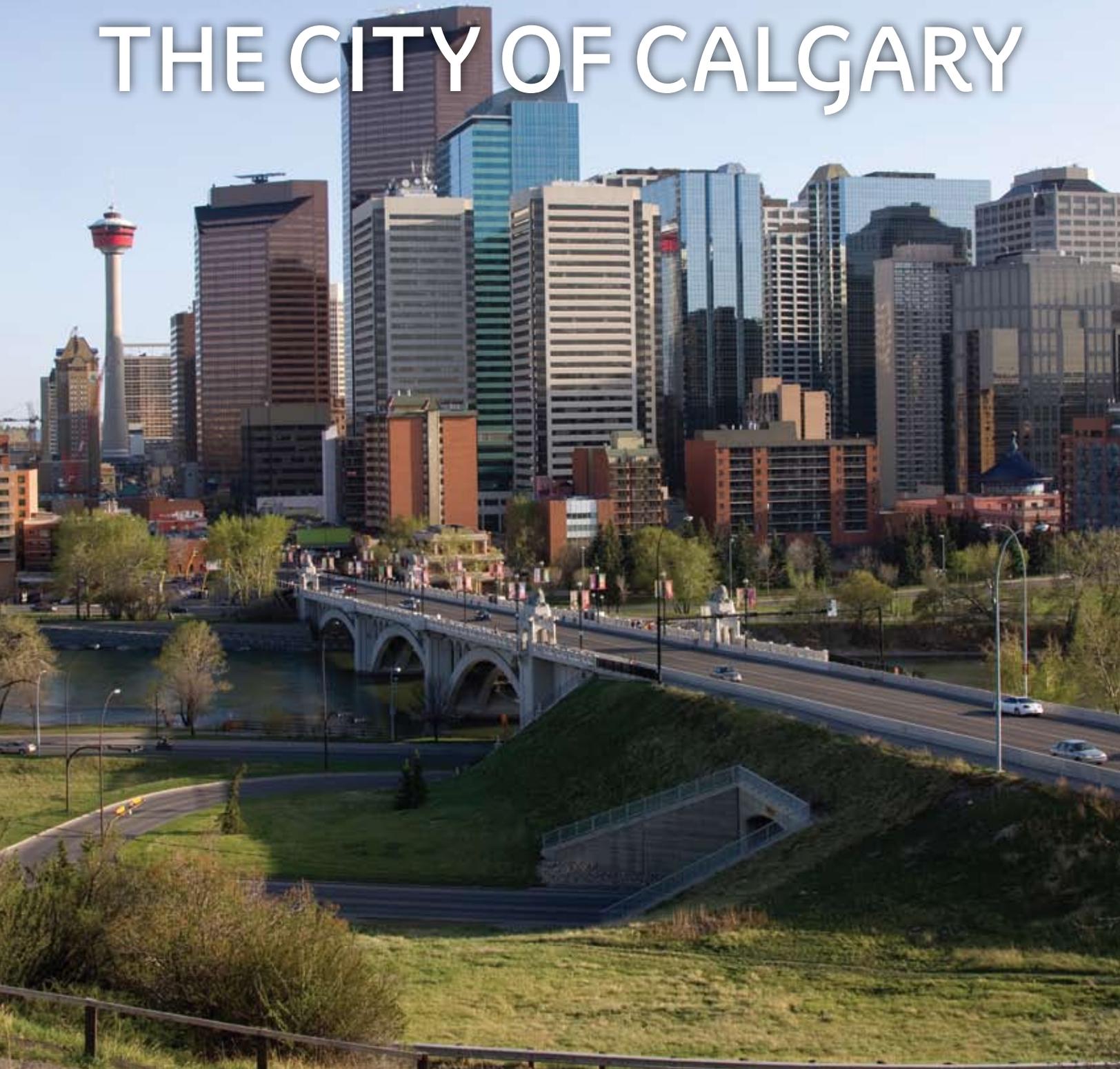
Four more task forces lie ahead. The fourth task force will be charged with improving administrative efficiencies and effectiveness in the delivery of membership services. The fifth will address accreditation standards and process primarily to ensure that the requisite planning competencies acquired through education are available to students in planning programs throughout the country. The sixth task force will focus on issues at the legislative/statutory/regulatory level. Its intent will initially be to achieve uniformity across Canada in terms of professional designation and credentials in legislation while, ultimately, developing a framework for and game plan towards licensing. The seventh task force will comprehensively review the FCIP (Fellow) designation/membership category and selection criteria.

The MCIP initiative is being funded as follows. CIP is covering 50% of the costs and the remaining 50% will be shared by all seven affiliates on a per-capita basis. With the total project cost over three years (2007 – 2009) estimated to be \$168,000, AACIP will be contributing approximately \$7,500. Considering that membership standards are at the very core of any professional association, how outmoded current standards are and the advances that have been made by the first three task forces, great return on this investment will be felt for many years to come.

A number of changes arising from the MCIP initiative will require the approval of bylaw changes at the national and affiliate level, which are ratified through ballot votes by the membership. Therefore, it is imperative that all stakeholders – especially members and the affiliates – be kept informed, are duly consulted and have a clear sense that they are being heard. To this end, the N/AMC is also in the process of securing communications expertise to ensure all are well informed of project developments, costs and implications. This is a vital element of the MCIP initiative intended to facilitate greater awareness and understanding of the project and, in due course, help achieve affiliate and membership support for proposed bylaw revisions that will be subject to membership ballot votes. ■

As we know, Calgary has experienced explosive growth in the past quarter-century, posing extraordinary challenges for city planners. During that time, planning priorities and practices related to urban development and redevelopment have changed a great deal. New perspectives have emerged on topics such as environmental awareness, the limitations of single-use development, and the importance of creating a balance between developing new communities and redeveloping existing neighbourhoods.

# THE CITY OF CALGARY





Calgary Skyline

By 2003, the 1980 Land Use Bylaw (2P80) had been amended over 150 times in an effort to deal with the changing environment. It had become difficult to use and expensive to administer. As a result, the City of Calgary decided that staff from the city's planning department would take on the massive job of writing a new Land Use Bylaw. The result, Bylaw 1P2007, went into effect on June 1, 2008.

In part, the project was driven by Calgary City Council's desire to implement "Smart Growth" and sustainable development policies that aim to improve the physical environment, reduce infrastructure costs, increase transportation efficiencies, and protect agricultural land. The City of Calgary Sustainability Principles, approved by council in January 2007, support these goals as well as LUB approaches such as compact development, mixed uses, housing choice and walkable environments.

The challenge for city planners was clear: to incorporate these ideals into legislation that would encourage more sustainable development, while enabling developers to realize the potential of their land holdings, and to continue to make valuable contributions to the local economy.

## Land Use Bylaw Review Process

Staff began the project by identifying the significant problems with the existing Land Use Bylaw. As wide-ranging issues became apparent, what began as a review and update of Calgary's existing land use bylaw quickly became an exhaustive rewriting process.

Public engagement for the process involved a unique stakeholder team process that emphasized consultation with those most affected by the new bylaw. This included representatives from the development industry and community-based organizations. Five stakeholder groups were established for each of the basic land use groups: low density residential, multi-residential, commercial, industrial and special purpose. An additional stakeholder group developed a Parking Strategy to guide the regulation of vehicle and bicycle parking requirements. Each stakeholder group met frequently over a relatively short time, sharing information and identifying issues. Participants were given opportunities to raise their concerns and articulate their interests, providing the entire group with a full spectrum of perspectives and potential solutions to the issues being considered.

As the process to develop the new bylaw progressed, planning staff examined information from a wide array of sources. Approved City of Calgary Policy was an essential source of direction as the bylaw was viewed as being a tool to implement policy. The existing bylaw was examined in terms of strengths and weaknesses and the identification of possible solutions. By examining direct control (DC) bylaws, it was hoped that recurring issues could be addressed through the bylaw and reduce the need to use DCs. Existing patterns of development, approaches from other jurisdictions and emerging trends were considered. Additionally, staff reviewed Subdivision and Development Appeal Board records to identify issues that have been contentious in the past.

Drawing feedback from the stakeholder teams and information from the above sources, the team developed a series of frameworks. Each framework outlined the proposed range of districts, along with typical uses and key development rules for the various districts. Each framework was reviewed and endorsed by Council.

Once that phase of the project was completed in 2005, city planners integrated the collected information into a draft of the bylaw. Then, members of the public examined the draft during a series of open house meetings. More revisions were made as a result of public and continuing stakeholder input, and the bylaw was ratified by City Council in July 2007.

## Goals And Challenges

One of the goals city planners hope to achieve through the new bylaw is greater consistency in interpretation of rules and greater innovation and flexibility in development. As time passed, developers and city administrators alike found that the 1980 LUB had outlived its usefulness and was impeding, rather than facilitating, innovative development. It is expected that the new bylaw will create a more predictable environment for developers, builders, and the wider community.

During the creation of the new bylaw, the planning team became aware of several issues. It was clear that one of the major problems with the old bylaw was that the land use districts did not

adequately accommodate development trends or policy, so new districts had to be drafted. While many of the new district designations closely resembled the old districts (for example, R-1), others were either significantly different, such as the four residential contextual districts, or completely new (such as R-CH, Residential Cottage Housing).

Once the new districts had been created, the team was faced with a necessary, but daunting and time-consuming task: re-mapping the entire city. Block by block, every area of the city was considered and re-designated in an exercise that took over a year. Once this was completed, there were far fewer areas that were designated as Direct Control Districts. It is anticipated that this will significantly cut down administrative time spent evaluating development applications in the future.

## Major Outcomes

The new bylaw represents a change in mind set from the City's previous bylaw. Whereas the old bylaw was oriented towards greenfield development, the new bylaw reflects both greenfield development and infill re-development.

As the City seeks to find a balance between redevelopment and new communities, the new bylaw provides tools to encourage the increase of density in existing communities. It encourages increased urban density in a number of ways, including the introduction of a new district to encourage development of "cottage" dwellings (clusters of small dwellings gathered around an open central space) and row houses. It also opens the door for the creation of legal secondary suites and makes allowances for increased flexibility in design ideas for multi-family dwellings.

It is recognized that established neighbourhoods are under pressure to densify, but city planners and residents want them to retain the qualities that make them desirable places to live as they are redeveloped. The solution was to mandate contextual redevelopment, which obligates developers to plan and build structures that fit in with the existing surroundings. The rules governing contextual development are, by necessity, flexible and variable, and are designed to maintain

the character of existing communities, while recognizing the inevitability of growth.

The new bylaw is designed to encourage mixed-use development, including multi-residential buildings featuring small boutique shops on the ground floor. The goal is to create more vibrant, pedestrian-friendly neighbourhoods. One of the bylaw's innovations is the creation of Use Area Restrictions, which will limit the size of retail establishments at the ground level in designated areas. The planners hope that increased mixed-use development will encourage alternatives to commuting and shopping by car, thus reducing energy usage and improving air quality.

There are other provisions in the bylaw designed to improve the quality of the environment. The need to preserve natural area parkland within the city has been recognized through the creation of a new parks district (S-UN, the Special Purpose Urban Nature District). Incentives have been built in to encourage incorporation of "green" technology into their buildings, including landscaped roofs ('green roofs') and methods that reduce water consumption.

## A Few Reflections

At the conclusion of any large-scale project, it is natural to look back at the process and identify lessons learned. In this case, city planners have said that they underestimated the amount of time it would take to write a comprehensive Land Use Bylaw from scratch. Although the project itself seemed to grow in size as they worked on it, the time allotted for completion did not. The deadline for completion was, in part, determined by the civic election cycle; since the Council elected in 2004 was familiar with the project, planners wanted to present the bylaw to them for ratification. The planning team met the deadline, as Council approved the project in the summer of 2007.

Some city planners have said they wish there had been more time to run test cases against the bylaw, although some new development applications were tested during the period before the bylaw took effect. Another minor regret is that the new bylaw is not comprehensive, as it does not

include new rules for the Beltline and Downtown districts. While a team of city planners are currently working on plans for the Downtown area (including the West End, Eau Claire, the Business District, and the East Village), an amendment to incorporate new districts and rules for the Beltline area into the new LUB will likely be approved by Council and in place by early 2009.

The implementation phase of the project is now in full swing. Staff training is ongoing and a number of systems have been redesigned according to the LUB's new rules. Employees from a variety of city departments are finding it necessary to become familiar with the new bylaw, since a complete overhaul of policy has wide-reaching effects.

Staff of the city planning department believes they have achieved what they set out to do; to create a land use bylaw that meets the urban planning needs for Calgary in the 21st century. They are now looking forward to seeing the results of their work. One planner expressed a wish to jump ahead in time 25 years to see what happens, but it seems he will have to wait to see how Calgary develops along with the rest of us. ■



Calgary Tower

Alberta Association,  
Canadian Institute of Planners  
P.O. Box 596,  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 2K8

Publication Agreement Number 41795020