

Innovative Strategies

Ideas for Sustainable Communities



CENTRE FOR CIVIC GOVERNANCE

Innovative Strategies Series
Volume 1

Innovative Strategies:
Ideas for Sustainable Communities

Innovative Strategies Series
Volume 1

Columbia Institute Centre
for Civic Governance, 2008

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INTRODUCTION

Municipalities and school boards are the first order of governance for community members. They work to bring communities together, make key infrastructure decisions, protect our natural environment, shape our local economies, safeguard public education, and develop healthy schools. They are perfectly placed to contribute to the environmental, social, cultural, and economic sustainability challenges emerging for our communities.

At Columbia Institute's Centre for Civic Governance, our goal is to inform, inspire, and connect community leaders who are using progressive policies to build inclusive, sustainable communities. We share the proceedings from our inaugural Governance Forum in Ontario in order to inspire and inform community building across Canada.



PART 1

'LEED'ing Ideas for Building Green

How can you LEED the way to green buildings in your municipality or school district? Not entirely sure what LEED is? This section features a roster of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) professionals, including an engineer, two design experts, and an architect, who will explain the ins and outs, reveal the importance of building green, show you ideas of how to make it feasible in your jurisdiction, and use innovative examples of LEED buildings to show you what's possible.

The ABCs of LEED

STEVEN CARPENTER is the founder and president of Enermodal Engineering, a firm that specializes in the design of energy efficient buildings.

LEED – Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design – is a green building system developed by the Canada Green Building Council, based on a system established by the US Green Building Council. LEED began in the mid-1990s when a group of organizations representing professionals, manufacturers, and government agencies got together to create a green building rating system. In the US they released the first version of LEED standards in the year 2000. Shortly after that the Canada Green Building Council was formed and in late 2004 LEED standards for Canada were released. These standards have attracted an amazing amount of interest since that time.

> MORE THAN NEW BUILDINGS

When people say they are doing a LEED building, they are usually talking about new construction, or what we call LEED-NC. But LEED goes far beyond new construction, which is only one part of the construction picture.

There are also LEED certifications for building interiors for people who are renting and LEED for building shells for developers putting up outer buildings. Most municipalities own and occupy buildings, so they would be concerned with the NC system.

There's another system called LEED-EB for existing buildings. This system focuses on the operation and maintenance of existing buildings. It has been in use in the US for a couple of years and we are looking at bringing it into Canada. Regular LEED also applies to major retrofits, in which mechanical systems are replaced (as in ice rinks).

> LEED'S POINT SYSTEM

LEED works by a point system. There are a total of 70 points available for each building project. If you earn 26 points, you have reached the certified level, or LEED Bronze. LEED Silver is achieved if you get 33 points, Gold for 39 points, and 52 points earns you the Platinum level. One thing I like about the LEED certification system is that the first level is easy to achieve. Even bottom-line oriented private sector developers can easily get LEED certified and not break the bank.

Often we hear from municipalities that are eager to demonstrate that they are forward-thinking and so are aiming for the LEED Platinum level. However, LEED Platinum is a very challenging level that the best designers are working hard to get to. Of all the 70 buildings certified in Canada, only one is platinum. The second platinum certification is coming soon.

Points are awarded equally for energy efficiency, water conservation, the materials used to make the building – whether they are recycled or are local materials, site development, measures to deal with storm water, and measures taken to discourage car use. Another criterion that many people find surprising is the quality of the building's indoor environment. LEED also deals with questions like natural lighting, occupant control of workspaces, and operable windows, among other things. So LEED is not only looking at creating a healthy outdoor environment, but a healthy indoor environment, too.

> LEED IN CANADA

To date LEED in Canada has been more popular on the west coast. There are approximately 70 LEED certified buildings in Canada, including 17 or 18 in Ontario. A building is certified when a builder has actually designed and built the building, collected all the documentation,

submitted it to the Canada Green Building Council, and the building has gone through a third-party review.

There are about 500 buildings across Canada that have registered for LEED. Builders register as soon as they've decided they want to build a LEED-certified building. When everything is added up, there is roughly about 50 million square feet of green building activity in Canada, with a construction value of about \$10 billion.

In Ontario a number of towns and cities – Kitchener-Waterloo, Kingston, Vaughan, Toronto – have mandated LEED for all of their municipal buildings. The York Region and the Region of Waterloo have also mandated LEED for all of the buildings that they build. In most cases those groups have selected LEED Silver as the level they are targeting to achieve, with the exception of the City of Vancouver, which is aiming to achieve LEED Gold.

The most interesting development is East Gwillimbury in the York Region, which is the only municipality in Canada or North America that has mandated LEED for all buildings, including private sector buildings. East Gwillimbury is a very small municipality and it will be interesting to see how the private sector reacts to having LEED as a mandated environmental standard.

Outside the municipal sector, the federal government has set LEED Gold as the standard for all federal government buildings. Infrastructure Ontario is using LEED certification for their buildings.

> LEED-ING EXAMPLES

Builders have designed buildings so inefficiently and so poorly that they can easily make dramatic improvements in performance. It's embarrassing

Builders have designed buildings so inefficiently and so poorly that they can easily make dramatic improvements in performance.

that it's so easy to reduce our water and energy use by two-thirds. We make these reductions by collecting rain-water off the top of the building into a buried cistern, and use it for flushing toilets, the cold side

of the laundry, and to wash down the building and vehicles.

To show how LEED works, below are a couple of projects with which our firm has been involved.

THE PARAMEDIC SERVICES HEADQUARTERS IN OTTAWA

- Slightly larger than 100,000 square feet;
- Includes ambulance, training and administration facilities;
- LEED Canada certified, the entry level;
- Low water use fixtures, heat recovery from the ventilation air, and the use of low off-gassing materials; and
- Greenguard certified furniture used in the offices.

THE REGION OF WATERLOO EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES FACILITY

- The second building to be LEED certified in Ontario;
- LEED Gold; and
- Uses 66 per cent less water, 67 per cent less energy, and 75 per cent less construction waste.

THE NEW TWIN PAD FOR THE CITY OF KITCHENER

- Includes a double ice rink, plus other recreation facilities;
- Rather than dumping the heat that is removed when cooling the arena ice, waste heat is recovered and used to heat the arena via radiant floor heating and radiant heating in the seats, resulting in a 60 per cent energy savings; and
- Rainwater is collected off the roof for ice resurfacing, avoiding the need for chemical systems to make Kitchener's hard water soft enough for ice.

THE TORONTO REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY ENVIRONMENTAL WORKSHOP

- 11,000 square foot building just submitted for LEED Platinum certification, the first in Ontario;
- Composting toilets and waterless urinals;
- No sewage water is produced; and
- Small septic system deals with water from lab sinks.

THE NEW CAMBRIDGE CIVIC ADMINISTRATION BUILDING

- Submitted for LEED Gold certification;
- Plant biowall that purifies the air; and
- Atrium for natural office lighting.

> FOUR STEPS TO GREEN BUILDINGS

Here are the top four things to consider in order to get a green building in your municipality:

STEP ONE: ACHIEVE OWNER COMMITMENT

In the case of municipal buildings, a strong commitment is necessary from municipal council, reflected in a resolution that is carried through to staff, the design team and the construction team. We have sometimes found that LEED certified buildings are harder to achieve than LEED Platinum because often the people that want LEED certified are aiming for the lowest level because they are unwilling to change the way they do things. Even for LEED certified, you've got to do things differently.

STEP TWO: GET THE PROCESS RIGHT

Since LEED is about changing the way we design and build buildings, we must do things differently. One of these things is the process we go through to deliver buildings. It becomes necessary to spend a lot more time at the concept design stage figuring out what you want in the building. The integrated design process involves getting all the players together, including getting feedback from building users on new design features. A traditional design team will give you a traditional design, so for LEED buildings you need someone on the team who is looking out for the environment.

STEP THREE: SET A SEPARATE BUDGET FOR LEED

While the cost of green building is not great, the environmental features are susceptible to so-called value engineering. When a project comes in over budget, LEED gets blamed for every cost overage that occurs. Look at the paybacks down the road in savings. Once that has been considered, green buildings are your best investment.

STEP FOUR: CHOOSE SUBSTANCE OVER SIZZLE

There are a lot of green technologies. Green roofs, for example, are good in some buildings and they're not good on other buildings. In the end, it's the ultimate environmental benefit the building user wants. Designers and users should look at the benefits they want rather than choosing particular technologies.

New Educational and Research Work at the Kortright Centre

ANDREW BOWERBANK is the Executive Director of the World Green Building Council, formerly the Executive Director of the Greater Toronto Chapter of the Canada Green Building Council, and Manager of Sustainable Development for the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

There is a great deal going on today with green buildings. There's a big shift in the marketplace that will make this change work, but those of us who are concerned with sustainability must work to encourage this movement.

> THE TORONTO AND REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY

The Toronto and Region Conservation Authority (TRCA) goes back 50 years, looking after the river valley corridors and the watersheds in the Greater Toronto Area. The Authority owns many important pieces of parkland, including the sites of the Toronto Zoo and the Ontario Science Centre.

A major problem we face today is buildings encroaching on our protected waterways. With the population of the GTA due to increase by about 40 per cent by 2020, we at the TRCA are asking ourselves

whether we are going to be able to continue to maintain the level of protection for waterways as we have for the past 50 years. We are asking if we can consider a new mandate for the TRCA that encompasses sustainable development.

Looking at the history of the TRCA and other conservation authorities, our mandates have shifted many times already. We now have a mandate for education, which we carry on in our residential field centres, and at the Kortright Centre for Conservation in Woodbridge, which is located between Rutherford Road and Major Mackenzie Drive, and along Islington Avenue west of Highway 400.

> LIVING CITY CAMPUS

The 325 hectare Kortright Centre has become Ontario's premier environmental and renewable energy education and demonstration centre, and today the TRCA is developing the Living City Campus at the Kortright Centre.

Kortright seemed to be an ideal place to create a centre for green building design and technology. By allowing people to kick the tires of these emerging technologies, we can build confidence in what we are trying to do with green buildings.

We have been told by the US and Canada Green Building Councils that we will have the largest concentration of green building types in North America at Kortright when the Living City Campus is completed. A unique feature of this project is that we will not be touching any of the natural features that exist at Kortright. We are trying to create a relationship between the natural and the built environment and determine whether that is possible in an urban context.

We're looking at six main areas of research at the Living City Campus: core research, design technology, biodiversity, energy conservation, sustainable living practices such as urban agriculture and biofuels, and preservation of natural wetlands.



The Living City Campus is not just a vision any more, we've got buildings on site. The Earth Rangers Building is the first LEED Gold building in the York region. This building delivers environmental education to younger people through school programs. The building's design is part of that education.

> NEW INITIATIVES

The Archetype Sustainable House project is under way and it's supposed to demonstrate the best in sustainable green design for new communities coming up. This initiative will hasten the day when LEED-certified residences can be built.

Beyond Kortright, we are looking at green buildings such as the TRCA's new Restoration Services Building in Vaughan, which has been awarded LEED Platinum status. This building provides a place for our habitat regeneration and restoration projects, and minimizes its own impact on the environment.

The TRCA is looking at a \$20 million opportunity from Ryerson University to build a Centre for Sustainable Technology Research. Ryerson is also considering working with Seneca College on that centre.

We've won a friendly competition to host the headquarters for the World Green Building Council, which will be hosted in the LEED Gold Earth Rangers Building at Kortright.

The WorldGBC has developed partnerships with a variety of organizations including the World Business Council on Sustainable Development and the Clinton Foundation to develop its environmental work.

There's a new initiative from BC called the Living Building Challenge. It's a challenge that goes beyond LEED Platinum. It looks at net zero energy, zero water waste, and using only salvaged materials in its construction. This initiative looks at actually giving back to the land as opposed to causing any impact whatsoever.

The Authority looks forward to building on its work to date with initiatives such as new educational facilities and challenges such as the living building and more environmentally sensitive modes of transportation.

There's a new initiative from BC called the Living Building Challenge. It's a challenge that goes beyond LEED Platinum.

Renewing Our Apartment Towers

GRAEME STEWART is a designer with E.R.A. Architects and has worked on a number of projects involving some of Toronto's major historic sites.

MICHAEL MCCLELLAND is a registered architect with more than 20 years of experience and a founder of E.R.A. Architects.

> LOOKING AT THE SUBURBS

E.R.A. Architects is a firm that works with heritage buildings. We also focus on social equity and appreciating existing buildings. With these things in mind, we wanted to look at the issue of sustainability within an urban framework.

Our efforts to make the suburbs more sustainable have materialized in the Sustainable City Tower Renewal Project. We wanted to take on the suburbs with love and appreciation. The point of this project, which also involves the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation and the University of Toronto, is to produce significant increases in energy efficiency, renew and update existing building stock, encourage social investments, enable entrepreneurship, and strengthen communities across the city and region of Toronto. We also want to provide workable models for appropriate and thoughtful intensification and relate them to current patterns of transit and existing clusters of densification. We want to shift urban design to encourage a clean and beautiful city.

But the buildings we are focusing on are those that people hate the most: high-rise residential towers, which we define as having 12 or more stories. These buildings are everywhere and the Toronto region and Ontario are unique for having more of these buildings than anywhere else in North America. Most people go out of their way to ignore these buildings, but a lot of people live in them.

In 1968 Buckminster Fuller, the geodesic dome architect, said, “In Toronto an unusually large number of high-rise towers poke above the landscape, miles from downtown. This type of high density development is far more progressive and better able to deal with the future than the endless sprawl of the US.” So 40 years later we are going to see if that is true.

> URBAN SPRAWL

There’s a belief that these apartments are mostly situated downtown, but in Toronto, the opposite is true: they are equitably placed in all parts of the region. In reality this is the environment most people live in.

Back in 1954 municipal planners and leaders were as concerned with urban sprawl as we are today. They decided to make new communities compact. It is interesting to note that when these towers were built they didn’t break up existing neighbourhoods.

At the time, these buildings were considered sexy. People wanted them like they want condos in the current condo boom. Last year there were 15,000 condos built in the Greater Toronto Area. In 1968 twice as many of these high-rise apartment units were built. Although we don’t think of Toronto as being a high-rise city, Toronto has the second largest number of these high-rise residential towers in North America and twice as many as Chicago.

An important issue today is that many of these high-density areas are related to low incomes. In many cases, these areas are under-served by transit and the situation doesn’t seem to be improving. Something must be done around these issues.

The buildings we are focusing on are those that people hate the most: high-rise residential towers. Most people go out of their way to ignore these buildings, but a lot of people live in them.



> RETROFITTING TOWERS ISN'T NEW

Many of these towers are energy inefficient – more energy inefficient than single-detached homes – which will surprise most people. These towers were built before insulation was required and they were built with single-glazed windows.

The best thing about these buildings is that they are extremely easy to retrofit. Putting in insulation, solar water heaters, and urban gardens can make these buildings attractive and make them candidates for LEED certification. And because these towers are so similar, a retrofit job on one building is easily repeatable. We can make major cuts in energy use and CO₂ emissions.

There is a precedent for this idea. In Europe most cities are surrounded by high-rise tower blocks that began to be retrofitted a decade ago. In Moscow they changed the wastelands that used to surround these buildings into shops and cafes. Other cities in Europe are retrofitting buildings and improving living standards. It's easier there because most buildings are owned by the government.

> INCENTIVES NEEDED

In Toronto the challenge is that these buildings have a variety of owners. We need to develop incentives to encourage owners to retrofit these buildings, because demolishing them is a short-term and irresponsible way of looking at this problem. The windows are failing, so they need to be fixed. But the fundamental infrastructure of each building is fine. The concrete in these buildings could last another 200 years.

Owners have to be given incentives to invest in these buildings. They are falling apart right now because their owners don't want to invest in them. With our work on this project, we hope that maybe these areas can accept new densities in beneficial ways.

If the owners put in new windows, new insulation, new services such as Internet connections, new cladding, and enclosed some balconies, many could wind up looking completely different.

The communities in these buildings are vibrant and we are looking at how we can make them work better. Retail shops and gardens in these buildings and subway stops nearby would get people out of their cars. Investing in these buildings would maintain affordable housing. We can't allow these buildings to gentrify.



PART 2

Environmental Leadership

Creating a Local Green Agenda and the Bylaws to Make It Happen

Local governments are at the forefront in pursuing an agenda to make Canada's cities and communities as green as they can be. In this section, Rick Smith from Environmental Defence identifies the most pressing environmental issues for local governments in Ontario to prioritize. Next, three examples of inspiring local environmental initiatives will show you what's possible: one small town's success with banning single-use plastic shopping bags, the pursuit of a community-right-to-know bylaw in Toronto, and the eradication of pesticides in Peterborough.

An Agenda of Green Cities

DR. RICK SMITH is the Executive Director of Environmental Defence Canada, which works on the connections between environmental and health issues. He has worked on a number of initiatives, including the greenbelt campaign, which brought together leaders from more than 70 municipalities in Ontario committed to defending greenbelts.

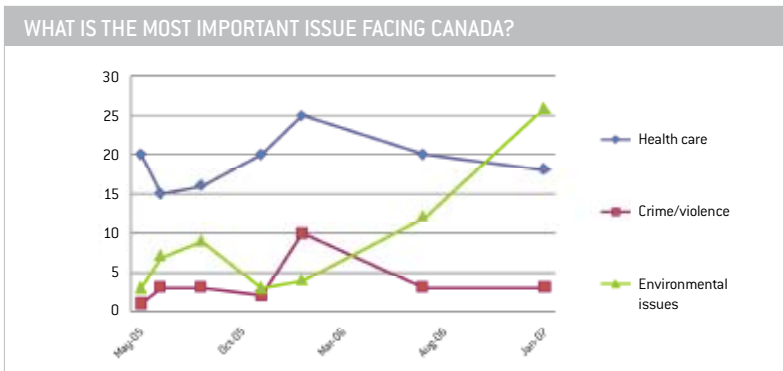
> THE TIMES HAVE ALREADY CHANGED

I am operating on two premises: First, to paraphrase Bob Dylan, the times they aren't a changing. They've already changed. Today you can look at the Toronto Star or the Globe and Mail and usually find a front page story that shows that we live in environmental times. Even Preston Manning has been writing and speaking extensively from his point of view about the importance of the environment.

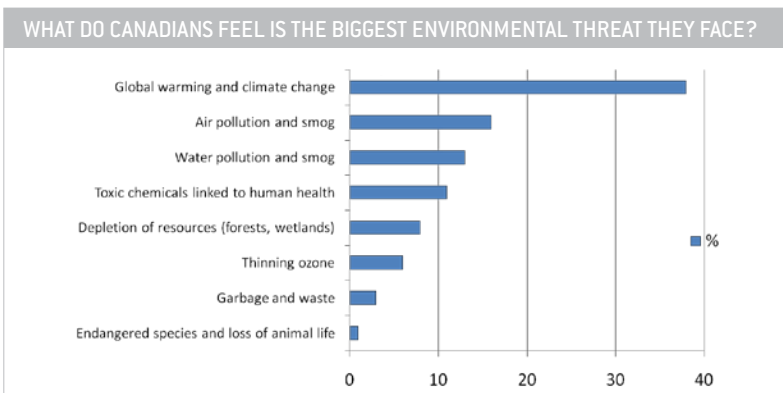
My second premise is that municipalities have a lot more power than most people think they do. We should all have a copy of the Sierra Legal Defence Fund – now Ecojustice – document entitled the Municipal Powers Report. It talks about the Hudson decision, in which the Supreme Court of Canada upheld the town's bylaw aimed at reducing non-essential pesticide use. The report has some interesting case studies from across the country and underscores the notion that the sky is the limit after the Hudson decision when it comes to what municipal leaders can do. This is a good time to be pushing the envelope.

> THE PUBLIC IS CONCERNED

A Strategic Counsel poll in the Globe and Mail says that environmental issues have shot up in the consciousness of the public. From May 2005 to January 2007 the environment as a top-of-mind issue has gone from about 3 per cent to about 26 per cent. This growth in concern is reflected in the volume of calls we're getting in our office. The weird weather that a lot of people experienced in the winter of 2007, Al Gore's activism on climate change, and other things have created a heightened interest in the environment.



The poll also shows that concern about global warming and pollution is driving this heightened interest, rather than other environmental issues. The poll shows that 76 per cent of Canadians are willing to pay to have their house retrofitted, 61 per cent are willing to reduce the amount they drive by half, 73 per cent will reduce the amount they fly. While we can question the sincerity, the sentiment is certainly there.



> THE SIX PRIORITIES FOR ONTARIO

PROTECTION OF THE BOREAL FOREST

The protection of large intact boreal forests is critical to carbon sequestration. These forests contain huge amounts of carbon and Ontario has one of the largest intact boreal forests in the world. We want a land use plan for north of the 50th parallel before there's a stampede for resources.

ENERGY

The supply mix in this province in terms of coal and nuclear power is far from ideal. It needs to change in favour of conservation and renewable energy. There needs to be more emphasis put on conservation and demand management, including incentives for renewable energy and different policies around fossil fuel use.

THE GREAT LAKES

The Great Lakes are a source of drinking water for 80 per cent of Ontarians and are a resource we take for granted. We are a signatory to the Great Lakes Water Quality Agreement and very little happens with it. There's been very little improvement in terms of sewage. There are more than 300 invasive species in the Great Lakes and more brought in every year. We are destroying this incredible ecosystem and we have no sense of what the costs will be. We need to pay more attention to the headwaters of our various rivers and we need to pay attention to all the lessons of Walkerton.

GREENBELTS AND URBAN SPRAWL

There's a zoning freeze on 1.8 million acres of land. Greenbelts in other countries give tax advantages to agricultural producers inside the greenbelt boundaries, but we don't. We are looking for that. There are infrastructure problems in the greenbelt. In spite of official greenbelt protection, we aren't seeing much change in terms of expansion of highways and gravel pits. More needs to be done to make greenbelts the centre of natural heritage system planning. And we all know we need to fix the Ontario Municipal Board, and we need to modernize conservation authorities.

Clearly now is the time to be pushing an environmental agenda. The public is hungry for some environmental action and its time we give that to them.

Priorities for Ontario is an initiative that's unprecedented in recent times. It is supported by almost every major environmental movement in the province. We took the leaders of 14 major environmental groups and argued our varying priorities down to six. We wanted a short list of priorities to put on the table with the political parties in advance of the October 2007 Ontario election. Interestingly, the Conservative platform for the election responded directly to this demand set.

> SOME ENVIRONMENTAL PRIORITIES

I want to recast those provincial priorities to make them more relevant to a municipal agenda. I have 15 priorities for you to think about.

PRIORITY 1: PROTECT THE GREENBELT

I want to encourage you to think about the greenbelt as a powerful anti-sprawl brand. Developers in southern Ontario have spent huge sums of money trying to defeat the greenbelt, limit its size, and undermine it. It is a powerful brand for good that, according to the Toronto Star,

The Six Priorities for Ontario, continued

TOXICS AND CANCER CAUSING POLLUTION

Almost half of US states have toxic use reduction laws, which focus on cancer-causing pollutants. We're looking to bring that approach to Ontario and ban the worst toxins. We have to look at these agents in consumer products too, such as baby bottles.

WASTE ISSUES

A lot of communities in the province have a lot of work to do to put the three Rs first. There's no reason why we shouldn't have a packaging reduction law and full life cycle product responsibility. After you've finished composting and finished recycling, you're left with packaging. Incineration is not a good option.

has 89 per cent of the public's support. Associating our arguments with the greenbelt will strengthen them. The greenbelt is a brand and we should use it.

PRIORITY 2: OPPOSE HIGHWAY EXPANSION

A whole new set of 400-series highways and highway extensions are being proposed, and these proposals contained in the Places to Grow plan will encourage urban sprawl. We need to halt these proposals and promote transit in their place.

PRIORITY 3: PROTECT LAKE SIMCOE

In the Lake Simcoe area, we are proposing a Lake Simcoe Conservation Act to encourage conservation regimes and watershed planning as a way to deal with relentless sprawl.

PRIORITY 4: DETOXIFY

Environmental Defence has been testing the blood of well-known Canadians for pollution. We've tested federal and provincial environment ministers, we've tested Robert Bateman, we've tested families across the country and compared levels of toxins in kids with those of their parents. We've often found that kids are more polluted than their parents. This defeats the idea being propagated by various governments that there is progress being made on pollution. Our kids have higher levels of many pollutants than we do. Little has gotten better with our pollution laws in recent years.

PRIORITY 5: ADOPT A PESTICIDE BYLAW

Passing pesticide bylaws is critical. Québec now has a province-wide pesticide regime. The pesticide issue developed there in much the same way as the tobacco issue, starting with municipalities and then becoming a provincial issue. We can achieve the same thing in Ontario. I encourage you to expand your pesticide-fighting efforts.

PRIORITY 6: BAN BISPHENOL-A

We need a municipality to ban the chemical Bisphenol-A within its boundaries. It's one of the highest volume chemicals out there. You can even find this chemical in baby bottles. It is going to be one of the hot topics over the next few years.

PRIORITY 7: JOIN THE BLUE FLAG PROGRAM

Environmental Defence runs a program called Blue Flag, which is becoming the acceptable international certification for great swimmable beaches. This program is a way of reconnecting people with their waterfront, getting resources to clean up waterfronts, and promote water quality. The Clean Water Act has established Source Protection Committees and these will be critical for moving water conservation efforts forward. The development industry and other vested interests are paying a lot of attention to these committees. If we lose control of these committees, we are in trouble.

PRIORITY 8: ADOPT WATER CONSERVATION MEASURES

Some jurisdictions are experimenting with technologies such as permeable pavements, where rainwater can pass through pavement and recharge the water supply. We need to bring these innovations to Ontario.

PRIORITY 9: CLIMATE CHANGE PLANNING

Climate change plans are key. I suggest you load everything into them except the kitchen sink: everything from green roofs to greening your city fleets to improved building codes.

PRIORITY 10: INSTITUTE GREEN BUILDING STANDARDS

It's clear that municipalities have jurisdiction to introduce improvements to the building code beyond what the province is doing.

PRIORITY 11: INTRODUCE COMPREHENSIVE WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

In terms of waste, we estimate that more than half of municipalities are not receiving funds from Waste Diversion Ontario. That likely means that they aren't making much progress on waste diversion issues.

PRIORITY 12: REJECT INCINERATION

Incineration is still being used throughout the province. There's no way to have environmentally friendly incineration.

PRIORITY 13: PROMOTE AND SUPPORT LOCAL AGRICULTURE

We need to return to things that municipalities used to do a lot of, things that seemed quaint but now have assumed renewed importance, and look at the advances that have taken place elsewhere. One of these

things is promoting local food. There are many advantages to local food: it benefits local economies and cuts down on carbon emissions from trucking. The province has put out a Pick Ontario Freshness label and there's room for municipalities to take up this issue. I don't normally associate multinational fruit cartels with forward thinking, but Dole Banana has created a website called doleorganic.com. It has a whole line of certified organic bananas but also a farm labeling system. You can look up the farm number when you buy bananas and get information online about the farm, including ownership and what is being done to raise the bananas organically. If international fruit companies can do this, surely local councils can find ways to connect constituents with local food producers in a real way.

PRIORITY 14: PROVIDE ECONOMIC ADVANTAGES TO LOCAL AGRICULTURE

PRIORITY 15: PLANTING AND PROTECTING TREES

We need to plant lots of trees and stop cutting down the trees we have.

> CONCLUSION

Finally, and this isn't on my list, the Environmental Defence prize for fantastic municipal leadership will go to those municipalities that take the most aggressive action against corporate donations to municipal election campaigns. Corporate political funding is completely out of control. A York University study shows that two-thirds of municipal donations in the Greater Toronto Area come from the development industry. This will ultimately require provincial action but municipalities have tools at their disposal as well.

My grandmother says: "Patience is not always a virtue." I would argue that we're not getting paid to be patient right now. Let's do all the things we can immediately.

> ON LINE RESOURCES

Priorities for Ontario: www.prioritiesforontario.ca

Blue Flag Program for better beaches: www.blueflag.org

Dole Pineapple organic site: www.doleorganic.com

Banning Plastic Bags and Building Environmental Awareness

In early 2007, the town of Leaf Rapids, Manitoba made headlines as the first municipality in North America to ban plastic bags. **BOND RYAN** was the Chief Administrative Officer for Leaf Rapids when the ban was introduced.

> THE TOWN

Leaf Rapids was built in a very green zone in a boreal forest in Northern Manitoba. It is a mining community located 25 km from the mine.

> REDUCING PLASTIC BAG USE WITH A LEVY

The town council wanted to eliminate or reduce waste resulting from single-use plastic bags. Our municipal budget showed that this could be an opportunity to save money that the town had been spending to clean up our community. I wanted to take some of that money and buy reusable bags. If we could get people to use the reusable bags, the town would begin to realize savings.

We've all heard about the three Rs. Bond Ryan has five:

- Reduce
- Reuse
- Recycle
- Refuse
- Replace, if necessary

We considered a tax levy to bring in some funds to help pay for those reusable bags. Looking on the Internet, the only levy that I could find was in Ireland, so I copied that bylaw.

The levy worked to a limited extent. Since it was only a three-cent levy, people didn't mind. If they needed a plastic bag, they were prepared to pay the three cents.

A problem with tax levies on plastic bags such as the three-cent levy we used in Leaf Rapids is that they may not be big enough. For instance, if you have introduced a one-cent tax levy, people are able to take 10 bags and lose just a dime. But make it a 25-cent tax levy like they did in Ireland and four plastic bags buys you a reusable bag. People are able to see the savings so this is one option that might work. The other problem is collecting the levy, however during the six months our tax levy was in place, we had no problems collecting it.

I get a lot of questions about tax levies from municipalities who wonder where the authority exists in the Municipal Act. Tax levies are there, for example for bottles, and we should use them.

> GOING TO THE NEXT STEP

Some time after we introduced the levy, we heard from a company out of Mississauga, Instore Products Limited, which makes shopping bins that reduce the need for plastic bags. They talked to us about what would happen if we went shopping bag free. This encouraged us to take up their challenge. We looked at the Manitoba Municipal Act to see how we could legally ban one-time use plastic shopping bags.



One of the biggest problems facing municipalities across Canada that want to bring in bylaws to restrict or ban plastic bags is finding room in the Municipal Act to be able to do this legally. I found a provision in the Manitoba Municipal Act that told us that if something is a nuisance in the opinion of council, then the council can write a bylaw to ban that nuisance. It's a pretty broad provision in the law.

When the Leaf Rapids council passed the bylaw banning single-use plastic bags in March 2007 and the news hit the media, we had two lawyers call us and say: "I want a copy of this bylaw. You can't do this because it's against the constitution." I haven't heard from them since. I've heard from many lawyers since then, especially lawyers in Ontario who are working for communities and cities that are interested in our initiative.

> THE BENEFITS OF THE BAN

The retailers in town think our bylaw is wonderful. They don't have to buy bags to give away. Instead, they sell reusable bags and can make money, although most retailers sell reusable bags on a break-even basis. One store owner was skeptical at first, wondering if the store would lose business to outsiders if bags weren't given away. But this fear did not become an issue.

MANITOBA MUNICIPAL ACT

Section 233: A by-law under clause 232(1)(c) [activities or things in or on private property] may contain provisions only in respect of:

- (a) the requirement that land and improvements be kept and maintained in a *safe and clean* condition;
- (b) the parking and storing of vehicles, including the number and type of vehicles that may be kept or stored and the manner of parking and storing;
- (c) the removal of top soil; and
- (d) activities or *things* that in the opinion of the council are or could become a *nuisance*, which may include noise, weeds, odours, *unsightly property*, fumes and vibrations. [emphasis added]

> TOWN OF LEAF RAPIDS, BY-LAW NO. 462

Being a By-law of the Town of Leaf Rapids for the establishment of Single Use Plastic Shopping Bags.

WHEREAS Single Use Plastic Shopping Bags are a very visible component of litter throughout the Town of Leaf Rapids, lakeside, trails, roadside and the nuisance grounds;

AND WHEREAS Single Use Plastic Shopping Bags have a negative impact on our wildlife habitat and are not environmentally friendly;

AND WHEREAS the Town of Leaf Rapids incurs a significant cost to clean up the Single Use Plastic Shopping Bags each year;

AND WHEREAS local businesses can reduce merchandise cost by not having to purchase Single Use Plastic Shopping Bags;

AND WHEREAS the Town of Leaf Rapids has provided education to shoppers and school children about the environmental advantages and reduced cost of using reusable shopping bags;

AND WHEREAS by using a multi-use shopping bag, residents are reminded of the positive impact of recycling;

NOW THEREFORE upon passing this By-law, the Council of the Town of Leaf Rapids, enacts as follows:

1. THAT the Town of Leaf Rapids will be Single Use Plastic Shopping Bag free effective April 2, 2007.
2. THAT retailers in the Town of Leaf Rapids will not be permitted to give away or sell plastic shopping bags that are intended for single use.
3. THAT a person who contravenes this By-law of the Town of Leaf Rapids is guilty of an offence and is liable on summary conviction of a fine of not more than \$1000.00.
4. THAT where a contravention continues for more than one day, the person is guilty of a separate offence for each day it continues.
5. THAT on passing of this By-law, By-law No. 457 is hereby rescinded.
6. DONE AND PASSED as a By-law of the Town of Leaf Rapids at the Townsite of Leaf Rapids, in the Province of Manitoba, this 21st day of March, 2007, A.D.

Our residents are taking more pride in our community because they're doing something that's good for the environment and certainly our residents are proud to be the first in North America to do this. Because the bags are an environmental issue, people are thinking more about the environment as a result of our initiative. For example, more people are joining our recycling program.

The town is much cleaner following the ban and we expect it to be even cleaner than that over time. The cost for clean-up is reduced this year and next year we should see an even greater reduction in costs.

Our residents are taking more pride in our community because they're doing something that's good for the environment and certainly our residents are proud to be the first in North America to do this.

> MORE WORK TO DO

One of the big things the media questioned was the fine for contravening the bylaw, which is \$1,000 a day. Enforcement for us is simple, because we have only two major stores in our community.

Leaf Rapids is not a plastic bag-free zone. It's a single-use shopping bag free zone. You still get those real thin one-time use bags for meat and dairy products and bulk items. We are looking at options to deal with those bags, but we wanted to start by getting the most unsightly bags away from our environment.

Town of Leaf Rapids, By-law No. 462, continued

Exemptions to the By-Law

- Small plastic bags that are used to store non-packaged goods such as:
 - Dairy products
 - Fruit, vegetables or nuts
 - Confectionery
 - Cooked foods, hot or cold
 - Ice
- Smaller bags for fresh meat, fish, candy and poultry
- Bags that cost more than \$1.50

> THE ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OF PLASTIC BAGS

Here are some statistics to consider: The average family of four uses 1,500 bags a year. One million sea birds and 100,000 sea animals die every year from ingesting plastic. I use these statistics when I talk to school kids. I show them pictures of whales that have died from swallowing plastic bags. The kids think what we have done is wonderful.

In the United States consumers go through 100 billion plastic bags a year, which is equivalent to 12 million barrels of oil. In Canada, the statistic is 15 billion bags a year. So dealing with plastic bags can make a big impact on our landfills and our environment.

The polls show that about 75 to 80 per cent of Canadians are ready to make changes like getting rid of plastic bags. If that many people make that change then we will make a big dent in the use of bags. It's certainly going to happen in the US as well, since San Francisco and other communities are looking at reducing and banning one-time use plastic bags.

> INDUSTRY DOESN'T LIKE THE BAN

The plastic bag industry doesn't like us at all. If you can take away 80 per cent of 115 billion bags, they are going to fight it.

When I hear criticism of our decision, my rebuttal is that we did it to reduce costs. We didn't start out to help the environment. But when we realized that plastic bags have a huge environmental impact, we started looking at this as an issue not just for Leaf Rapids, but as one that involves all of North America.

> NEXT STEPS

We are thinking about biodegradable options to plastic bags. We are looking at a bag made of corn starch and cooking oil, which after about two weeks in the landfill begins to break down. There are also biodegradable alternatives to disposable diapers and dog waste bags. We are still doing research on biodegradable bags, because there are some questions about them.

> ON-LINE RESOURCE

Bring your own bag: www.bringyourbag.com

Community Right-to-Know Bylaws

Fighting Pollution By Disclosure

KATRINA MILLER is Campaigns Director for the Toronto Environmental Alliance

We in the Toronto Environmental Alliance are working with the City of Toronto to bring in a Community Right-to-know Bylaw. This is a type of bylaw that most people probably haven't heard about, because it doesn't yet exist in Canada. Once this bylaw is in place in Toronto we hope that other communities will replicate it.

Community right-to-know is a very broad term. In the context of the bylaw we are planning to introduce, a community's right-to-know is about the use and release of toxic substances in neighbourhoods and workplaces.

We want disclosure of toxic chemicals that can turn up in our products, in our homes, in our air and our water, and even in our blood. A community right-to-know bylaw relates to how much we are allowed to know about where those chemicals are coming from and why they are being used.

> BENEFITS OF RIGHT-TO-KNOW

The benefits of community right-to-know are pretty obvious. If you are a resident and you see a great big factory nearby, you can telephone or get on the Internet and find out what's coming out of the stack of that factory and you can use that information to raise your concerns in an informed and eloquent manner. We want to use that information so that we can go and talk to industry and be somewhere on an even footing with them.

Community right-to-know and disclosure of toxic chemical use have shown time and time again that they lead to significant reductions in toxic releases. Experience has taught us that community right-to-know leads to pollution reduction, which leads to cost savings most of the time for the business. That cost saving causes the business to be more sustainable and more viable in the long term.

> MAPPING TORONTO TOXICS

Like most major cities and many smaller centres, Toronto's air, land, and water are burdened by many toxic chemicals. Whether it's because of the disease and death caused by toxic chemicals, or the fact that there are hundreds of spills every year in our city from chemical accidents, toxics are an issue in the City of Toronto.

We found out the following facts about toxics in Toronto:

- 1,700 people/year die prematurely from smog.
- At least nine potent carcinogens are in Toronto's air at unhealthy levels.
- Every year there are hundreds of chemical spills and accidents.
- In 2003 more than 7,000 tonnes of toxic chemicals were reported as having been released into Toronto's air, land, and water.
- Reported releases are rising in Toronto and elsewhere in Canada.

We began our campaign by trying to represent how we are burdened by toxic chemicals in the City of Toronto and give people a visual ability to see that burden. We came up with a map that shows people the reported completely legal toxic chemical releases by air, land, and water in the City of Toronto. The map shows the 7,000 tonnes of toxic chemicals – that we know about – that are reported through Environment

Canada's National Pollutant Release Inventory. These toxic chemicals are released in people's neighbourhoods, near their workplaces and inside their workplaces. There are about 11,000 facilities in Toronto that use and release toxic chemicals. Only 3 per cent of them report that use and only report around 20 to 50 per cent of their actual pollution. This means that there is a massive unknown about how the chemicals in our air are getting there, where they are coming from, and the dangers that they present to our neighbourhoods right now.

Nowhere in Canada is there any mandatory reporting of the use, production, or storage of chemicals. That's a problem for all of our communities. It's a problem for workers, because unfortunately neither the Ontario Health and Safety Act nor the Workplace Hazardous Materials Reporting System do an adequate job of protecting workers.

Toxic chemicals are also a problem for firefighters and other first responders when they go to an accident. They don't have reliable information letting them know what they're walking into when they enter a facility that's on fire, or a facility where there's been a spill. This has become a major issue for firefighters throughout the Greater Toronto Area, who are really pushing for more information about what is stored where.

Nowhere in Canada is there any mandatory reporting of the use, production, or storage of chemicals. That's a problem for all of our communities.

> STARTING WITH COMMUNITY FEEDBACK

The bylaw we are working for is based on the idea that the community has a right-to-know what chemicals they are being exposed to, where they are coming from, why they are being used, and some potential ways of reducing their impact. One of the ways we've been trying to really engage communities in Toronto about this problem is to get people to look around their neighbourhoods to find what kinds of facilities exist, especially facilities about which there is little information and serious concerns about what is going on inside.

We embarked on a project where we asked residents to take pictures and tell us their stories. In response we got pictures back from community groups of an abattoir with a smokestack in a residential area in downtown Toronto. We also got photos of an ice-making plant with

odd-looking bins and strange substances. People wondered about dry cleaners that advertise themselves as being solvent-free.

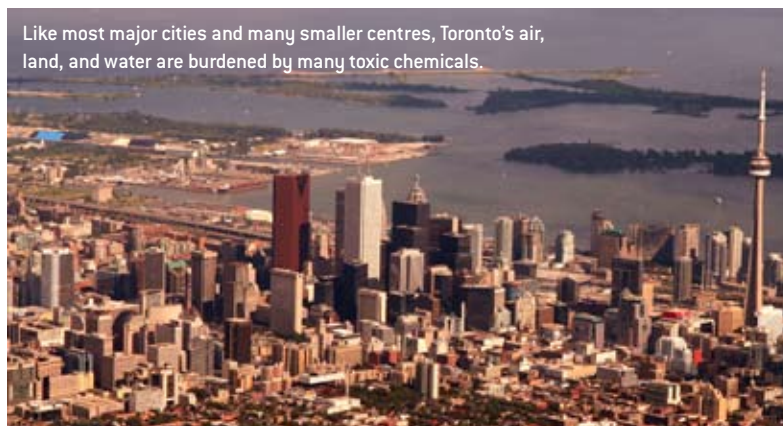
We're going to make an interactive website of Toronto with the pictures and stories and then begin conversations with the facilities involved on behalf of the residents. We will send the questions from the residents to the facilities and let the communities know what the answers are. This is one way we're trying to engage communities and begin conversations with some of these facilities to see if they'll voluntarily disclose some of that information.

> THE CAMPAIGN IN TORONTO

The City of Toronto is heading toward a more mandatory approach to community right-to-know. In 2000 the city council actually committed to adopting a community right-to-know bylaw that empowers community members to know the locations, sources, and health effects of toxins in their neighbourhoods.

We had been working to get that bylaw passed, but we put it aside for a time because we got distracted with another campaign. Later on we came back to the idea of community right-to-know in the Riverdale-Beaches area to show that there was a real need for community right-to-know and that communities wanted it.

Our campaign triggered a second stage of action. We are expecting a thorough report from the City of Toronto Public Health Department, which we believe will likely recommend a mandatory approach to community right-to-know with a bylaw.



> RIGHT-TO-KNOW IN THE UNITED STATES

There are lots of success stories about community right-to-know, but unfortunately none of them so far are in Canada. This is a movement that comes from the United States, in states such as Massachusetts, that have had wonderful success. In 12 years the Massachusetts Toxic Use Reduction Act has caused the use of toxic chemicals to fall by 42 per cent and a reduction in releases of 92 per cent. That's massive and the reduction itself is voluntary. The disclosure is mandatory and the reduction is voluntary. New Jersey and California also have community right-to-know laws.

There are also municipal right-to-know laws in the United States. New York City is the best-known example. Eugene, Oregon has one of the most comprehensive laws on disclosure and it's a town of 140,000. So if Eugene, Oregon can do it, certainly the City of Toronto and other municipalities can do it.

In 12 years the Massachusetts Toxic Use Reduction Act has caused the use of toxic chemicals to fall by 42 per cent and a reduction in releases of 92 per cent. That's massive and the reduction itself is voluntary.

> COST SAVINGS FOR BUSINESS

The traditional viewpoint is that pollution prevention is going to cost lots of money. It's true that initially there will be up-front costs because owners have to go into their facilities and spend money and time to track and audit their use and releases of toxic chemicals. However facility operators often find that they are either using more of a toxic chemical than they actually need, or that the chemical isn't being used in an efficient way, and its release is unnecessary. By halting or reducing the use of these chemicals, facility operators save money by not having to buy that toxic chemical any more and by no longer having the liability of that toxic chemical in their facility. For example, the Canadian Auto Workers audited one of their workplaces and found a very carcinogenic solvent that they were using to clean some of their machinery. They brought this matter to the attention of the company and pointed out that the solvent was very expensive to buy, handle, and dispose of because it is considered toxic, hazardous waste. They also found out that they

could get the same job done with soap and water. That is much cheaper and doesn't have a liability associated with it.

In Massachusetts people are finding that the average business savings from the pollution prevention that is triggered by disclosure and tracking is between \$60,000 and \$100,000 per facility, which is considerable. Cost savings from chemical disclosure has been a very important argument in Toronto, where we are losing some of our good jobs in the manufacturing sector. We have been very careful to ensure that our push for a community right-to-know bylaw is complementary to the idea of keeping good industry in Toronto.

> BUILDING A COALITION

Because we use both the health message and the economic development message, we have a broad coalition of people that is pushing for this bylaw in Toronto. We have environmental groups, cancer prevention

“Community right-to-know is simply our inherent right-to-know in a democratic society. It's ridiculous that we don't know about toxic chemicals. The health result of this is that you get some major pollution prevention.”

groups, firefighters, labour groups, and worker health and safety clinics who support community right-to-know. Twenty residents' associations have formally signed on to a position statement on community right-to-know. Getting that much support is really hard to do, because residents'

associations don't meet that often. We even have some community-minded and green-minded businesses that are now writing letters in support of this.

We've gained a broad coalition of support and I would suggest that when you try to promote community right-to-know in your communities, you first look for that broad coalition of support. This is a very basic principle and a very basic right. Most people believe strongly that it is their right-to-know and are willing to support the community right-to-know initiative, if you are able to show how it connects to their lives.

> START BY ENGAGING YOUR COMMUNITY

To enhance community right-to-know in your area, you don't need to start with a bylaw. What you really need to do at the beginning is to engage your community, first by making information that you have more available and accessible. Municipalities receive large amounts of environmental information, whether it is tests on brownfield sites, water quality tests, air monitoring tests, or certificate of approval applications that come through. You can also make more information available at the school board level.

You also need to talk to the public about the information that you don't have and find out what information they really want, so you can move on to the next step, which is link disclosure to existing environmental concerns. In Toronto the main concern today is air quality. The bylaw that I think we will see in Toronto will emphasize air quality and chemicals that are in our air at unhealthy levels, including chemicals that cause smog and global warming.

If you are interested in bringing in a bylaw, ensure that you have jurisdictional authority. We have used a general review conducted by the Canadian Environmental Law Association and found that there is broad jurisdictional authority under the same authority that governs pesticide bylaws. That's as far as anyone in Canada has gone so far in terms of looking at jurisdictional authority. We will learn more as we get closer to our goal of bringing a community right-to-know bylaw to Toronto.

> ENGAGE THE COMMUNITY

- Make available information accessible
- Tell the public what they don't know and find out what they want to know.
- Prioritize concern
- What toxic secrets have the biggest impact on the community?
- Collaborate with Broad Allies
- Universal issue can bring wide support
- Establish Jurisdictional Authority if passing bylaws
- Likely same authority that allows for pesticide bylaw adoption.

PESTICIDE BYLAWS

Citizen Action to Ban Pesticide Use

LORI PETERSONE is an elementary school teacher in Peterborough and the co-founder of Pesticides Beware, a local citizens' group.

In 2005 the City of Peterborough passed a bylaw that effectively bans the use of pesticides inside its boundaries. This bylaw was passed after a lengthy process that involved local citizens working together with environmental groups. This is the story about how we made it happen.

I am not a politician – I am a citizen who is concerned about pesticide use. In March 2001, I attended a pesticide seminar put on by Peterborough Green-Up, a wonderful non-profit environmental organization that runs a number of environmental programs in Peterborough. The seminar had some great speakers, including Janet May from the Toronto Environmental Alliance, a doctor, a former pesticide applicator turned organic farmer, and an organic landscaper. They spoke to a full house of people concerned about pesticides.

Many of us were very moved by the presentations and at the end of the evening, Patricia Dixon and I organized a group called Pesticides Beware. We had 60 people sign up that evening. From that initial meeting, about 10 or 12 people met regularly every couple of weeks to drive the project. In the first year, we worked to educate the public and elected officials.

During that year we printed and sent out a flyer to almost every home in the city that we funded through a sale of perennials at my home. The flyer outlined the harmful effects of pesticides and explained alternative lawn care practices and products.

> PETITION DRIVE

One of our main goals was to collect signatures on a petition and in our first year we collected 4,000 signatures in the City of Peterborough, which has a population of 70,000 people.

Wherever we could, we got out and ran tables, talked to people and collected signatures. During these activities we used information produced by Green-Up, including their Pesticide-Free Naturally kit. We went to events like the Saturday Farmers' Market, the Love of Gardening Show, and the Buckhorn Health Fair with positive results. Many people really wanted to see something done about the spraying of pesticides in Peterborough.

Patricia Dixon and I also emailed and phoned councillors in Peterborough regularly. We received a great deal of information by email from Mike Christie, an activist on the pesticide issue who is based in Ottawa. We didn't send along all of Mike's emails to the councillors, but we talked to them about the more important ones. We kept them informed and let them know that we were not going away.

Pesticides Beware made a PowerPoint presentation to the Peterborough Health Unit to win their support. That same year our Member of Parliament read our petition in the House of Commons and we were interviewed a number of times by the media. We were getting our message out.



> GOING TO CITY HALL

In the spring of 2002 two councillors invited us to come to city hall to meet them. They suggested we go to Peterborough City Council's next meeting and ask that they form a pesticide committee to work on the pesticide issue. We thought that was a good start and the city set up a pesticide committee that year.

The committee was composed of 13 members, chosen by the city from a pool of applicants. I was the only person formally representing Pesticides Beware. There were three pesticide applicators and several people who were in the middle on this issue. They were interested, but wanted to learn more. This committee would meet about every two weeks and we educated each other with presentations. I shared information on the harmful effects of pesticides and alternative lawn care practices and products.

A year later, the committee decided that we needed to hold some sort of public forum to see what the rest

"This may be the best pesticide bylaw in North America. Certainly it's the strongest in Canada."

– Paul Muldoon, Executive Director of the Canadian Environmental Law Association

of the city thought about pesticides. The response was substantial. A large number of people came out to the forum and more people wanted to speak than we had time for, so we met a second night. Ninety per cent of the presenters were there to support a pesticide bylaw.

> MOVING BEYOND THE COMMITTEE

Meanwhile, the work of the pesticide committee had become a very frustrating process. We rarely came to a consensus on anything because the two sides were so divided. The one thing we did agree on was that pesticide use should be reduced in Peterborough. We worked for two years on the pesticide committee and wrote four different drafts of our report intended to go to city hall.

In the summer of 2004, I received a call from Gideon Forman, the Executive Director of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment (CAPE), who had heard about our work in Peterborough and offered to help us. I eagerly accepted Gideon's offer, put the word out to Pesticides Beware members, and a group of 21 met in my backyard

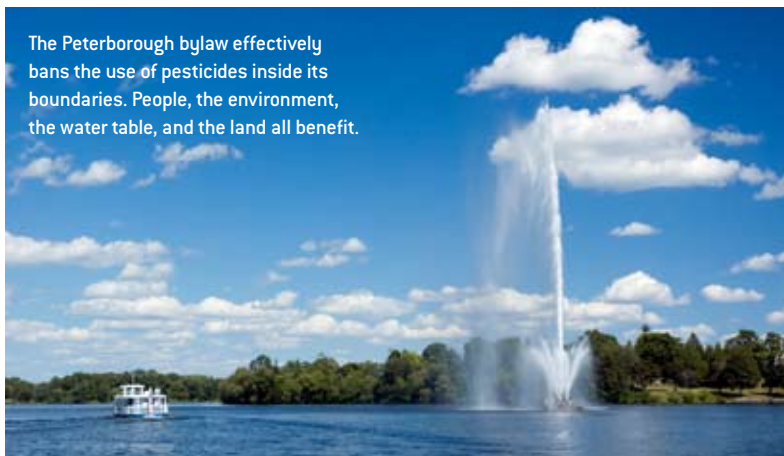
on a beautiful July afternoon with Gideon Forman and Janet May. We agreed to work together to get city council to pass a pesticides bylaw for Peterborough.

> GETTING A BYLAW

At Gideon's suggestion, we formed a core group of five people to work on our mission. We met regularly at my home and Gideon came from Toronto to help with planning, strategy, messaging, and media. He had CAPE commission an opinion poll through Oraclepoll Research, which showed that 84 per cent of citizens in our community wanted a complete phase-out of pesticides.

We also began lobbying councillors individually, using the poll results and a 10-minute video presentation CAPE had produced, called 'Lawn and Garden Pesticides: Reducing Harm.' We also gave councillors the April 2004 Ontario College of Family Physicians research paper that discusses the health effects of pesticides. Gideon encouraged us to find a champion on council and a councillor did come forward who gave us a lot of valuable insight into what was happening on council.

On the Pesticides Committee I often found myself in the minority when we voted on recommendations. At the end, the majority of committee members voted to support a voluntary 50 per cent reduction in pesticide use over four years. That was too little and too long a time for Pesticides Beware. Thankfully, the committee recommended that there be a month-long public input phase where the public could pick up a copy of the report, review it, and give feedback.



> CITY OF PETERBOROUGH, BYLAW NO. 05-077

(As amended by 06-056)

BEING A BY-LAW TO REGULATE THE USE OF PESTICIDES WITHIN THE CITY OF PETERBOROUGH THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF PETERBOROUGH BY THE COUNCIL THEREOF HEREBY ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

WHEREAS Section 130 of the *Municipal Act, 2001* authorizes the City to enact by-laws which provide for the protection of the “health, safety and well-being” of City residents;

AND WHEREAS the Council of the City of Peterborough desires to respond to the concerns expressed by City residents about the health risks associated with the use of pesticides;

AND WHEREAS regulating the non-essential use of pesticides will help to promote and protect the health of City residents.

NOW THEREFORE THE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF PETERBOROUGH BY ITS COUNCIL ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

Definitions:

In this by-law, the following word has the following meaning:

I.P.M. accredited groundskeeper – means a person who:

- (a) obtains and maintains accreditation in a recognized integrated pest management programme from the Audubon Cooperative Sanctuary System of Canada, or equivalent, as determined by the City; and
- (b) provides proof of I.P.M. accreditation to the City Clerk on or before January 31st of each year.

By-law 05-077 is hereby amended by deleting the definition of pesticide in Article 1, and substituting the following therefore:

pesticide – means any substance, other than a substance derived from plants, plant extracts, fatty acids, iron phosphate, sulphur, mineral oil, borax or microbial pest control agents, which is intended to:

- (a) control, destroy, reduce, or repel, directly or indirectly, an animal, plant or other organism which is harmful or annoying to a human being;
or
- (b) inhibit or prevent the growth of plants.

> CAMPAIGNING AROUND COMPROMISE

In October 2004 the pesticide committee report went to city council. At the same time, I prepared a minority report stating my feelings about the report, which was put into councillors' mailboxes the same day as the final pesticide committee report.

City of Peterborough, Bylaw No. 05-077, continued

OFFENCE

The application or use of a pesticide is prohibited within the boundaries of the City of Peterborough.

EXCEPTIONS

Notwithstanding Article 2, it is permitted to apply or use a pesticide in the following cases:

- (a) In a public or private swimming pool;
- (b) To purify water for human or animal use;
- (c) Inside of a building;
- (d) On land used for the commercial production of food;
- (e) To control, destroy, reduce or repel, directly or indirectly, an animal, plant or other organism which is harmful to human health; or
- (f) On a golf course, provided that after March 1st, 2007, any such use or application is permitted only under the direction of an I.P.M. accredited groundskeeper.

PENALTY

Any person who contravenes this by-law is guilty of an offence and, upon conviction, is liable to a fine or penalty provided for in the *Provincial Offences Act*, as amended.

EFFECTIVE DATE

This By-law comes into force and effect on March 1, 2006.

By-law read a first and second time this 2nd day of May 2005

By-law read a third time and finally passed this 2nd day of May 2005.

*Sylvia Sutherland, Mayor
Nancy Wright-Laking, City Clerk*

During the public input phase, Pesticides Beware really got working and created a form letter calling for a pesticide bylaw. We went out to the malls and to public events and got help from nurses at Trent University. In the end we got 1,900 form letters signed by people who wanted a bylaw. We also still had our petition from earlier in the campaign, which hadn't yet been submitted to city hall. At the end of the month-long public input phase, we had almost 6,000 signatures calling for a pesticide bylaw in Peterborough. Only one person submitted a letter to city hall against having a pesticide bylaw.

When the pesticide committee was brought to council in February 2005, one of the committee chairs stood up and recommended that the report be accepted, but he also raised the results of the public input. Council had heard a number of speakers on both sides of the issue, and the evening ended with the councillors voting eight to one against the committee report, deciding instead to look at a pesticide bylaw at the next council meeting.

"This is a major victory. It means over 70,000 residents have strong protection against toxic lawn chemicals. Lots of politicians talk about protecting children. Mayor Sutherland and council have actually done something about it." – Dr. Kapil Khatter, president of the Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment

I provided city hall with bylaws from Halifax, Toronto,

and Hudson, Quebec. Our Pesticides Beware core group then met with Gideon from CAPE and wrote up a sample pesticide bylaw that was as simple and clear as possible. Gideon met with the city solicitors, they tweaked it a little bit, and the bylaw was written.

> THE BYLAW PASSES

In May 2005 city council voted unanimously in favour of the bylaw. That evening one councillor succeeded in getting an exemption for golf courses put into the bylaw. Even with that exemption, it is still an excellent bylaw.

The Peterborough Pesticides Bylaw became effective 10 months later in March 2006. Council agreed to fund an education component, understanding that pesticide bylaws work better in conjunction with an

education campaign than on their own. Council agreed to spend \$60,000 on education and Green-Up was chosen to do the job.

After the bylaw was put in place, two of the councillors came to me and said how impressed they were by how calm and reasonable we remained when delivering our message to council. We were never angry or hostile in any way. That level-headed approach worked in Peterborough. Councillors and citizens appreciated that kind of approach when we talked to them.

It is a short, simple, and clear bylaw. It is balanced because it protects residents against unnecessary spraying of toxic chemicals, but it also allows them to use them if there's something that affects their health, like poison ivy, rats, or harmful infestations.

> ENFORCEMENT AND EDUCATION

Green-Up did a great job in the education campaign, which included workshops for lawn care professionals and homeowners, two cable television shows, a school poster contest, and a full-colour guidebook and a fall lawn care fact sheet that went to all homes in Peterborough.

Enforcement of the bylaw is triggered by reporting possible infractions to city hall. The legal department sends out a letter to the person who is reported to be using pesticides promising that Green-Up will be contacting them to provide help with their lawn or garden. If the person complies with the bylaw, that's the end of the matter. If there's continued pesticide use, then the city legal department will seek evidence for court action. Anyone convicted under the bylaw can be fined up to \$5,000.

Adults, children, the elderly, and pets all benefit from reduced pesticide use, along with wildlife, insects, and birds. The environment, the water table, and the land all benefit. We are proud of our work to establish Peterborough's pesticide bylaw.

> RESOURCES

Peterborough Green-Up: www.greenup.on.ca

Canadian Association of Physicians for the Environment: www.cape.ca



PART 3

Building Strong and Sustainable Neighbourhoods Through Citizen Action

Building strong and sustainable communities requires effective leadership as well as an active and engaged citizenry. This section begins with a fresh perspective from one of the most inspiring community engagement experts in the US. The remainder of the section looks at five examples where neighbourhoods and communities have mobilized, with exciting and inspiring results.

Community Engagement

Building a Community Voice

GARLAND YATES is one of the foremost figures in community mobilization and democratic action in the United States. He is well known for the work he did through the Annie E. Casey Foundation. Following the destruction caused by Hurricane Katrina in 2005, he has been involved with facilitating direct action in the reconstruction of New Orleans.

> POWER IN PEOPLE

There is real power in people and I have seen in my life that real change can happen when people get together and decide that it's time to change: kids become better educated, neighbourhoods become safer over decades and not just during a particular crime initiative.

These things happen when people decide that they aren't going to accept the status quo and they decide that they are going to change. In my work, I have not seen a program that can make positive change in troubled families without taking account of the family itself, and in the larger context, without taking into account the community in which people live.

In our country elected officials look at community groups as a threat. That's for good reason: it's because they make elected officials more

accountable. But those officials who have an agenda of change find that these groups are invaluable allies.

I believe that the power of people is essential in making change in a community, but I don't for a minute believe that they can do it by themselves. I don't for a moment believe that they can do it without the help of local government and in most of the cases that I've been working on, the institution with the greatest resources and the greatest clout is government. For community change, we have to end up in a place where we have a solid relationship with local government and local officials in particular.

> COOPERATION IS ESSENTIAL

The strength and sustainability of any community change ultimately depends on the willingness and ability of individual residents to cooperate with each other on matters of mutual interest and take control of their community. The very first reason that people organize is to take control of their neighbourhood to make it safe for their kids.

Social and economic alienation and isolation is a major reason for the decline of many neighbourhoods. People don't talk to each other and most of the time they are overwhelmed with fear. They don't come out at night. They don't go to community meetings. They don't let their kids go to the playground. That results in isolation: people live next door to each other and don't know each other.

Overcoming that isolation is essential in building a neighbourhood and that's the first step in our strategy. When we go in and help rebuild the community, the first thing we want to do is get people interacting with each other. Helping people break down isolation not only helps them get acquainted with each other but also helps people share their knowledge, which is a valuable resource. Getting people talking to each other and working with each other will help them improve their lives.

In our country elected officials look at community groups as a threat. That's for good reason: it's because they make elected officials more accountable. But those officials who have an agenda of change find that these groups are invaluable allies.

> HOW CAN WE HELP?

As outsiders, we asked ourselves how we could make these things happen. How could we encourage people to interact more with each other? The most logical thing was to go to people in the neighbourhood who had histories of interaction. That involved reaching out to community organizers and to community organizations.

Community organizing is controversial, so it's not every day that a big foundation is going to put resources into community organizing. In some places, there's a weird belief that these groups undermine democracy, when in reality there is no democracy without them.

After having worked in projects in Denver, Boston, and Detroit when I was at the Annie E. Casey Foundation, I learned that there are two factors that influence the willingness of people in neighbourhoods to get involved in local affairs. One factor is the burden of participation, which includes money and time and things like child care. The second factor is self-esteem; how people feel about themselves, their children, and their neighbourhood.

In a neighbourhood that has a lot of needs, people are going to be troubled with a lot of negative feeling about themselves. We know that connecting with the people that do the organizing and then working on the problems that form the barriers to participating are things to do right away. These were things that the Casey Foundation had never funded before. That was unheard of – funding things like child care and transportation was considered the same as giving out a welfare cheque.

> HIERARCHY OF NEEDS

One elected official in Denver told me that people have to deal with their immediate needs first before they can engage in neighbourhood affairs, something like Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Before this official understood this, he was surprised that people didn't come out when he called a community meeting. His understanding of that made him a more useful ally in getting neighbourhoods involved.

We found it useful to step back and take a look at what would encourage people to get engaged in their neighbourhoods. Some of the barriers are short term and some are long term. But then there are other characteristics that we had to understand so we wouldn't make things

worse. We had to understand as best we could the characteristics and composition of these neighbourhoods. Sometimes you have people who have immigrated from other parts of the world and you sometimes have groups that have migrated from other parts of the country. Understanding who was in these neighbourhoods was absolutely crucial.

We needed to find some targets of opportunity. That meant learning about neighbourhood events and celebrations, where people went and where they felt safe, and what organizations people felt were legitimate. We had to understand these things at a basic level before we took any steps to do anything in these neighbourhoods. We had to learn which events were part of a series of events, as opposed to a one-time event.

How do we get that knowledge? We sat down with the residents and asked them how we could learn about their community and create opportunities for them. In one neighbourhood in Denver a group had gone to Appalachia to learn about story circles, where people got together and talked about their experiences. These people were so impressed they wrote a study guide about story circles and used it as a tool.

They came to us and said, “Why don’t you let us spend some money on things we think are important?” They were interested in cutting crime, strengthening families, and getting youth out of trouble. The list of activities they proposed to deal with these goals didn’t go over well at the Foundation headquarters, but we set aside \$100,000 to help them. Most of what they did with the money was social. They formed block clubs and they held multicultural dinners. They also designed Spanish classes to allow African-Americans and Vietnamese-Americans to communicate with Spanish speakers and they designed English classes so that the Spanish speakers could communicate with the Vietnamese-Americans and the African-Americans. They asked a local resource centre to help them create a good neighbourhood resource guide to better understand the neighbourhood and better talk to each other. So here we had three groups using this money to become familiar with each other’s language and culture so that they could learn to work together. That would never have come from us.

“Sometimes we have gone into neighbourhoods and tried to do too much. Sometimes we have underestimated the knowledge and understanding of local people and sometimes we have underestimated the impact of what outsiders say about a community. The biggest sin is not trusting the people in the neighbourhood.”

> CREATING A NEIGHBOURHOOD VOICE

When you get people talking and interacting with each other, that's a good first step. Then how do you get people talking so that they can create what we call a neighbourhood voice? We wanted them to think collectively about community problems. How do we help them without intruding on them or manipulating them? How do we encourage them to work together and create an authentic voice? Somewhere, leadership has to show up. Anything that happens in the community has to have a centre. The authenticity of potential leaders was an issue that arose immediately.

One thing that people said to us about leadership was that there are too many gatekeepers, people who are anointed by outsiders because their views served the interests of outsiders. So we first had to deal with that fear. The fear of gatekeeping reflects a concern that someone might define and promote an agenda that reflects the agenda maker's personal interests rather than those of the community.

> REPLENISHING LEADERSHIP

We have to remember that leadership needs to be constantly replenished. People come and people go. Someone can become a leader in a school, for example, but may be forced to step back if something happens to his or her family.

Constant investments have to be made. Community organizers have to be funded, as controversial as that can be. What we all want is a model of leadership that reflects the community.

The first thing that we must recognize is that leadership should be representative, even if it is adversarial and works against the interest of the funding foundation. This of course wasn't easy for me to sell at the Casey Foundation. When people get organized and become powerful, we have to be ready for the possibility that the power will be exercised within their close relationships, not directed at some distant place.

Leadership development can be a double-edged sword. On one side there is the establishment of people in positions of power and influence and on the other side monitoring how and in whose interest that power is used. On one hand, we have to build leaders that have power and are authentic, and on the other hand, we have to make sure that they are

accountable to the residents under them and that they don't stray into the realm of gatekeeping for their own agendas

> TRAINING LEADERS

At the Casey Foundation we believed that the constant recruitment and training of new leaders mitigated the concentration of power and influence in the pursuit of individual agendas. There were three means we used to create an authentic community voice. The first was creating and supporting leadership development that was authentic and true. The second was leadership training so that these new leaders could understand that effective leaders require a following to which they are accountable. The third was understanding that the real work of community organizing was not just going to happen: we had to fund it.

If you go to a community and you help it get organized and ask it what it wants, then you had better be prepared to give it to them or work with them to help them get it. When you ask the question, you've got to be accountable for the results. The results can be powerful. A politician in Denver who listened to what people in his community wanted was able to help create a very strong partnership that enabled him to make even bigger reforms than he had expected to be able to make. We learned that helping residents help themselves is the core ingredient of community organizing. This reflects what Saul Alinsky once said: "Never do for people what they can do for themselves."

"As a progressive, I believe that elected leaders have to come together with the people in the community who will have to live with the consequences of decisions that are made and I believe that organized labour should be represented. I do not believe that working people can have a just place in their communities if they are not organized around their common interests and those interests have to go beyond collective bargaining."

> LAYING FOUNDATIONS FOR CHANGE

Once we've gotten people to interact with each other and to think collectively, how does all that get converted into an agenda for change that is doable, to which people in the neighbourhood feel accountable, and to which they can make others in their community accountable?

Interaction and engagement cannot be ends unto themselves. They must become the foundation upon which neighbourhoods organize for long term sustainable change. The challenge is one of gathering the right information and creating the consensus for an agenda that addresses community concerns. This involves seeing what individual concerns will rise to the level of community concerns that become catalysts for action.

> THRESHOLD CONDITIONS

How can we frame those concerns so they become a framework for getting things done? Our work in this area involves examining two sets of threshold conditions. One of them is making residents feel that they

Some neighbourhoods are poor and some are in desperate need, but when people come together, there is no question about the difference they can make by using their collective wisdom and collective power.

are going to be heard in the public discourse. The other is that people need to know what will happen with the information they give. How will it be used? If residents are satisfied then they will likely want to work with others.

In this case, we are talking about communities working with public officials, which is the most important constituency to which communities

have to reach out. We can stop some kids from criminal activity, but we can't reduce the crime rate without the police department. We can help individual kids, but we can't improve the educational system for our kids without working with that system.

In distressed communities that may lack social organization, the mechanisms required to support community agenda building are often weak or absent. In the communities we're talking about, when you go about building a community agenda for action, the infrastructure and

resources are not there. These communities require help to develop the means to exchange information.

> INFORMAL WORK

We should work beyond social interaction to develop issue recognition and consensus building. A resident-friendly environment must be created for information sharing and consensus building and action. As much as possible must be done that's non-hierarchical. At the end of the day, people must know that we are being sincere and accountable.

Another way to encourage this is to sponsor informal opportunities for change such as story circles, multicultural dinners, block parties, etc. People just want to talk about what's on their minds. Social events can attract larger numbers of people without emphasizing the attendance of certain people. They bring everybody together.

In addition to these informal meetings, there is a need for focused discussion of topical events. We ought to do both, but we need to be strategic about when we do them.

> CONCLUSION

Community building involves some art, but you have to be direct and strategic and you have to be willing to invest in it. Where there's a healthy neighbourhood infrastructure that engages people around things they care about, those neighbourhoods tend to be healthier by far. Some neighbourhoods are poor and some are in desperate need, but when people come together, there is no question about the difference they can make by using their collective wisdom and collective power.

When other people are open to working with them and putting up with the headaches and accepting the fact that we don't know it all and that the people here are experts in their own way, there is the joy of making and sustaining change. If we want to make life better for these people, it is worth the journey.

Strong and Sustainable Neighbourhoods

Responding to Community Needs in Kingston

CAROLYN DAVIES is Director of Community Health Services at Kingston Community Health Centres.

ELAINE RADWAY has worked in the community development field for many years and has worked over the past few years with members of Kingston Community Health Centres.

Community health centres are holistic in their orientation, and therefore focus not only on primary health care for individuals, but also on taking care of community-wide health issues. In this article, Carolyn Davies and Elaine Radway show how a community health centre in Kingston supported the development of a vital neighbourhood-based and managed community centre in response to the city's decision to close down the neighbourhood arena.

> RIDEAU HEIGHTS

One of the arenas slated for closure was the Wally Elmer Youth Centre in Rideau Heights and it is there that this project took place. In this part of Kingston, which includes Rideau Heights and adjacent areas, a significant number of families live below the poverty line. The percentage of those living below the poverty line in the surrounding areas ranges between 27 and 42 per cent, compared to 7 to 22 per cent for the rest of the city.

Slightly more than half of the families are led by lone parents. The incidence of obesity in these areas is twice the national average. There are 1,500 children under the age of 14 within 10 blocks of the arena, a very high ratio that is twice the density of the average city neighbourhood. Unlike the rest of Ontario or Canada, the population bulges in the younger demographic. In many ways, this neighbourhood will play a huge role in our future.

There is a high concentration of subsidized housing in the Rideau Heights area, with 500 needy units within 15 blocks of the arena and a lot of privately-owned apartment blocks that cater to lower income residents. There is a low level of home ownership: 28.6 per cent compared to 58.4 for the rest of the city. The residential population is about 6,000, just over 5 per cent of the total city population. The average family income is \$33,585, compared to \$68,396 for the city.

The average family income in Rideau Heights is \$33,585, compared to \$68,396 for all of Kingston.

> ACCESSING SERVICES

People in this part of Kingston have trouble accessing services, which appears to be getting harder as time goes on. The city commissioned a consulting firm to do a report, and in 2004 it recommended closing three arenas, primarily because of the cost of maintaining these older buildings. The city has gone ahead with that plan and is building a recreational multiplex in a suburban location that is probably a 25-minute drive from this neighbourhood.

There has been a lot of negative media coverage on the Rideau Heights area because of its demographics. In spite of that a strong surge of support came out of the neighbourhood to save the arena.

> COMMUNITY HUB WORKING GROUP

As the community health centre in the neighbourhood, we do a lot of community development work and we support a lot of community initiatives. We called a meeting between ourselves and the city. Both the city and CHC agreed to see what we could do to improve services through

the development of a youth centre. To this end, the Community Hub Working Group was set up in November 2005. In our work we put a priority on inclusion, and here we ensured that a number of community groups were invited to the table, along with community members, our city councillor, and city staff.

> COMMUNITY CENTRE

Out of the Community Hub Working Group's efforts came a vision for a true neighbourhood-based and managed community centre. The centre would involve an expansion of the Wally Elmer Youth Centre, as opposed to decommissioning the arena. This centre would deliver recreation programs and services and be a gathering place for all ages. It would be community-driven and supported by the city. We are looking

Community building is about building relationships and bringing people together so they can create new conversations and activities.

at building on existing community group partnerships rather than replacing them.

Why is a community hub important? A number of studies have shown the importance of social structures in neighbourhoods and how they affect individual educational

attainment, employment success, and social connectedness, which in turn can have a positive impact on individual health. That's why the community health centre is at the table. Community building is about building relationships and bringing people together so they can create new conversations and activities.

> NEW USES FOR THE COMMUNITY HUB

In the visioning process and the focus group work, the question of how the Wally Elmer Youth Centre could be utilized as a neighbourhood hub was posed and several different focus areas were identified.

Education was one focus area, where the community centre would be used to provide English as a Second Language classes and adult education programs. Health was another focus area. We discussed having a foot care clinic and a place to meet with nurse practitioners available right in

the community. Instead of having these services outside the community, people could actually walk to the community centre to access them.

Social services could also be delivered from this centre, including a place to meet with Ontario Works representatives and social workers. With regards to recreation, arts, and culture, the committee expressed the hope that the arena would remain available for events like skating classes, dancing, and other sports.

The community centre could be used to promote community beautification, pride, and safety. This would help make people feel comfortable walking in the streets and going to parks, and also foster pride in the community. The centre will also have to address the growing multicultural makeup of the community. The community centre could be a hub where multicultural awareness and activities could branch out into the community.

> VISIONING WORK

In the working group, we wanted to bring the various partners together to make sure that the vision was right, that the hub was a good idea, and that it had continued support. We have been able to move forward because of strong neighbourhood support for the Wally Elmer Youth Centre and support for community arenas, and because community members and organizations need a place to offer their services.

> TIPS FOR COMMUNITY ORGANIZERS

Here is what we recognize as the crucial items in this kind of community work:

- Take action when the time is right.
- Focus on the community action and partnerships.
- Be diverse and inclusive.
- Make sure you have the right people at the table at the right time. It's not always the same people all the time.
- Know when you need outside help. We're all busy, we all have jobs, and the momentum will not continue if work is left to staff only.
- Get the commitments and keep them going.

We held a visioning day session in September 2006 that was attended by 38 community organizations. We were fortunate that the city sent a consultant who had been hired to look into repurposing the community arenas. The consultant took an active part in our community discussions and used the information to write a report that addressed the planning and implementation process as well as how to build awareness.

In order to make the vision work, we had to look imaginatively at sources of money in addition to money that was already available. We had to look at partnerships, including those with city agencies, community groups, the province, and most importantly community members. We discussed potential programming and what would make sense for the physical space.

After the visioning session, the working group was very inspired and its members agreed that in order to keep the momentum going, they needed to go back to the different players and get a commitment in principle for the vision. It was essential that the City of Kingston and Kingston Community Health Centres agree to continue to provide staff support.

On November 16, 2006 a meeting was held with decision-makers from the City of Kingston and Kingston Community Health Centres. At this meeting, the Community Hub Working Group submitted a written report based on the community visioning exercise and 20 letters of support from community agencies. The meeting resulted in a firm commitment from all players.

> CONCLUSION

We are now working on establishing an interim planning group. We have invited the United Way to the table as a potential funder. The City of Kingston has assigned full-time coordination help and the health centre provides secretarial help. We are still at an early phase of our work, but we used community engagement to get us to where we are.

The renewed commitment to the Wally Elmer Youth Centre is taking form in a splash pad for use in the summer, which opened in 2007.

What is really exciting about our work so far is that we've turned a potential loss into what is going to become a major asset for the community.

Action for Neighbourhood Change Comes to Thunder Bay

SANDRA ALBERTSON is Manager of Community Capacity Building with Thunder Bay Action for Neighbourhood Change, a project of the United Way of Thunder Bay.

> COMMUNITY CAPACITY BUILDING

We in the United Way of Thunder Bay are working in an area that is new for us called community capacity building. Community capacity building is about engagement, learning, and change. It is also about engaging residents in the public, private, and voluntary sectors to develop visions for the future of their community. It's about learning to work together better to address complex community issues like poverty, safety, and declining neighbourhoods. This work is about long-term strategic change that will support the development of strong, vibrant communities.

Community capacity building work can address complex community problems in a way that is holistic, looking at the big picture from multiple views. It involves getting to know the population and who the people are that are involved. It's collaborative and multi-sectoral, bringing together people from different groups with a common vision.

This work is for the long term and we know that it takes a lot of time. It is inclusive of all the people who want to come to the table and work with you. And of course it is messy work. You have to get out there and try new things and take risks. You have to know the people in your community and know who is supportive, who is on the edge of being supportive, and who isn't supportive.

> OUR PROGRAM IN THUNDER BAY

Action for Neighbourhood Change (ANC) is a community capacity building program that began in February 2005. The United Way of Canada oversaw the program and funds came from five federal departments until March 2007. ANC took place in five cities across Canada – Thunder Bay, Surrey, Regina, Toronto, and Halifax.

ANC brings together a diverse range of people who live and work in a neighbourhood and helps them achieve a common vision. ANC involves re-establishing a neighbourhood's sense of itself and the connections between neighbours. In Canada we've lost that sense of neighbourliness and I believe that it needs to be regained.

The United Way of Thunder Bay selected the Simpson-Ogden neighbourhood as the place we were going to do our community work. We asked the community if they wanted the project to happen there and the people we talked to gave us an overwhelming yes.

To meet residents, we did something we in the United Way know well, which is throw a party. About 300 people came together and the outcome was very positive. People came to us and said, "This is the first time I've met my neighbour from down the street," and, "it's the first time I've felt like I was part of this neighbourhood."

> THE SIMPSON-OGDEN NEIGHBOURHOOD

Simpson-Ogden is the second oldest neighbourhood in Thunder Bay. It once had a thriving business district and Ogden Park has been a community park for over 80 years. Its population of 3,200 people includes a high proportion of descendants of European immigrants. A large number of Aboriginal people are moving in and out of the neighbourhood. A high number of seniors live in the area, as well as a very high number of youth and young people.

This population brings with it a high number of issues that revolve around youth. About two-thirds of the housing stock consists of small single-family residences and a number of larger houses have been converted into apartments.

The effects of a recent economic decline are seen in this neighbourhood in the form of boarded up businesses on Simpson Street. Out of 266 business addresses in the area, only about 60 to 65 are operating. There's a business improvement area with limited ability to leverage change due to declining participation. There is a high concentration of bars along the business development area, along with drug trafficking, visible street prostitution, and a high number of people who are homeless and living with addictions and mental illness. In spite of this, there's still a strong core of long term residents who really care about their neighbourhood and see it as their home.

About 300 people came to the party and the outcome was very positive. People came to us and said, "This is the first time I've met my neighbour from down the street," and, "it's the first time I've felt like I was part of this neighbourhood."

> RESIDENTS ARE KEY

From the outset, resident involvement was key because we wanted residents to take ownership. We worked to engage residents and representatives from the neighbourhood. We looked to the health organizations and groups involved in the arts and heritage, education and family services sectors, as well as the police.

The people themselves decided how the project would roll out. There was some poking and prodding along the way because people weren't sure what they could accomplish together. Residents were involved in the consultation, the planning, and in steering the process, and they are doing much of the work themselves.

The work of ANC focused on building the capacities of these community groups. They've come together to really plan for the future. The neighbourhood city councillor has also played a key role in this work.

The Simpson-Ogden Neighbourhood Advisory Committee is a diverse group of residents who care about the long-term future of the Simpson-Ogden neighbourhood. They've developed a vision statement in consultation with the residents of the neighbourhood: "The Simpson-

Ogden neighbourhood is a supportive community that will identify and respond to unmet needs allowing our diverse citizens to continue to strive for a proud, prosperous, unified place that we are proud to call home.” They wanted to get all that in there to show what they want to achieve over time.

> DEVELOPING A PLAN

We invited people from the neighbourhood to meet us at a strategic planning event, but nobody came. So we decided to go where people were already meeting. It was much better because people were more comfortable in their own environment. We presented the information that we found and then put people together in groups. They then decided what priorities they would pursue.

We have now developed a strategic plan for the neighbourhood. Some of the things we are going to pursue are mental health services for the neighbourhood and a settlement and welcome program for Aboriginal people and families moving into our area from northern communities.

Local residents would like more recreation services for youth and they want to set up a public relations effort to combat the negative image of the neighbourhood. They want to deal with the community’s safety concerns by working with the city. So now we’re working on getting funding for these initiatives and helping people prepare grant proposals and look for grant money.

> GOVERNMENT SUPPORT

We have received \$160,000 from the federal government to implement neighbourhood projects. Since we, as United Way staff, didn’t want to select projects, we formed a neighbourhood advisory group to oversee project selection. Residents themselves selected the projects that came out of it, including the Simpson-Ogden Housing Project, where a group of residents came together to learn about housing and bylaw issues. Now they’re trained to do housing inspections. People can call our office and have a volunteer inspector look at their concerns and report them to the bylaw office or the housing project.

The involvement from the City of Thunder Bay was low at first. However as time went on, more councillors got on board and got involved. The mayor is interested and our local councillor is very active. We've done two deputations to council and we've been successful in getting funding.

As United Way staff, our role is as conveners and facilitators. We work to get the discussion going, provide training, learning opportunities and get the project going. Residents are running what is becoming the structured project they wanted it to be and they're taking over those services.

> EARLY SUCCESSES

The community itself has begun to work out some problems, starting with beautification. The work so far includes an art walk and murals on boarded up buildings. A design by a 10-year-old is being transferred to banners that are being put up on local streets. Murals are being painted in a pedestrian underpass. Neighbourhood cleanups are taking place on

> SOME ADVICE WE GOT FROM THE RESIDENTS FOR COMMUNITY WORK

- Take time to lay the groundwork; it will take longer than you ever thought.
- Be directed from the neighbourhood.
- Pull together people who know community development and train those who don't.
- Go to people – don't expect them to come to you.
- Use an asset-based approach rather than trying to grapple with issues.
- Involve and trust local youth because they have really good ideas.
- Link with organizations where you can get leverage.
- Start small and build on small achievable results.
- Find your allies and people who can be your champions and advocates.
- Get the municipality on board and don't quit.
- Evaluate and celebrate your accomplishments.
- When faced with roadblocks, don't be afraid to improvise.

Wednesday nights. Last year people picked up 15 bags of garbage at one of these events and this year only five bags were collected. Youth are painting garbage containers. As a result of this work, things are looking better.

Thanks to people in the neighbourhood, we have soccer in this neighbourhood for the first time. About 55 children are enrolled in this soccer league. People are looking at Tai Chi and wellness seminars for this neighbourhood. The third annual block party is being planned and this time it's the residents doing it rather than us. Neighbourhood coffee parties are taking place where specific topics are discussed. These events have increased membership in the neighbourhood association. These activities have been managed by residents with a small amount of our own staff time and we've tracked about 8,000 volunteer hours.

The garden project, which involves backyard gardens, is just taking off this summer. An unusual program is the Underground Gym and Youth Shelter, which began when an individual bought three buildings for \$200 and turned them into this gym. Many people were hesitant at first but they realize that this individual is reaching youth who otherwise wouldn't be reached. We provided some funding to help them repair the roof of one of the buildings. Here these youth are training to be boxers and they've participated in the Aboriginal games and have done very well.

Thanks to people in the neighbourhood, we have soccer in this neighbourhood for the first time. The third annual block party is being planned and this time it's the residents doing it rather than us.

> LESSONS LEARNED

What have we learned about capacity building? We've learned that place-based and community-based solutions are essential. They have to be rooted and developed in the community to have long lasting effects. We need to have champions at many levels. We need to work to build the capacities of individuals and families to give them a voice to make lasting change. We need to work long term.

Building a Sense of Community in Toronto's Inner Suburbs

SEAN MEAGHER is president of Public Interest Strategies and Communications, a community development organization based in Toronto. In this article Sean discusses his company's work to build a sense of community in Scarborough Village, an immigrant community in south central Scarborough.

> REACHING OUT

We have learned that it is important to reach out to people because in order to be successful you need a variety of people at the table. Recently, we have been involved in community development work in Scarborough Village, an immigrant community in south central Scarborough.

When we work on community development processes, our goals are to reach out to residents, businesses, and community service providers, and to link up all the different parts of the neighbourhood and support the existing systems. We have found that building on the assets you have in the community is so much more efficient than other approaches, and is more respectful to the community. When we go into a community, we look at the systems that work there and try to find a way to build and strengthen them.

We have found that we need to find the issues and priorities that matter to people, and work on those issues and priorities. Everyone has their own vision of how to make the world better, and one's personal vision is a great thing to hold dear, when you're in someone else's neighbourhood, it is their vision that matters. Finding the community's key priorities is critical and so is building on lasting community structure and leadership.

> RESIDENTS DRIVING CHANGE

The people who live in the neighbourhood are going to be the ones who make community projects successful in the long term. If we are there doing a lot of terrific work and then going home, the neighbourhood doesn't get a lot out of it.

If we help people change the way their neighbourhood works the neighbourhood is going to get something out of that forever. That's not an easy thing to do, because even neighbourhoods that recognize that they are in significant distress have a lot of barriers to deal with when they work with folks who want to come into the area and do good.

> SUSPICION OF OUTSIDE HELP

People in these troubled communities are often disillusioned about institutional interests and many neighbourhoods in the greatest distress have been the subject of a lot of studies and all kinds of programs. Many of these programs are of the type that aims to fix problems overnight. The people who run the programs don't stay long and in the end the neighbourhood is left with very little.

The people left behind don't want to go through that cycle again. They don't have a lot of time, energy, or resources to squander on something that isn't going to make a lasting change in their neighbourhood, so they tend to be very wary of people like us. They also wonder who the winner is in these kinds of processes.

These are challenging neighbourhoods for many other reasons. As immigration grows, there are numerous fissures along language and cultural lines. There are limits on the level of connection inside the community. In many neighbourhoods the physical space to connect with each other and create relationships simply doesn't exist

> TORONTO'S INNER SUBURBS

In Toronto many of the problems are migrating to the inner suburbs. These are traditional suburban neighbourhoods that were built around car culture, where everything is far apart and accessed by car. Now the area is populated by a majority of people who don't have cars, can't afford to drive, or for various reasons are unable to take the bus so they end up physically and geographically isolated.

In such neighbourhoods, people are wary of you, they don't trust you, they're disillusioned, disconnected, and they are split along language and cultural lines. In addition to that, everything is far away. How do you get around all of these challenges?

In Regent Park we worked in nine separate languages. Every piece that we published, every meeting that we held, every discussion that we took part in, was in nine different languages at the same time. In Scarborough Village, we worked in the four languages that are predominant in the neighbourhood: English, Urdu, Bengali, and Tamil. Everything we did was available to all in the languages. We had to put that discipline on ourselves. It wasn't always easy and it wasn't cheap, but it was necessary in order to demonstrate that the process was about them and not about us.

In Scarborough Village, we worked in the four languages: English, Urdu, Bengali, and Tamil. Everything we did was available to all in the languages. It wasn't always easy and it wasn't cheap, but it was necessary in order to demonstrate that the process was about them and not about us.

Whenever we go into a neighbourhood, we ask who is effective in communicating with a group of people and then we hire them. We have to make sure that the project economically benefits the people in the neighbourhood. We also have to make sure that the people who do the outreach are people who understand the language, culture, and local dynamics. Reaching out to people in familiar venues, such as community centres or places of worship, is also very important. We hold meetings in mosque basements, parks, kitchens, and living rooms, because that's where people are. People don't come to us; we need to come to them.

Our place-based, bottom-up, engaged approach to tackling these issues of crime and poverty doesn't have all the splash and splendour of a big national program, but it reaches more people more effectively.

REGENT PARK | Instead of just looking at who is living in poverty, who is a new immigrant, etc., SNTF overlays those questions by asking who has the infrastructure in the neighbourhood to tackle those issues.



This is because people in the community know the languages, cultures, and venues in their own neighbourhood. They also know those informal networks, those relationships between Urdu-speaking moms or Bengali taxi drivers, that spread most of the information in the community. Local people have to be the centrepiece of the process, because they are the ones who hold most of the cards and most of the tools for engaging and communicating.

> COMMUNITY ANIMATION

We have been using a process that we call community animation, where we have systems for training people to become the outreach workers for their own neighbourhood. That process is spreading in Toronto really fast, in part because of a group set up by the City of Toronto and the United Way of Toronto called the Strong Neighbourhoods Task Force (SNTF).

SNTF did two important things. First it built the political will to use place-based strategies to address social and economic challenges. Then it sketched out new tools for looking at the nuances of neighbourhoods. It measured social challenges as well as the infrastructures in place to address these problems.

Instead of just looking at who is living in poverty, who is a new immigrant, etc., SNTF overlays those questions by asking who has the infrastructure in the neighbourhood to tackle those issues. Interestingly, the places that don't have food banks, health centres, libraries, youth services, and seniors services are these areas out in the suburbs that were designed as neighbourhoods for middle-class homeowners but are now becoming home for low-income newcomers. This is where the real struggles are because the appropriate support infrastructure is not in place.

> SCARBOROUGH VILLAGE

Scarborough Village is one such neighbourhood that is lacking in infrastructure. One of the challenges is bringing together all the different people with different mixes of resources to work together to tackle these issues. That's what gives strength to the process. Although it is not monolithic or homogenous, everyone shares the same objective, which is to build a great neighbourhood in which to live.

The middle class homeowners are still part of this community. They still live mainly in nice little bungalows in one end of the neighbourhood, as opposed to the high-rise towers where the immigrants live. Both groups share an interest in making the area a safe, comfortable place to live, so they have a motivation to get involved.

About 14,000 people live in this neighbourhood and 72 per cent of them are people of colour. Sixty-one per cent are immigrants, most of them coming in the last 10 years. Approximately half of the population does not speak English as a first language.

There are some real challenges in this neighbourhood. The local elementary school has an annual 50 per cent turnover rate. Half of those who graduate in June weren't there in September and a large percentage of those weren't even in Canada when the school year started. The instability of the population in the neighbourhood makes it difficult to make connections.

> USING COMMUNITY RESOURCES

Our first task was to find out about the systems that work in the area. We found that social networks work well in the neighbourhood. We employed some of the people who were active in those networks to lead the process because they are familiar with neighbourhood cultures and languages.

We worked within these social networks in order to have an impact on issues that mattered to community members. Poverty, unemployment, and other such prevalent problems were not identified as the most important. Instead, they were concerned about what programs and activities they could establish for the neighbourhood kids in the summer. They said, 'It's May now. What have we got for kids to do this summer? We were able to help them put together a couple of youth programs.

From the outset it seemed as though English-speaking residents, who are mostly African, and newcomers had different objectives in mind. The English-speaking residents seemed to be most concerned with establishing youth programs, whereas the newcomers talked more about language programs. However, after speaking with newcomers, we found that while they talked about youth language programs, underneath it all it was actually youth programs that most concerned them. We found that these two groups were all on the same page. They were simply describing their objectives differently. After gathering people together in small

meetings in familiar places, we were able to launch youth programs to serve 75 people in approximately 60 days.

Eventually we were able to enroll 300 people in language programs by that fall. Once the various ethnic communities understood that language programs were available, word spread through the social networks. We even got calls from another city where there's a Tamil community. The Tamil grapevine got the word out there and they began to dream new dreams.

The next step was to link people in larger cross cultural forums, where we could create links across the boundaries that divided the community and help people experience new ways methods of working together other than the informal networks they knew.

At Scarborough Village local elementary school has an annual 50 per cent turnover rate. Half of those who graduate in June weren't there in September and a large percentage of those weren't even in Canada when the school year started.

> A SURPRISING GOAL

Once these firmer linkages were made amongst the different ethnic communities in the neighbourhood, we helped them establish structures that were useful to them. The first thing these communities wanted to do was create a neighbourhood association. I was surprised because I thought they would first build little groups to deal with specific problems, but the first thing they wanted to do was create a neighbourhood association. They built their own steering committee and wrote their own constitution drawing on various elements they found in other neighbourhood association constitutions. They later revised their constitution when they found that some things didn't work right, but it was important that they got to choose how to run their own organization.

They organized their own safety committee and carried out a safety audit of the area, they organized a forum with a new superintendent, and they built youth programs that were relevant to what they wanted—homework clubs, job fairs, basketball programs, a cricket team. Cricket, the most popular sport in South Asia, is becoming the most popular sport in Scarborough Village. Kids in the neighbourhood started to make movies about what wasn't working in their community. They not only had an exciting activity, they came away talking about how this



The community convinced the city to convert an ice rink into a gym during the summer, because there was no gym that kids could use. Now there's basketball and other sports programs used by 300 kids in what used to be an empty ice rink all summer long.

showed them how to plan ahead. It takes a lot of discipline and structure to make a movie and they were able to learn those skills.

The neighbourhood association built new services by attracting service providers from other neighbourhoods to come because there was an authentic and unified neighbourhood voice calling them in. That was compelling to the funders, and so these service providers started getting grants. They've raised about \$250,000 in various grants by learning how to become grant applicants and by developing partnerships with some of those service providers. Now those service providers are beginning to develop their own structure to better meet the needs that are coming from the neighbourhood. They're building a community hub and developing access for community services through a central point.

> PROGRESS IN 18 MONTHS

Some of these accomplishments took place in the first 18 months of being organized as a community. The people of Scarborough Village built a neighbourhood association, launched a video program, started a YWCA 'girl power' program for girls, and began language schools. They started a two-night-a-week public volleyball program for youth, and set up a Pakistani women's group that meets every month to raise issues and talk about what's happening in the neighbourhood. The Pakistani community there developed an earthquake response strategy when the Pakistani earthquake took place during that time.

The first thing these communities wanted to do was create a neighbourhood association. They built their own steering committee and wrote their own constitution drawing on various elements they found in other neighbourhood association constitutions.

The Bengali community now has their own club where about 100 people from that community get together every month to figure out how they can do good things for their neighbourhood and they painted a massive mural on a big wall in one of the scariest places in the neighbourhood. The spot is dark and out of the way, and when a man was murdered there the group decided to paint a mural to take back that space.

They raised \$250,000 in community grants, they have started parenting programs, they have new health programs operating in Tamil, a co-op

literacy program, a youth job fair, a volunteering project for youth, two different theatre programs, and a community safety office. They built a playground in a park that people never wanted to go in to. It's now full all the time.

The community convinced the city to convert an ice rink into a gym during the summer, because there was no gym that kids could use. Now there's basketball and other sports programs used by 300 kids in what used to be an empty ice rink all summer long. The community cricket program is run entirely by volunteers. The community has developed its own community garden and a homework club.

That's what they could do in 18 months just by being organized and drawing on the networks they knew with a bit of skills development from folks like us.

> COMMUNITY COMMITMENT

One thing I will underscore is that there wasn't a lot of money in that work. The people didn't come out because a level of government decided to fund a cluster of programs. The people in the neighbourhood came out because they decided that they could make some meaningful changes in their neighbourhood.

There's been some interesting research done by Felton Earls and Robert Sampson in Chicago that shows that if you want to find a neighbourhood where it is most likely that crime will go down, the best test is to find where people are most likely to believe that they can make changes in their neighbourhoods. If a significant number of people believe that they can make change happen, five years later crime is on the decline. If they feel they can't make changes, crime is increasing five years later.

Shortly after we started, we asked people what they would like to do and most said they would like to leave the neighbourhood. Eight months later, the day after a murder, there was a packed public meeting where people said that they can't allow this to happen in their neighbourhood. They wanted to do something about that problem and visibly showed that they didn't want to give up. They firmly believed that the way to change the neighbourhood is to work collectively.

That's the kind of change you can make in a neighbourhood by connecting people and giving them that subjective sense that they can change their neighbourhood by dreaming about what it could be.

Imagine London

Grassroots Politics in a Complacent Town

GINA BARBER is a member of the Board of Control for the City of London, Ontario. She taught sociology at Fanshawe College for many years and she is one of London's foremost social and political activists.

> LONDON'S GOVERNANCE

Imagine London was formed by a group of activists in 2005. It has changed the face of politics in London, Ontario.

A city of 352,000 people, London is home to University of Western Ontario and Fanshawe College. It was once a major financial centre but many of its head offices have left. London is now a major health care centre. When a large amount of land was added to the city in 1993, developers moved in quickly and serious problems related to sprawl resulted. It has acquired many big box stores and the doughnut effect is seen here as development has moved to the outskirts of town.

London has a unique governance system with a mayor and four members elected at-large who become members of the board of control. The member of the board of control who gets the most votes becomes deputy mayor. This is the only remaining board of control in Canada and probably in North America. Council also has 14 councillors – two elected from each of seven wards.

As it existed prior to the 2006 election, the board of control was an executive committee that drew up the budget and made recommendations about who got appointed to which committee. It had a lot of power over what proposals went to council because it met first and controlled the information and the agenda. Not surprisingly, it was regarded as an old boy's club. Although women got on from time to time, it was usually a core group of the same men with ties to the development industry who made up the board. Members of the board of control were almost always funded by development interests and that was evident in the things they did.

> THE REFERENDUM

In 2003 London had a referendum over reducing the number of councillors and eliminating of the board of control. Both questions got majority approval but because only 35 per cent of the electorate took

> CITY COUNCIL TOP TEN "14 WARD" EXCUSES

1. You mean we have to listen to the citizens? Man! That sucks.
2. We'll consider it later when we figure out how to do nothing about it.
3. What? A special-interest group telling us what to do?
4. No one will seek office because the job isn't secure
5. It will lead to a dysfunctional city council... everyone will have different ideas.
6. Couldn't we find a way to do this without spending any more of the taxpayers' hard-earned money?
7. Okay, so Council ignored the vote... and ignored Imagine London... but Gates misunderstood us! Two wrongs don't make a right... oh, wait... that's three...
8. In the entire history of political science never before has one person made a difference. Something is screwy.
9. I don't know what to think. I'll have to wait for my lawyer to tell me what to do.
10. One councillor per ward? Who is going to babysit my constituents when I'm away at a governance convention?

COURTESY DOUG ROGERS

part in the vote – far short of a majority – the results weren't considered as binding.

The seven wards were distributed like a pie, which meant that a great deal of power was concentrated in the suburbs. The downtown had little power and had become depopulated. It was very difficult to get change in the board of control because of the expense of city-wide campaigns.

There were problems of accountability on council. Many people liked having two councillors because when one councillor didn't work very hard, people would go to the other councillor. If two councillors worked together well, the system was effective, but the seven wards were too large for effective representation. People had little sense of ownership of their council.

Shortly after the referendum, the Chamber of Commerce came out in favour of keeping the Board of Control, but reducing the number of councillors.

Some of us began to look at the relationship between the handling of development issues and contributions from developers.

> IMAGINE LONDON

During that time, eight people got together and Imagine London was born in January 2005. A number of progressive political and community groups got involved. Some were issue-based, such as people fighting pesticides.

As the 2006 election began to draw near, council called a public participation meeting to discuss the referendum results. Imagine London also had a meeting where we talked about a new set-up for the wards. We drew up a new map based on existing communities. A number of people from Imagine London spoke at the public participation meeting, not representing any organization but as individuals to promote this map.

Council looked at four options, including the status quo, but voted to retain the system as is.

> GOING TO THE ONTARIO MUNICIPAL BOARD

Under Section 223 of the Municipal Act, 500 citizens in a municipality (or 1 per cent in smaller municipalities) can sign a petition to propose a ward map of their own to council, and if council rejects it, citizens can propose the new map to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB).

The city persuaded the OMB to separate the board of control question from the map question and the ward map went to hearings at the OMB.

The OMB's decision in November 2005 on the ward map came out in Imagine London's favour and called on council to work with citizens to create a new ward map. The city chose to appeal the decision and

stall on implementation, so the OMB imposed a map that was similar, but not identical to our map. The new map has 14 wards, each represented by one councillor.

Under the Ontario Municipal Act, 500 citizens can propose a ward map to council, and if council rejects it, they can propose it to the Ontario Municipal Board. London's new map, imposed by the OMB, has 14 wards, each represented by one councillor.

During the city's appeals and stalling against the OMB decision, it came out that the city was paying a lawyer \$545 per hour to fight the case. Ultimately, the city lost its appeals against the new wards.

> NEW BLOOD

In the election of 2006, we in Imagine London decided that we needed some new blood on city council. Imagine London didn't sponsor people, but a number of us ran on our own. I ran for the board of control on the platform of abolishing it. I didn't originally plan to run on that promise, but in my canvassing everybody asked me about abolishing the board of control. I had been thinking that way, so that became my position. I won a seat on the board of control with the second greatest number of votes and turnout in the election was up by 20 per cent.

Today the fight to reform politics in the City of London continues. We are now addressing the issue of governance in our work on council and in the community.

> RESOURCES

Imagine London: www.imaginelondon.ca

City of London: www.london.ca

Citizen Action for Democratic Communities

The Path in Guelph

KAREN FARBRIDGE is the Mayor of Guelph, Ontario. She became the first woman mayor of Guelph in 2000 and she was returned to the position in 2006. She holds a Ph.D. in biology and has taught classes on democracy and environmental sustainability at the University of Guelph.

> ROOTS OF CONSULTATION

After graduating from the University of Guelph, I worked for a community group that was funded by students from the university, the Ontario Public Interest Research Group (OPIRG). For 10 years I was a paid community organizer with OPIRG and for six of those 10 years, I was on city council. I view my work on council as an extension of my work as a community organizer and my work as mayor as the ultimate community organizing position.

Guelph is a rapidly growing mid-sized city of 120,000 people with a university and a community college. The city is expected to grow to 180,000 people by 2031. Sustainability is becoming a big issue.

In the late 1980s, public consultation came to Guelph with the waste management master plan that the city and the county were working on.

This plan included an incinerator, which got people mobilized. Rather than fighting an anti-incineration campaign, people fought a campaign promoting the three Rs – reduce, reuse, recycle. That set us on the path to sustainability and got us to where we are today. Out of that process came a public liaison committee for council.

As a member of council, I have a most unlikely mentor who had been on council for 30 years and had been an industrialist. He told me that before that time, there had been no public delegations to council or council asking the public for input. Council made decisions behind closed doors, came out and voted, and then played cards. The waste management issue ended that arrangement.

> ROUNDTABLES

During the 1990s, the Brundtland Commission report on sustainable development was a real catalyst for roundtables on the environment and the economy. We had a national roundtable, an Ontario roundtable, and a Guelph roundtable, which is still active. The roundtables were successful in bringing diverse people together and beginning relationships between people who had never talked before. In fact, one co-chair of Guelph roundtable was the general manager of a local chemical company; the other co-chair was a representative from a local ENGO. In developing our recently adopted community energy plan, those relationships were once again drawn upon.

The Guelph roundtable was active through the 1990s and was part of developing the City of Guelph's Green Plan and a green communities initiative that was ultimately killed by the Harris government.

Because of the multi-stakeholder work in the community, this approach began to be adopted at city hall and we began to use it as the foundation of a number of public consultation processes such as the water conservation and efficiency strategy and the transportation strategy. In both cases, community consensus was established before we brought the strategies to council. When you have a consensus among groups that include trucking companies and cycling activists, it brings a level of comfort to council.

> CITIZEN INVOLVEMENT

There was a growing expectation of citizen involvement, and this led to the creation of a number of groups such as Citizens Urging Responsible

Budgeting, which promoted alternative budgeting. This group looked at our capital budget process and exposed how much money was going to roads as opposed to other services the community was looking for. There was just an explosion of different groups on water issues, waste issues, capital budgets, and on transportation that came out of this growing expectation that people should have a say in how the community is run.

I give credit to our former chief administrative officer who met with all of the councillors during my first term on council. I said my big goal was public involvement and he brought in a group of citizens and asked them what the principles should be for public involvement. They developed a clear set of rights and responsibilities for citizens, staff, and councillors for participation in these processes. This was the mid-1990s and these principles are still important today.

During my first mayor's term from 2000 to 2003, the planning department was missing these guidelines. You can never be sure that the communication is there and we had to work to get the planning department involved in these processes.

> SMARTGUELPH

We had this growing expectation of public participation and it culminated in a process we launched in 2001 called SmartGuelph. Its goal was to develop a strategic framework for growth and was an ambitious public consultation program to determine what people wanted the city to be in 25 years. We were growing quickly and we wanted something to help manage change.

We liked the smart growth framework that was coming out of the United States, especially the links it made between quality of life, development, and economic vitality. We were also looking for integration. What was coming out of the Guelph roundtables were discussions of the triple bottom line of economic vitality, environmental sustainability and social well-being. Some people also add emphasis to culture and governance. When we make a decision we should consider all these factors.

If we wanted to get community support for a growth program we also needed a program of community engagement. We asked a committee of citizens if we should do this and when they said yes, we then asked how they would like to be consulted. Our consultation process was created by the community for the community, rather than as a staff-driven process.

We had focus groups targeting different sectors from developers to business to youth to seniors to neighbourhoods. There was the mayor's bus tour, bicycle tour, and a walking tour. The fact that the mayor's bus tour attracted new Canadians was an unexpected bonus. We had displays and pamphlets translated into many languages. We took back input in various languages and translated it. We even had SmartGuelph TV on cable. Through that process we identified common positions on principles and strategies.

> POLITICS INTERVENES

That's when things began to unravel. We had a political split on council in the worst sense of the word "political." The 2003 election was coming up and people saw an opportunity to leverage it for personal political gain. The balance was tipped one evening when one member of council had to leave because of a babysitter going home and the result was no decision from council on a set of principles for growth in Guelph.

The community reacted with letters to the editor and council and delegations at council meetings. All of this highlighted the importance of consultation. The principles for growth returned to council and were adopted. This decision turned out to be of lasting importance. In the years that followed the terms of reference for our local growth strategy were based on these principles despite political changes on council.

The implementation plan was approved, but then the 2003 election took place. The development industry mobilized with a lot of money and a new council was elected that had a different perspective from the outgoing council.

Citizens wanted to be engaged. More than 1,200 people took part in SmartGuelph. This wasn't talking about their backyards, it was visioning for the future. In the election the fact that not every single person took part in SmartGuelph was twisted, but we eventually learned that when people buy into an agenda, they become your best ally. The people who had taken part in SmartGuelph stuck with it and in 2006 they came out and restored a progressive council to office.

There are two real threats to sustainability: the vested interests of certain segments of the development industry and low voter turnout that distorts democracy. If you look at what most people expect and what city councils do, there's a massive gap. In our process, we began to move beyond the common ground, the easy pickings that we all could agree

on. We were starting to challenge some fundamental values and sector biases. Sustainability is one of those values.

> CITIZENS, NOT STAKEHOLDERS

You need to know who is at the table and why. There's the involved citizen who will donate to the food bank, there's the participatory citizen who will organize a food drive and tree planting, and then there's the justice-oriented citizen, who asks why people are hungry and acts on that. You can't make assumptions about who is around the table. You need to understand who is there to be effective.

SmartGuelph engaged people as citizens, not as stakeholders. Interestingly, both the environmental and development communities reacted to this, because they traditionally had preferential access to decision-makers and processes. Change is never easy and sometimes I think things really have to get worse before they get better. Things got really bad in Guelph after the 2003 election before they got better. The loss of participation processes really highlighted to people what we had before and where we were going.

SmartGuelph, as an initiative, was and is optimistic, underscoring a role for local government in building communities. It says we can envision different futures and that collectively we can look at the values that are involved with those different futures and choose which future works for us.

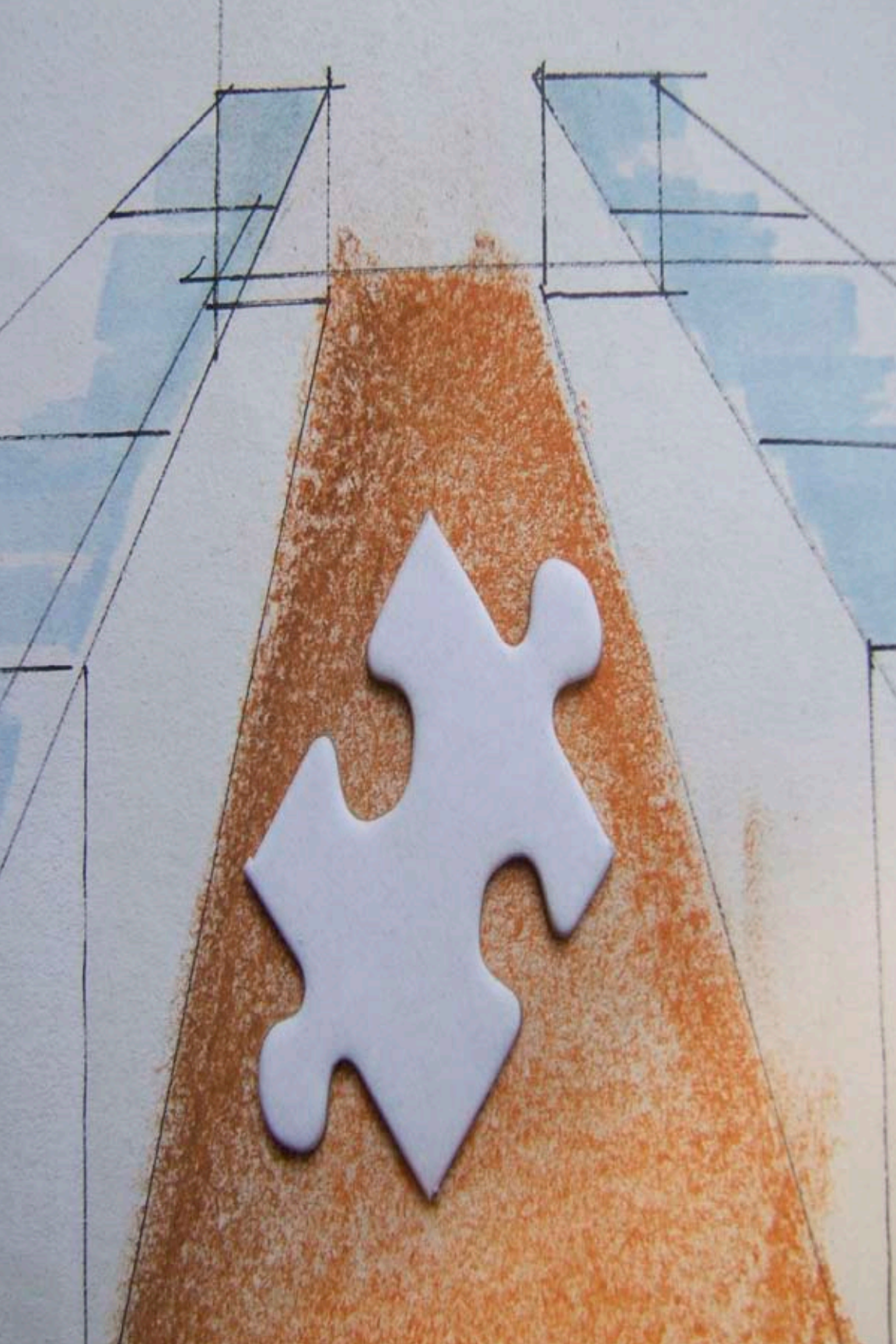
After the 2003 election, the Guelph Civic League (GCL) got organized around what happened after that election. It was a wonderful way of capturing the dismay people felt around the 2003 election result and is one of the most ambitious civic organizing initiatives in the history of the city.

GCL's values are based on the SmartGuelph principles. Its members believe that an informed, active, and voting citizenry can make a difference, and in the election of 2006, they did make a difference. The Guelph Citizen's League was instrumental in increasing voter participation and continues to engage Guelph citizens in community participation. Community values have been restored to city hall.

> RESOURCES

Guelph Civic League: www.guelphcivicleague.ca

City of Guelph: www.guelph.ca



PART 4

Healthy Schools, Healthy Communities

How can the linkage between healthy schools and healthy communities be better understood and strengthened? How are Ontario schools reaching beyond their walls to have an impact on their communities and their environment? The articles in this section detail inventive initiatives in schools that inspire students, help build more inclusive communities, and put schools in the lead on social and environmental sustainability issues.

Working Together to Save Energy in Niagara Schools

BRUCE MCLENNAN is with the CUPE Local 4156 Energy Conservation Committee. He began working with the Niagara South Board of Education in the 1970s and has recently retired from the District School Board of Niagara.

> THE SCHOOL DISTRICT

The District School Board of Niagara maintains a consortium of buildings that adds up to more than 6.3 million square feet in 12 municipalities in the region of Niagara. Most are used by 3,800 teachers and support staff to educate 42,000 students in 99 elementary and 22 secondary schools. We have an annual gas bill that reaches nearly \$2.5 million and an electricity bill that exceeds \$3.5 million.

In the fall of 2001 four members of CUPE 4156 met in a coffee shop to talk about what we could do to assist the board in saving money on energy costs. That fall Local 4156 proposed some cost saving initiatives to the district school board designed to reduce energy consumption and the board quickly accepted those ideas.

> JOINT COMMITTEE

The committee, which was formed to investigate and move forward with these initiatives, was made up of four CUPE members, the board's technical services department supervisor, the plant services controller, and the director of education. We met every six weeks to develop a plan containing many ideas and initiatives. After many meetings involving some controversy and discussion, we agreed to a plan that was put into place.

We started with large posters that showed energy saving ideas that could be used in school buildings. The posters were put in conspicuous places within all the buildings.

We also introduced a plan to pay back any school that realized energy savings when compared to the cost of the previous four years of operation. Any school that realized more than \$200 in annual energy savings would be reimbursed 25 per cent of the amount it saved. That money would then be used for the benefit of the students in that particular school. To be fair to all the schools, the calculation was adjusted using the square footage of each particular building.

The principal of each school was asked to set up an in-school energy committee, which would have four members, including members of the teaching and support staff and the student body. A member of the school board committee then met with each school committee to get them started. In most cases a student was designated to monitor the use of lights and computers. Sometimes notes were left when lights or computers were left on, or in some cases fines were levied.

> ENERGY ISSUES

Computers were a big issue. It was not uncommon to see banks of computers left on all weekend. They consume more energy than people realize. Over time, older machines were replaced with new computers that were pre-programmed to shut down at certain times.

Another initiative was to present the leading schools with plaques commemorating their success in the program: one for the leading elementary school and one for the leading secondary school for the most energy saved over the preceding four years. Then we provided another set of plaques to the schools that saved the most electrical energy over

the previous year. The award was called the most improved school award.

As a result of this program, we saw energy savings from \$60,000 to more than \$80,000 each year. In 2004 this program received a commendation from the Ontario Minister of Energy.

The combined expertise of CUPE members, educators, students, and plant department personnel in Niagara schools, resulted in a savings of \$79,100 in energy costs. Close to 50 per cent of the schools have been able to reduce their energy consumption. As a reward, 25 per cent of those savings will be rebated to the 55 schools able to reduce their energy use.

In May 2007 a news release from the District School Board of Niagara stated: “The combined expertise of CUPE Local 4156 members, educators, students, and plant department personnel at the District School Board of Niagara, resulted in a savings of \$79,100 in energy savings at DSBN schools. Close to 50 per cent of DSBN schools have been able to reduce their energy consumption. As a reward, 25 per cent of those savings will be rebated to the 55 schools who were able to reduce their energy use.”

The release added: “In total, DSBN schools across the region saved over 800,000 kilowatt hours of electricity. That’s more than enough energy to power a high school for an entire year or an elementary school for almost four years.”



It was not uncommon to see banks of computers left on all weekend. They consume more energy than people realize. Over time, older computers were replaced with new ones programmed to shut down at certain times.

> THE COMMITTEE

Over time, more representatives joined the board's energy committee, giving us more representation across the board. The committee's members include:

- A maintenance electrician
- The board's technical services supervisor
- The board's plant services controller
- The president of CUPE local 4156
- Elementary school principals representative
- Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation representative
- School waste reduction coordinator
- Secondary school principals representative
- A caretaker representative
- A science consultant
- Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario representative
- Ex Officio – board director of education

> OTHER INITIATIVES

What else have we done? We have initiated what we call a green bookcase, which is a dedicated workstation in every school library stocked with information about energy conservation, recycling, and environmental issues.

We have a school conservation energy package, which is available in PDF format to all teachers and interested individuals. It is full of energy saving tips and procedures for any building. We've developed a power conservation manual for teachers and another manual for caretakers. We also make regular use of email to remind people to shut things off before each vacation period.

EcoSchools in Waterloo

CATHERINE FIFE is a trustee with the Waterloo Region District School Board. She was first elected in 2003 and re-elected in 2006. Catherine is chair of the board's Environmental Advisory Committee. As a long-time activist in progressive causes, she is also active in many educational and child care organizations.

> THE WATERLOO WAY

When I was first elected to the Waterloo board in 2003, we did not have an environmental advisory committee. We talked about the “Waterloo Way” and our tradition of being environmentally aware, but we didn’t have an action plan in place. I learned that during the painful years of amalgamation, the environment committee got pushed off to one side, then lost altogether at the Waterloo Region District School Board.

I was determined to act on this matter because it is difficult to hold a school board accountable for things they talk about but actually don’t act upon. I believe that links between healthy schools and healthy communities are vital but not well understood.

To be honest, I had to be creative about bringing the environment back to the board table, but I was motivated because I am a parent who is concerned about the growing disconnect I see between this generation of children, the natural habitat and the environment.

> ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION

I am worried about future generations not understanding the importance of the environment and I have seen a growing disconnect with previous generations. Public education is a place where you can positively effect social change.

Changing the culture of how we treat our Earth, how we manage our natural resources and how we understand our environmental footprint is so important. When we teach our children these issues, they take them home and they can change living patterns in their own homes. This is how recycling happened and how the anti-smoking campaign gained momentum. We know how to change negative or damaging behaviour through education.

The board's Environmental Advisory Committee looked at EcoSchools as a program to help us find direction and focus. EcoSchools provides teachers with environmental education resource units, it promotes taking individual action, and it aligns what is taught in classrooms with the operation of the school itself. School boards can save money through conservation efforts such as EcoSchools. Most importantly, this program also encourages opportunities for learning outside the classroom to reinforce the curriculum. Clearly not all learning should take place within the walls of the classroom; outdoor education is a vital piece of absorbing the concepts of ecological literacy and requires stable funding. In Waterloo Region, outdoor education is constantly at risk of being cut because it is still thought to be an "enhancement."

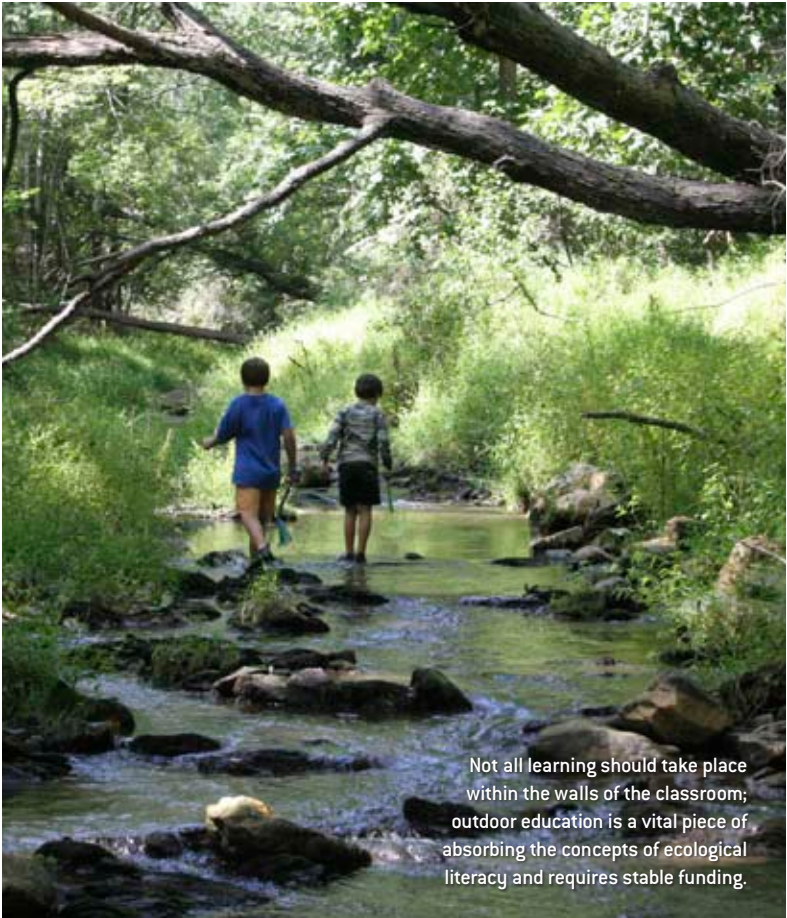
When we teach our children these issues, they take them home and they can change living patterns in their own homes.

> ECOSCHOOLS

We got the Environmental Advisory Committee to sign on and recommend EcoSchools through the minutes at a Committee of Whole meeting and then to Board. Before we knew it, we had agreed to be an EcoSchool board which was finalized with a signed contract. Once we signed on, we had to demonstrate that we were going to do something, we had committed to taking action on environmental reform.

We became an EcoSchool board May 2006 and since then our goal has been to get certification for conservation, waste minimization, and schoolyard greening. Our schoolyards need to be outdoor classrooms. When schoolyards are covered in asphalt and there's no shade, they draw heat to the school and increase cooling costs for the school and nearby residences. We have to look at how portables are placed, because we have learned that their placement affects the environment.

We don't want to download this program to the schools because we know that they are already overloaded. We need to find and foster environmental champions in our school system and in our communities. Unfortunately, the progress has been slow. Out of 115 schools in the board, five schools have become certified. It is a start and large bureaucracies take time to move forward, but it is important to be vigilant.



Not all learning should take place within the walls of the classroom; outdoor education is a vital piece of absorbing the concepts of ecological literacy and requires stable funding.

The EcoSchools Program

JODY SOEHNER is a consultant with the Waterloo Region District School Board who has responsibility for the EcoSchools program in the board.

> GOALS

The goal of EcoSchools is to provide curriculum support for teachers to give guidance on actual actions to reduce greenhouse gases, to align what happens with the teacher and student to what happens in the rest of the building, and to save money and reduce environmental impacts. Boards are encouraged to develop their own guidelines for waste and for energy conservation.

Schools have to develop a team to determine at what stage the school is at and develop an action plan. The EcoSchools program not a one-off deal, it's not an Earth Day. It starts in the fall, goes through the year, and in April, each school is asked to re-evaluate and document their work, and submit a portfolio of what they've done over the year. That portfolio gives the work in the school a lot of credibility.

EcoSchools Ontario looks at the portfolio and looks at the school and then decides on certification. This certification is based on a points scale. To become certified at the bronze level is not very difficult if the school has adopted many energy conservation habits and some recycling and schoolyard greening. There are also the silver and gold levels of certification that are more challenging. This certification must be renewed every year.

EcoSchools operated only in Toronto during its first couple of years. By 2007 we had 16 boards with at least one certified school and a total of 251 certified schools around the province.

> CHALLENGES

I have to admit that I was disappointed at first with how EcoSchools operated in our board, until I looked at some of the other schools. More than 400 schools have taken on the EcoSchools program and are working toward certification. Of those, 150 didn't quite get to the level of being certified, but they can try again next year.

Toronto is the champion of EcoSchools. The Toronto School Board began the program and now have more schools certified than all the other boards in Ontario put together. Toronto has been instrumental in creating the resources and donating these resources to Ontario EcoSchools.

Teachers need to have the time to carry out the program. They need time to evaluate the school, draw up a plan, and put it into action. Many schools don't have the expertise, but EcoSchools has put up documents on its website to help teachers along.

The Ministry of Education is focusing heavily on numeracy and literacy and I have heard from many principals that they have EcoSchools in their sights for the near future. The EcoSchools program is not necessarily a priority in a lot of places but I have hope that this will change.

> NEXT STEPS

The Ministry of Education has released a document called *Shaping our Schools, Shaping our Future*. It's a report put out by an environmental committee headed by Dr. Roberta Bondar, and the government has promised to implement that document. It is calling for the environment to be brought into all curriculum areas.

> RESOURCES

Ontario EcoSchools website: www.yorku.ca/ecoschl

Shaping our Schools, Shaping our Future: www.edu.gov.on.ca/curriculumcouncil/shapingSchools.html

Model Inner City Schools

A New Frame for Equity and Social Justice

JEFF KUGLER is the Executive Director of the Centre for Urban Schooling at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education at the University of Toronto. He has worked for many years as an educator in the Regent Park neighbourhood in Toronto.

ELIZABETH SCHAEFER is a Model School lead teacher from the Nelson Mandela Park Public School, which is located in the Regent Park neighbourhood. She serves on a variety of school and neighbourhood communities.

> FIRST SINCE 1995

The Model Inner City Schools initiative, which is now in place in Toronto at an early stage, is the first attempt to look at inner city schools in a proactive way since 1995. There were many initiatives geared at supporting inner city schools before 1995, but despite funding and staffing they all ended in 1995. This is our first attempt to rebuild some of that in the amalgamated school board.

When we say inner city, we no longer mean a specific place in that inner city. It's clear that the inner city is now all over the City of Toronto and all over the suburbs. I'm sure that the problems I am talking about affect people all around Ontario and so the statistics I use here refer to Ontario.

> CHILD POVERTY IN ONTARIO

In 1989, the House of Commons unanimously voted to reach the goal of eliminating child poverty by the year 2000. But child poverty has remained stuck at between 15 and 17 per cent since 2000, despite strong economic growth. About 443,000 children – one in six – live in poverty. The average low-income family lives far below the poverty line. Low-income, single-mother families live on average \$9,400 below the poverty line. The percentage of poor children living in working families has doubled in the last 10 years. 34 per cent of low-income children live in families where the parents work full-time, full-year. This is up from 27 per cent in 1993. Poverty rates for children in Aboriginal, visible minority and immigrant families are double the average rate.

> MODEL INNER CITY SCHOOLS

These realities form the context for the need to do work geared toward inner city children and communities, and in response there is a new initiative called the Model Inner City School. Doing this work really does mean questioning the way everything is done in our schools. It doesn't necessarily mean changing everything, but it does mean necessarily questioning why we do the things we do and what impact those practices have for students, families, and communities.

> STATISTICS FROM THE 2006 REPORT CARD ON CHILD POVERTY RELEASED BY CAMPAIGN 2000

The richest 10 per cent of families saw a 41 per cent increase in income over the past 10 years, compared to a 4 per cent increase for the poorest 10 per cent.

Child poverty rates:

- 18 per cent – all children
- 40 per cent – Aboriginal children
- 27 per cent – children with disabilities
- 34 per cent – racialized children
- 40 per cent – total immigrant children
- 49 per cent – recent immigrant children.

Fundamental to the change in model schools is a change in the power dynamics imposed by a huge school system such as the Toronto District School Board or any other huge system. Inner City Model Schools do not belong to the educators alone. They belong to the students, parents, and the communities in which they exist. The changes that will develop in the work over the next few years must involve all the players.

> INCLUSIVE VISION

The vision and practice of each school must be a vision that's inclusive of all the players. For the change to work, there must be an authentic move to validate the voice of every member of the Inner City Model School community. The goals of the Inner City Model School are to achieve fairness and equity, establish the school as the heart of the community, develop an inclusive culture in the school, and ensure that there are high educational expectations for the students.

Each of these schools is located in different parts of the city and each of these schools is in what we call a cluster. The model schools have the responsibility of sharing what they are doing and learning with the other schools in that cluster.

> TASK FORCE

The Toronto District School Board established a task force in November 2004 to look at the possibilities for inner city initiatives and it included a wide range of people from inside and outside the school system. The task force's report was approved in May 2005 by the school board.

Schools began to apply to be Model Inner City Schools in the fall of 2005 and there was a large process involved in looking into all those schools. The first three schools were approved in the spring of 2006 and they opened in September 2006 as Model Inner City Schools. The Toronto District School Board has been forced into this from the beginning and it is a miracle that the first three schools were funded.

Funding of these schools is a huge issue. In this program, each of these schools received \$1 million a year. In school districts around Ontario, large amounts of money are earmarked for projects aimed at dealing with the impacts of poverty, but most of the money is not spent on that purpose. In fact, most of the money earmarked to deal with impoverished communities is in fact diverted to cover wage increases or the cost of heating buildings. People need to take a stand on this funding issue.

> THE NELSON MANDELA PARK MODEL SCHOOL

The Nelson Mandela Park Model School in South Regent Park has the largest social housing project in Canada. It is one of the poorest census tracts, with an average income of \$12,500. It's one of the oldest schools in Toronto and it has a very diverse school community.

> NEW APPROACHES

At this school teachers are working together collaboratively in teams and planning their curriculum delivery based on school-wide assessments that they use to decide where they need to go with the students. Everything in the school starts with the students, the goal being that every student should leave the school reaching his/her full capacity.

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There are also a large number of after school programs. The programs are open to all schools in our neighbourhood and we facilitate them through partnerships.

We provide the space and a lot of our community agencies come in and supply the programs. Regent Park Focus runs break dancing and photography programs. There are also grassroots organizations like Bengali Women and Families that runs a homework club. Dixon Hall runs a girls' group, a homework program,

> FIVE COMPONENTS

Model Schools have five components, according to the task force on these schools set up by the Toronto District School Board:

- Innovation in teaching and learning practices and in the school structure
- Support services to meet the social, emotional, and physical needs of students
- The school as the heart of the community
- Research, review and evaluation
- A commitment to share successful practices.

and a cricket program. We work collaboratively with our local police force, which runs a football program and a basketball program.

> OFFSITE PROGRAMS

We have offsite after school programs through Manulife and Upper Canada College. There are students involved in activities that they are interested in, are experiential, are hands on and involve teachers working collaboratively in teams sharing information with each other. Before this model school project began, there were professional development sessions but they didn't address the needs of inner city students dealing with poverty.

Now we have the opportunity to share successful strategies with other schools and other teachers. It allows teachers to be leaders. We have an organization committee at our school that's open to all teachers and staff members and that's where we try to do our planning in a collaborative fashion. We find that teachers like myself are on board and willing to go the extra mile.

> PARENTS ARE KEY

We can't do anything without parent support and we have a very strong parent council. We provide translation and interpretation so that everyone can communicate with each other and we provide child care so parents can take part in meetings. We listen to our parent council and we work really hard to help them.

Parents have their own learning needs and so we have joined up with George Brown College to provide academic upgrading for parents in one of our classrooms. I can't tell you how exciting it has been for our school to have the mothers drop their children off and go to class. These are people who have had generations of welfare and bad experiences. They admit to being non-readers and they want to make a change.

Among our various parent groups, we have groups that have a social focus. Others concentrate on teaching parenting skills. These groups have grown into a successful part of our school.

We provide a welcoming and respectful school climate. We connect with agencies and we work with other schools in our cluster. We have translated into various languages signs that are used by all schools, such as the "Please visit the office first" signs.



PART 5

Economic Development at the Local Level

Building on Strengths, Creating Opportunity

Local governments across Canada are facing tough times. Whether it's a small community or a large metropolis, local governments are struggling to make ends meet. This section looks at how to create well-paying jobs in your community, ensure that there are enough jobs to make your community viable, and shows how one small town is planning its future in the face of a stagnating local industry. This chapter begins with economist Hugh MacKenzie, who examines the recent history of local government financing to reveal that federal transfers to local government have been on a steady decline for decades.

Local Government Finance in Ontario

Who Does What? To Whom?

HUGH MACKENZIE is now at the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, where he works on the Ontario Alternative Budget. From 1991 to 1994, he was Executive Director of the Ontario Fair Tax Commission.

> CONTEXT IS EVERYTHING

I am a believer that context is almost everything. If you understand the context of a decision or concept, you are almost at the point of understanding it. A lot of what passes for debate on issues today is not really debate, but a conscious or unconscious attempt to make us focus on the wrong things. I want to peel some layers off the onion of local government finance, starting with the global picture of where local government fits in Ontario.

We all suffer from the frog in hot water syndrome, where the temperature gradually goes up while the frog seems just fine. We often get caught up in short-term situations. I'm going to look at some of the long-term trends in local government revenue and expenditure in the context of government policies, and I'll examine the impact of provincial government policies on local government.

> TWO PERIODS OF PUBLIC ECONOMY

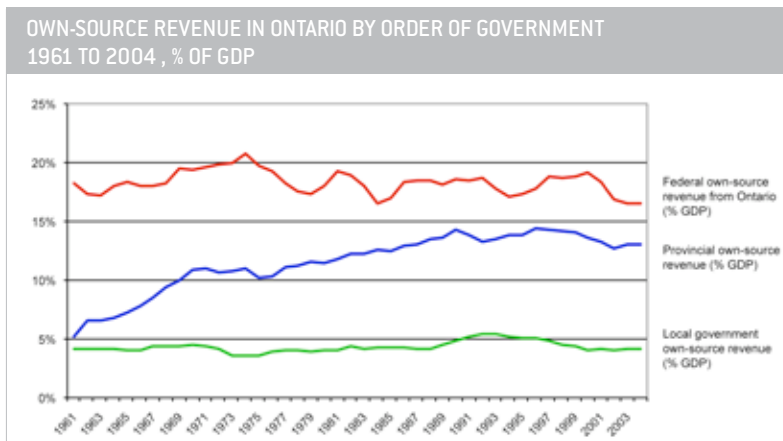
If you look at things over the last 40 or 45 years, what jumps out at you is that the history of public economy in Ontario is divided into two periods. There's the pre-1995 world and the post-1995 world. There's a dramatic shift in the way that the public economy developed and the way government reacted to those developments. One noticeable trend is that over a long period of time, there has been a gradual decline in the relative importance of the federal government in the public economy.

Going back to 1961, when we look at revenue that has been raised by each level of government, without considering transfers, we can see that the people who say that the rapid development of the public economy came from federal transfer payments are wrong. That's not how the modern public economy in Canada grew. The

engine behind the growth in the public economy in Canada was the willingness of provincial governments to tax their citizens more to pay for public services that their citizens want.

Our public economy did not develop because the federal government wanted to raise more and more money and hand it over to the provinces to develop public services. This was not the case in Ontario,

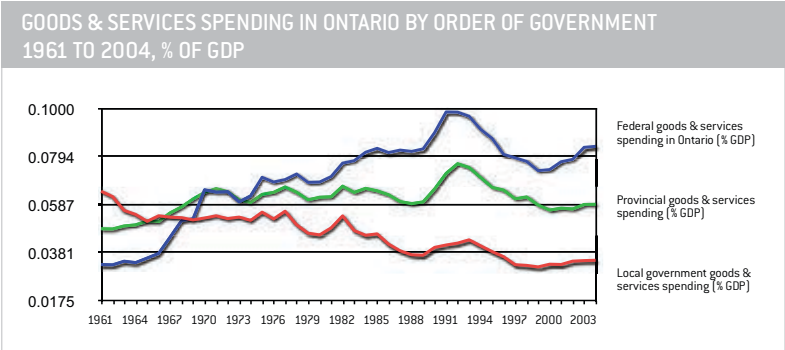
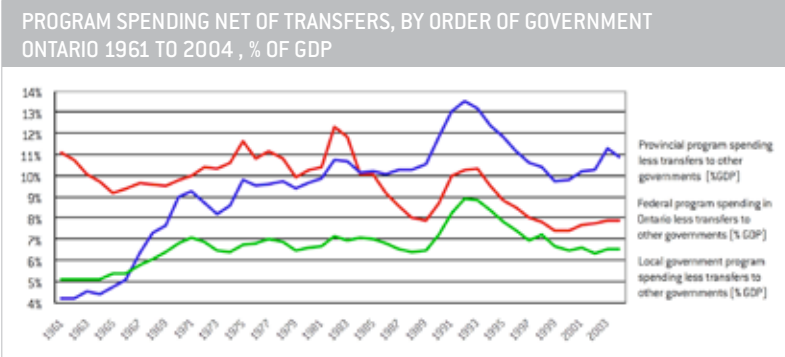
People who say that the rapid development of the public economy came from federal transfer payments are wrong. The engine behind the growth in the public economy in Canada was the willingness of provincial governments to tax their citizens more to pay for public services that their citizens want.



and the same pattern is true nationally. Federal government revenue raised from Ontario has actually hovered around 17.5 per cent of the GDP for 45 years.

The real action has been at the provincial government level where provincial governments have been prepared to raise additional revenue to pay for public services that people want. It is not surprising that a lot of the downward pressure on the public economy comes from provincial government tax cuts. In the post-1995 period, the share of own source revenue for all three levels of government as a share of GDP declined. The fall at the federal level began just after the year 2000 when the big cuts from the Paul Martin budgets came into play.

Program spending, excluding transfers, by each level of government shows the extent of the spending drop between the early 1990s and today in all three levels of government. We've seen an upturn in the provincial level since 2000, and an upturn in the federal level since 2000. Local government spending as a share of GDP has remained about the same. This is all program spending, including direct program spending, and transfers to people and transfers to businesses.



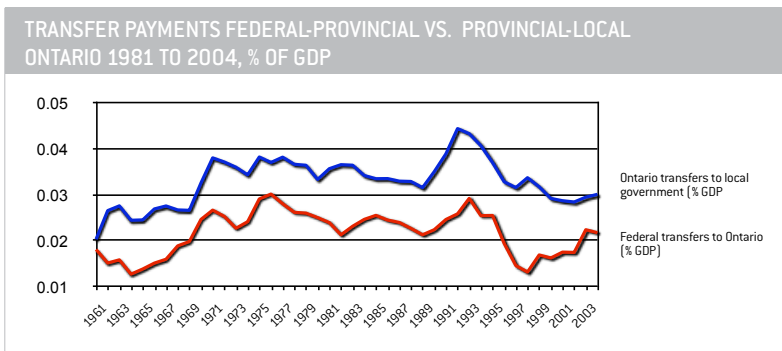
In looking at the goods and services spending by all three levels of government going back to 1961 we see the enormous growth in the provincial government's role from 3 per cent in 1961 to a peak of 10 per cent in 1991. The decline in goods and services spending as a share of the GDP did not begin with the election of the Mike Harris government. It began about three or four years before that. So the squeeze on the public economy began about four years before Harris took office.

The reason these trends are sharper than the own source revenue trends is that this was the period when, unlike the United States, which balanced its budget in the 1990s on the revenue side, Canadian governments at all three levels balanced their budget on the expenditure side and started to run surpluses.

It's striking how small the federal government is as a direct provider of government services through expenditures on goods and services. The federal government is now easily the smallest of the three orders of government, and local government is in about the middle. It's something federal politicians don't like to admit very often, but it's true.

Ontario government transfers to local governments, and federal transfers to Ontario, all move together. During the period in which federal transfers to the provinces as a share of GDP were ramping up in the 1960s, the provincial government was ramping up its transfers to local governments. Then there was a period of stability for about 20 years, and then in the late 1980s, there was an increase in federal

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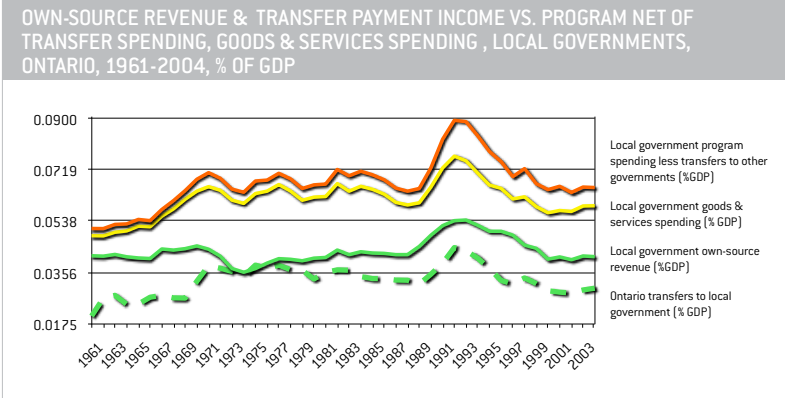
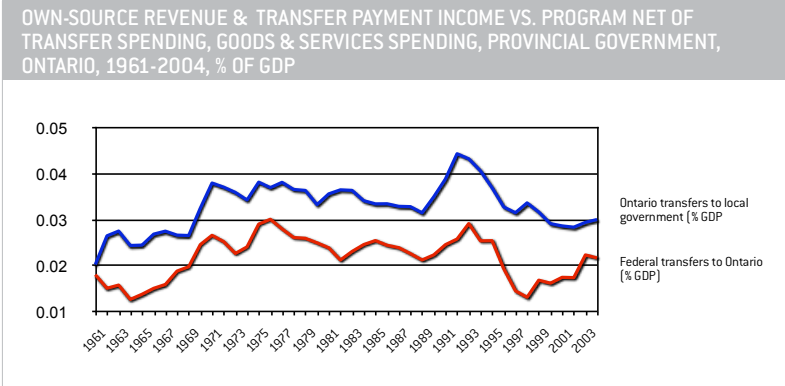


transfers to the provinces, and provincial transfers to local governments. Then they all fall off the cliff in the early 1990s. This pattern is identical across the country.

When provincial governments were complaining about the impacts of federal government cuts in transfer payments in the 1990s, they were simply passing on the pain. When you look at it, Paul Martin's cuts to provincial government transfers had no impact on provincial government balance sheets at all, because the provinces simply took every dollar of that away from local governments

Around 1999-2000, federal government transfers to provinces tick up quite substantially. When you consider that in Ontario 1 per cent of GDP is about \$550 billion, this increase is not trivial. It's about \$5 or \$6 billion. But there's been no corresponding increase in provincial transfers to local governments.

Over these 45 years, there's only been one period where there's been a divergence between federal transfers to provinces and provincial transfers



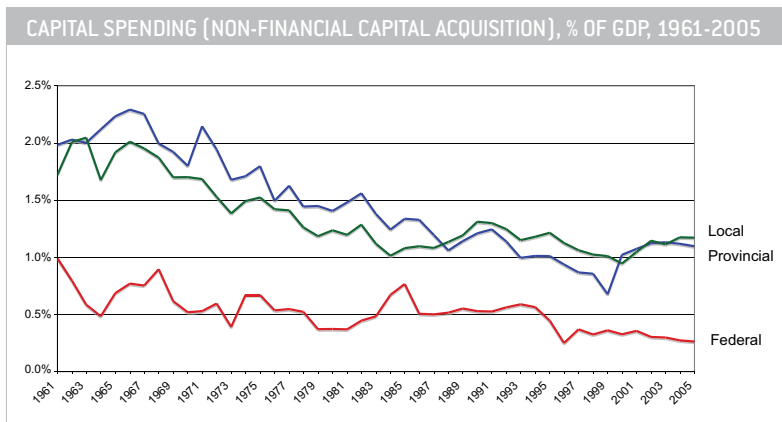
to local governments, and that's been in the last five or six years. If there's any question why local governments are feeling so much pain right now, that's the answer. After having convinced the federal government to pay its bills, provincial governments are not paying theirs.

Federal transfers to Ontario are reasonably stable and they aren't a big deal, but the picture changes when you look at local government. Transfers are important to local government spending. If the province decides not to pay its bills, it has an effect on local government's spending abilities.

Capital spending from 1961 to 2005 is part of the simple answer to the question of why we have such a problem with infrastructure spending in Canada. The order of government that's most important to infrastructure ownership and investment is the order of government with the narrowest tax base. The federal had been relatively trivial in infrastructure issues.

In 1955, the federal government owned 57 or 58 per cent of the public capital in Canada. The provinces owned about 28 per cent, and local governments owned about 18 per cent. In 2003-5, the federal government's share of public capital is down to 30 per cent, the provinces about the same at 25 to 30 per cent, and local government's share has risen about 20 percentage points to 37 or 38 per cent. This is why we have a public infrastructure problem. Local government is responsible for the lion's

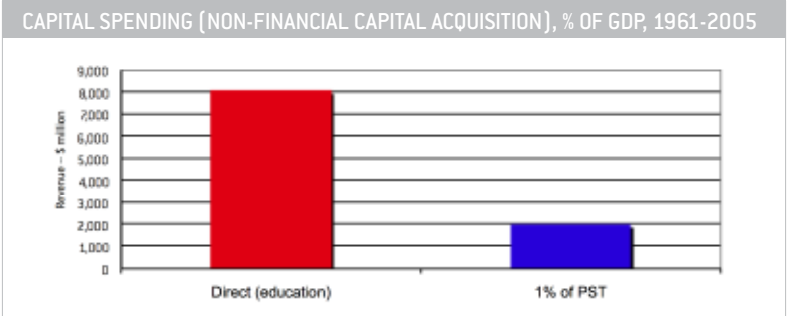
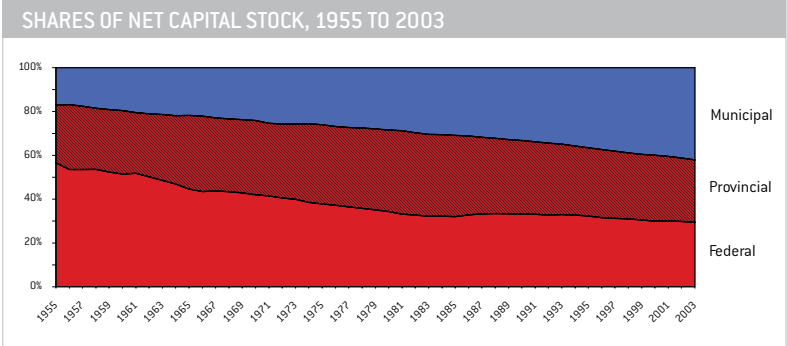
When provincial governments were complaining about the impacts of federal government cuts in transfer payments in the 1990s, they were simply passing on the pain. If there's any question why local governments are feeling so much pain right now, that's the answer.



share of public infrastructure and has the lowest and narrowest sources of revenue. The level of government with the most buoyant revenue, the federal government, is now a minor player in capital investment and no longer provides any meaningful transfers for that purpose.

> PROPERTY TAXES

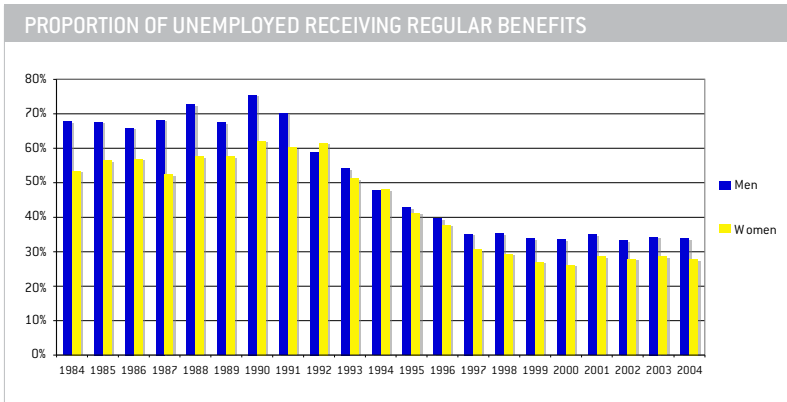
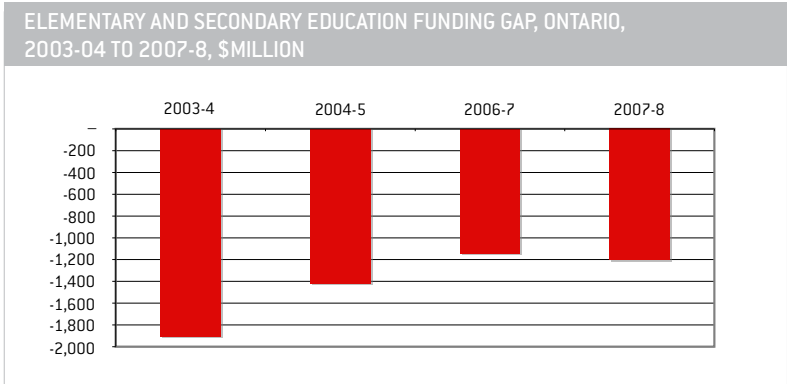
Paraphrasing Winston Churchill, I have described property taxes as the worst means for paying for local government services except for all the others. Property tax is the perfect local government revenue source, because the base is immobile. If you think about taxes as the foundation of democracy, what could be a stronger foundation than your ability to do something different from your neighbour? If your tax system won't give you that ability, how much choice do you really have? That's why property taxes are so important to local government, and that's why it makes so little sense for provincial governments to raise revenues from that source. Nevertheless, Ontario is a major user of the local property tax base.



Ontario's direct property tax revenue is \$8 billion. The revenue from one percentage point of the provincial sales tax is \$2 billion. So who's creating the problem of financial squeeze on local governments?

The picture that emerges is unique to Ontario. Ontario accounts for 68 per cent of the national total of non-local government use of property tax. We only have 38 per cent of the population. Ontario accounts for 95 per cent of local government spending on social services. Ontario accounts for 88 per cent of the national total of local government spending on housing. Ontario accounts for 84 per cent in Canada of local government spending on health. Things are more out of whack in this province than anywhere else.

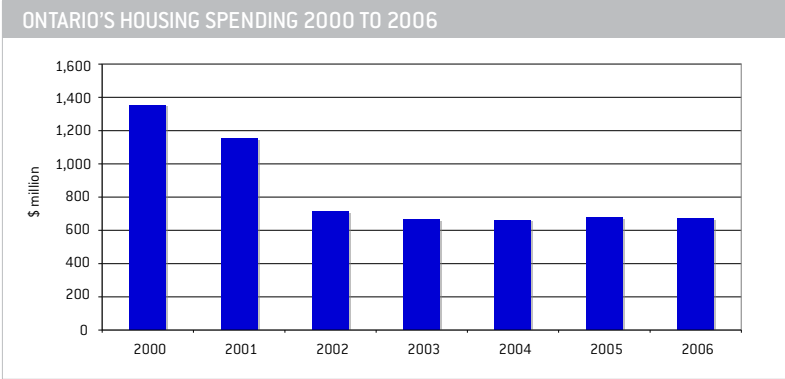
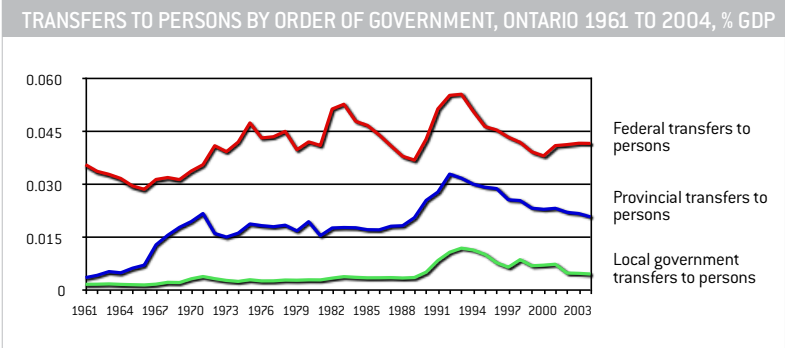
This is why we have a public infrastructure problem. Local government is responsible for the lion's share of public infrastructure and has the lowest and narrowest sources of revenue.



A healthy education system is important for all of us. And as the provincial government has savaged the ability of school trustees to speak for their communities, there's a vacuum there that local governments should step into. Even though we have had these massive increases in spending on education, there's still a gap of about \$1.2 billion between what's needed and what is spent on education, and a significant portion of that gap is attributable to funding shortfalls in our major cities.

The proportion of the unemployed receiving benefits in Ontario has gone from about 70 or 80 per cent in 1990 to less than 30 per cent today. For local governments, that means that there is less money coming into the community. They turn to social assistance and local services.

Both the Harris government and the Chretien-Martin government incessantly claimed that they were just cutting bureaucracy, not cutting anything that went to people. The data say those claims aren't true. Both the provincial and federal governments imposed dramatic cuts on transfers to people. There's a fall in local government transfers, but that fall is the local government share of welfare costs, which local governments didn't have any control over.



When we look at the Ontario Works and Ontario Disability Support Program rates adjusted for inflation, the interesting thing is that the real benefit payable to an adult on social assistance, adjusted for inflation, has been lower in real terms since November 2007 than it was when the Dalton McGuinty government took office in 2003. There's been no progress at all in reversing the dramatic decline in living standards that took place under the Harris government.

The same pattern emerges with housing spending in Ontario. The numbers show no response to the affordable housing crisis.

> IT DOESN'T ADD UP

I have been involved in a number of these financing discussions over the years. These discussions all start with an analysis of appropriate revenue generation. They all come to the same conclusion. Property tax is a great tax – it's the appropriate revenue source for local governments.

Then they go to services, and the accountants ask what services does it make sense to pay for from property taxes, and what services should be paid from other sources? And they always conclude that road and police and fire should be paid for from property taxes, and that health and education and social services should be paid for from taxes based on income.

So then the province tries to control all these things, and you come up with numbers that don't add up. They link taxes to services without looking at the revenue situation as a whole. They try to do it on a piece-by-piece basis. We don't pay for other public services that way. We use a mix of revenue sources to pay for them.

Then they say the only accountability they care about is financial accountability. They try to lay on the idea of taxpayership rather than citizenship. This is based on the idea that government can't be accountable for delivering services that it's not responsible for generating revenue for. If that were true, then the province would have to cede control over much of the health care system.

The province links taxes to services without looking at the revenue situation as a whole. They try to do it on a piece-by-piece basis. We don't pay for other public services that way. We use a mix of revenue sources to pay for them.

> REFORM THAT WON'T WORK

I believe that the idea of trying to fix up local services on a revenue-neutral basis is laughable. You start off with the province taking \$8 billion of the local tax base, and you want to reform the system on a revenue neutral basis: it won't work.

If you go into a revenue exercise with the province and they say it is going to happen on a revenue-neutral basis, you should walk out of the room. It doesn't make any sense. It won't solve the problem.

Forget about this idea that it is a bad thing to have shared responsibility for government programs. We have these ideas that responsibilities should be hermetically sealed. Even the province has an interest in roads, just like local governments do. Why should we pretend that they don't?

I believe that the idea of trying to fix up local services on a revenue-neutral basis is laughable. You start off with the province taking \$8 billion of the local tax base, and you want to reform the system on a revenue neutral basis: it won't work.

It's time we start thinking about political responsibility and not financial responsibility. Thinking in financial terms means that you have to forget about accountability to the people who are supposed to benefit from government services. Who are they? In education, who's responsible to the parents and the kids and the community? Accountability

in financial terms is not political accountability, it is bean counter's accountability.

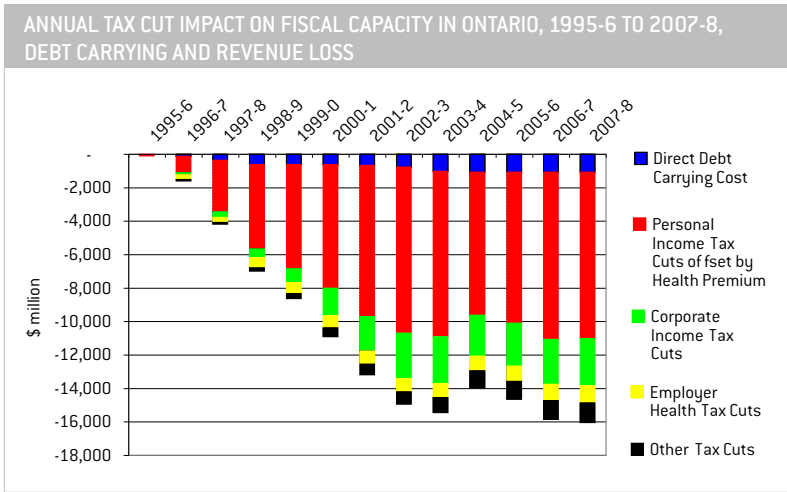
You cannot think about restructuring the relationship between local governments and the province without thinking about infrastructure. It's a sewer down which an infinite amount of money can go without solving the problem.

> ATTACKING PUBLIC SERVICES

Somehow, we have got to develop a system where all three governments can make financial commitments to each other that can last over time. The country can't function if the federal attitude to funding of provincial programs can change so fundamentally with the election of a new government. And this goes for provincial and local governments.

What started in 1995 at the provincial level in Ontario and continued in 2000 at the federal level is a systematic attack on the capacity of governments in Canada to pay for public services. The provincial and federal governments insulated themselves from the problems their policies created by shifting the pain down from the federal government to provincial governments, and onto local governments. We aren't going to make any durable progress on dealing with fiscal issues that local government face until we deal with that reality.

To conclude, when we look at the annual impact of changes in revenue capacity between 1995-6 and 2007-8, one can see the impact of the annual tax loss from the tax cuts introduced between 1995 and 2003 by the Harris government is \$16 billion. Think about that. We could build another elementary and secondary school system with that money. We could run 16 child care programs. We could get the province out of the property tax twice with this. The province has a broader revenue stream, and it's destroyed a big part of that stream.



\$10 Minimum Wage Campaign

A Recent Case Study in Political Bargaining to Improve the Conditions for Low-Wage Workers

JULIUS DEUTSCH is the Executive Assistant with the Toronto and York Region Labour Council. He has worked for many years in unions and in political and community groups and campaigns.

The \$10 an hour minimum wage campaign is relevant to people in our communities who want to make reasonable wages. This campaign speaks to the difficult state in which many people who are working in Ontario today find themselves. The Free Trade Agreement and NAFTA have had huge impacts on our marketplaces and economies. The loss of manufacturing jobs has been a huge problem for many people and many communities.

Jobs of the future must respond to the demand for jobs that pay decent, livable wages. The story of incomes in Ontario over the past few years has been fairly dramatic. The Harris-Eves government froze the minimum wage for eight years. The Chretien-Martin cuts to Employment Insurance (EI) have had a huge impact in terms of workers' ability to access EI. The percentage of workers eligible for EI in Ontario has fallen

below 30 per cent. In communities such as Thunder Bay, eligibility is as low as 19 per cent.

More than a million people in Ontario earn less than \$10 an hour, and most of those people are women, immigrants, workers of colour, youth, and people living in smaller communities where lower wages are the norm. It's not just a Toronto problem, it's a problem around the whole province. A lot of the social problems we have in Ontario are linked to the fact that many younger people can't get jobs that pay a decent wage.

Many of these low-wage earners now work for large multinational corporations, one of them being Wal-Mart. We have a climate in Ontario where many workers have precarious employment. That means that they're working part-time or in non-standard work. Some people work as contractors, where they have no rights under the Employment Standards Act. Others work for temporary employment agencies.

> CATALYSTS FOR CHANGE

In the 2003 provincial election, Dalton McGuinty's Liberals promised to increase the minimum wage to \$8 an hour by 2007. The pressure to increase the minimum wage came as a result of political bargaining. Back then we wanted to see the minimum wage go to \$10, but the McGuinty Liberals wouldn't agree to that. In spite of that, our demand laid the foundation for our \$10 minimum wage campaign.

The decision in the fall of 2006 to go with the \$10 minimum wage campaign came about for a number of reasons. Workers and anti-poverty groups had been organizing around this demand since the 2003 election.

The crucial turning point was the election of Rev. Cheri DiNovo, who won a crucial by-election in Parkdale-High Park in September 2006. When she got into the legislature, she moved a private member's bill that called for an immediate increase in the minimum wage to \$10 per hour. Much to our surprise, the bill got through second reading and was sent to a standing committee for further consideration.

Another piece that was important was having a champion or an ally in the media. The Toronto Star launched a series on the war on poverty and that issue became a rallying point for many people who were pressing for the \$10 minimum wage. The first article in the Star's

series discussed the plight of people who deliver pizza. Pizza delivery people are classified as contract workers under employment standards and have no rights and no benefits.

Another important element in getting the campaign going was Dalton McGuinty's decision to give MPPs a 31 per cent salary increase. The premier himself pocketed a 40 per cent increase in pay. To put it mildly, this decision caused a real firestorm of reaction around the province that the government didn't understand.

> CAMPAIGN BUILDING

Labour councils worked with student groups, ACORN community groups in Toronto and Ottawa, social planning councils, immigrant support groups, the Workers Action Centre, and Campaign 2000, launching a support campaign for Cheri DiNovo's private member's bill on the minimum wage.



We talked to young, low-wage workers, in particular women. In the Jane-Finch area, more than 100 people who crowded into a room were indignant that they couldn't earn \$10 per hour.

All of these groups shared a common vision, which is vital to building coalitions of this type. We had events to support our campaign. We got support from community activists, students, and even some business people. The Toronto Star ran a series of articles after we launched our campaign.

When you're doing economic development you have to ask if you want \$8 per hour jobs in big box stores or if you want skilled manufacturing jobs that pay \$15 or \$16 per hour. With this campaign, we talked to young, low-wage workers, in particular women.

We organized town hall meetings in low-income communities across the City of Toronto. In the Jane-Finch area, more than 100 people crowded into a room who were indignant that they couldn't earn \$10 per hour. We got 3,000 people to sign petitions in Jane-Finch. We also conducted town hall meetings in Mandarin and Cantonese and other languages.

> PENT-UP DEMAND

The campaign took off really quickly due to the fact that there was such a pent-up demand for it. People were angry about the economy. The issue of economic development was top of mind. We were also able to gain support from middle-class people who wanted to see an increase in the minimum wage.

Local municipalities began to pass motions on this issue, including Sudbury, London, Ottawa, and Toronto.

The minimum wage went up to \$8 an hour on February 1, 2007, but the labour minister said it wouldn't go any higher. A week later,

We've now launched a campaign called RESPECT. This campaign has the following demands:

- Respect my right to make \$10 an hour now.
- Respect my right to have a stable, full-time job that pays a livable wage.
- Respect my skills and experiences, wherever I gained them.
- Respect my right to affordable housing, child care, and education.
- Respect my right to have a union voice at work.
- Respect my right to social benefits if I need them.

New Democrat Paul Ferreira upset a Liberal candidate in the York South-Weston by-election after a campaign centred on the \$10 minimum wage. From then on, things changed. The government suddenly felt the heat. It had to promise an anti-poverty budget and the premier began talking about hiking the minimum wage to \$10. It became a matter of when rather than if.

When the Ontario legislature came back in March, the government blinked and announced that the minimum wage would be raised to \$10.25 by 2010. The government thought the issue was resolved, but many people wanted faster action on the \$10 minimum wage.

> CONTINUED CAMPAIGNING

Our campaign was built around the idea that for economic development, we need better than \$8 an hour jobs in big box stores. Having media allies was vital to fighting off scare tactics launched by the business community. Through bargaining, we accomplished a 28 per cent increase for minimum wage workers. That political bargaining was very effective. It

How we approach economic development is key for our local communities. We have to resist pressures that come from economic development departments and some politicians to go for the easy type of development with big box stores.

put \$1 billion of extra income into the pockets of Ontario's poorest workers. Many people now see organized labour as a champion of low-wage workers.

The demands that came out of the campaign have turned into an agenda of economic development for local communities. How we approach economic development is key for our local communities. We have to resist pressures that come from economic development departments and some politicians to go

for the easy type of development with big box stores.

One example of economic development work is in the community of Weston-Mount Dennis, where people are working to see if the 52 acres of land once occupied by the old Kodak plant at Black Creek Road and Eglinton West can be used to develop green manufacturing jobs.

So how do we develop well paying jobs? That's actually the challenge. That's the issue that affects us wherever we are in Ontario.

The Process of Redefining a Town

KATRINA CARRERA is a councillor in the Town of Hearst. She holds a Master's degree in health studies and has been active in a number of community organizations.

> HEARST

This is a story of local people who are taking responsibility for their preferred future. In Hearst, we are in the process of redefining our town and creating a resilient and sustainable community. This redefinition process balances economic viability, the well-being of the community, and the environment. It is also a carefully thought-out process that involves planning, action, and organization.

In northern Ontario, we have a few dominant characteristics, notably declining demographics. More people are moving away and it's often the younger people. The relative and absolute numbers of aging people are increasing and the young workforce is leaving. Amid uncertain world commodity markets, many communities depend on one market or one source of income. In the case of Hearst, the source is the forest industry. In Ontario and elsewhere environmental concerns are at their peak. Any revitalization strategy has to take into account both economic and environmental concerns.

In Hearst we have a smaller population with a large number of older people (two-thirds of people are over the age of 50). We have declining youth participation in activities and many shops are closing. We are dependent on one industry with a strong outside ownership. Twenty years ago, our three mills were locally owned and they were based on community values. Now they are owned by outside agencies where the trend is to consolidate. There is a limited range of jobs.

> WAITING FOR A SAVIOUR

As our problems worsened, people seemed to be waiting for someone to come in and save them. There was a lot of negativity and resistance to change. The fact was that the status quo was no longer working. We could no longer sit and wait for the pulp, paper, and wood-working industries to revitalize our growth. Do we wait and hope or do we take action?

In this situation, we have the opportunity to shape and channel our future as a community. The key in smaller communities that hold strong family values, like the francophone community in Hearst, is to keep a firm grasp on our beliefs and values even as we try to adapt to a new environment.

Being in a small community that is both rural and isolated, we tend to believe that what happens in China or other countries doesn't affect us. But as you know, everything in the global economy will eventually



affect us. Small communities often feel that they cannot compete on the global market and they just let go – they need to regroup and find a way to face the global situation that is here to stay.

Our process of change had a catalyst. We knew the forest industry was suffering, so when we got a proposal from a foreign company for an ethanol plant in Hearst that would use wood chips, that proposal generated a great deal of enthusiasm among people in the town. Unfortunately that project was put on hold when the company ran into problems and the council became concerned. Yet, this potential ethanol plant was one of the catalysts for the need to take action and change our community.

We saw that a healthy economy was based on our forest heritage and the development of natural resources and sustainable secondary business sectors.

> REDEFINING OURSELVES

We started redefining ourselves starting with Perspective 20/20, our economic strategy. Although the analysis was traditional and limited, we used environmental scans and we insisted on using a community approach and focus. The community knows best what it needs, even though it may have trouble organizing itself.

We saw that a healthy economy was based on our forest heritage and the development of natural resources and sustainable secondary business sectors. If the lumber industry is suffering, we need to look at other alternatives. We need to diversify. We have to do the SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats) analysis, starting with our strengths. Locally, one of our strengths is that we're right in the middle of the boreal forest industry. We have access to wood, we have a strong labour force, and we have opportunities to develop partnerships with native communities.

Some of the weaknesses of our situation include a negative attitude to change. Fear makes us less creative. We have low quality fibre and there are dangers from new competitive industries such as wood substitutes.

In my work I looked at development strategies with wood products and I concentrated on secondary wood products. Once the tree has been cut down there is a lot of biomass or wood chips left over. Could we use that biomass?

> OUR STRATEGY

We looked at several things in our strategy. We wanted to maintain the growth that we had in the three mills. We recognized the need to collaborate with governments at the provincial and federal levels, as well as with private industry. To prepare the community for change, we came up with a project called Bio-Com, which is about building a sustainable community in terms of the environment, the social needs of the community, and the economy. Bio-Com is about changing attitudes and values towards the bio-economy. Bio-Com looks at developing products from biomass and biology, while maintaining communication with the community.

One of the biggest projects that we're working on is a pilot project with Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) and other partners. We're developing a genetically modified willow tree that grows in three years.

To prepare the community for change, we came up with a project called Bio-Com, which is about building a sustainable community in terms of the environment, the social needs of the community, and the economy.

We could use that as an energy source, or to produce something else. We're networking and getting involved in new developments in the forest industry.

The first phase of our work concentrated on disseminating information about change. To deal with resistance to change, we had to acknowledge that things are not working well presently. We used different techniques to generate ideas. The three main areas that we're looking at and developing for our

economy are adding value in cultivating products that come from the forest for medicine, personal care, as well as for decorative purposes and gardening. There is our biomass that is eventually going to be a source of energy. We also have value-added fibre products that can be used to build other products.

We set up a steering committee that involved experts on economic development, the business sector, the forest industry, citizens, and people from the ministry of natural resources. We developed a structure and disseminated information through newspapers and radio about new economic alternatives we could look at. We shared information to promote creative thinking among people.

We held community forums with different segments of the population, including young students and the senior population, to get an idea where the community wanted to go and what issues were concerning them. We met with educational institutions to see if they could deliver programs that relate to the environment, energy, and forestry, and we held workshops and a roundtable on regional politics.

We had a major conference on sustainability in April 2007, with forest industry people, private industry, government, environmentalists, and community residents. The focus was to shake people up, make them uncomfortable, and give them the tools and information to get them to look at alternatives. That was phase one, which ended that month, and it is difficult to measure the outcomes, which may be more qualitative than quantitative.

Recommendations came up last January on six key area of focus for the community:

- Vision and leadership
- Community resilience
- The forest of tomorrow
- Innovation and education
- Entrepreneurship
- Youth
- Assessment

It may also be too early to assess the effectiveness of these efforts. The contacts and networking we have begun may not produce tangible results for another year or so. We have met the goal of promoting and working collaboratively. So where do we go now?

Citizens are expecting brick and mortar; they want to see new factories. This is not what they will see short term with our approach. Some are disappointed. This approach works with attitudes and values that will lead to long term sustainability by enabling every citizen to participate and get involve. We are not used to this approach. It is a long term process towards sustainability. We can no longer put band-aids on situations we need to take control of our future.

There are a number of key elements one must consider when looking at redefining a community. One is accepting that there's change involved. Change can be seen as a three-stage process, starting with resistance. The community needs to be able to voice its fears and anxieties.

It is important to highlight the opportunities that are coming up. Open up your mind, and be creative. Communities can begin to move in one direction, but remember that some flexibility is needed. In strategic planning, preparatory work is needed to see the way ahead. Local leaders and leadership need to be established, because they have to be a community's biggest renewable resource.

This activity has given us in Hearst a clearer vision. I have found that people's anxiety level has diminished. We are starting on phase two of the project, which involves making an inventory of our assets, the resources and the human resources that we have in the community. And we continue to work on networking with secondary value-added industries.



NORTHERN ONTARIO | In Ontario and elsewhere environmental concerns are at their peak. Any revitalization strategy has to take into account both economic and environmental concerns.

PART 6

What the People Think

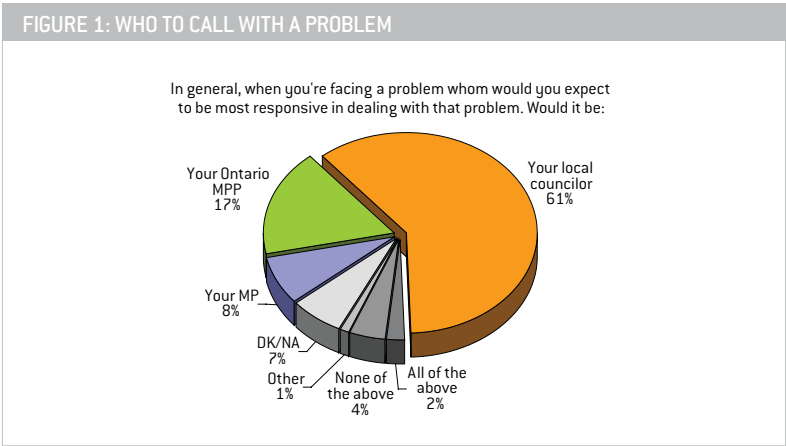
The Columbia Institute's Centre for Civic
Governance Checks in on the Public Pulse



Ontario Polling on Local Government Issues

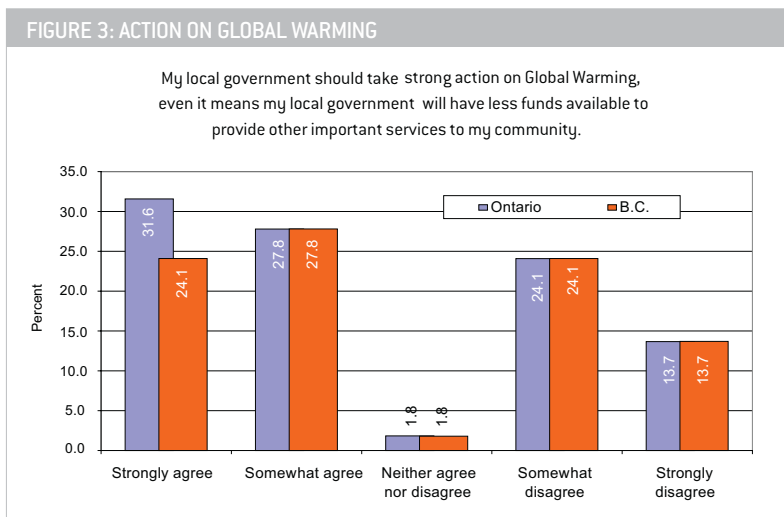
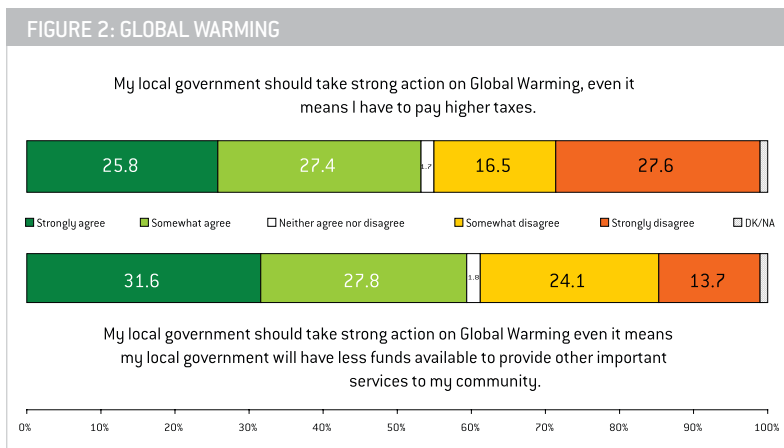
BOB PENNER is the CEO of Strategic Communications, a full service communications, fundraising, and polling firm that has offices in Toronto and Vancouver.

The Columbia Institute commissioned polling questions to determine how Ontarians view local government issues. This poll was fielded in Ontario from June 5 to 11, 2007 and we got a sample size of 604 people, with a margin of error of four, 19 times out of 20. In some places, the results from this poll are compared with a similar poll conducted in British Columbia in March, 2007.



The first question in this poll concerns who people will call when they have a problem (Figure 1). Sixty-one per cent say they would call their local councillor, as opposed to their Member of Parliament or MPP. People find local councillors more responsive than their other representatives. When we asked a similar question in BC we found the numbers for local councillors are lower there than in Ontario.

In the poll we asked questions about global warming (Figure 2). The question here is, “Would the people support action by their local councillor to deal with global warming, even if it involved raising taxes?” The response is a tie. Nevertheless, that’s strong support for taking action on global warming.



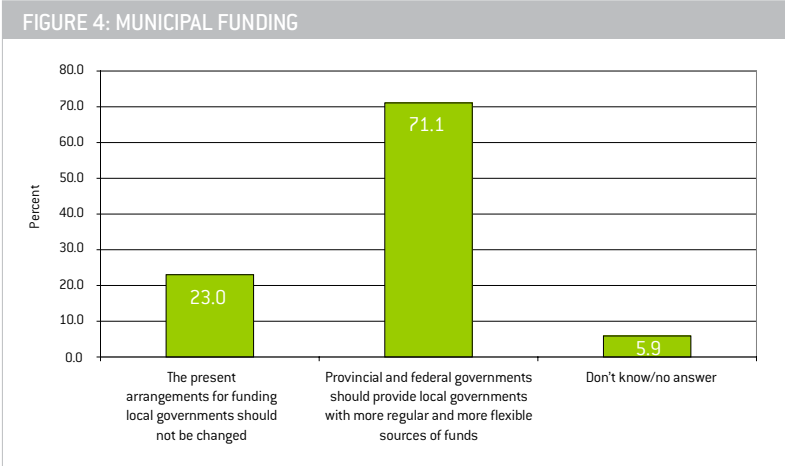
One thing that I have noticed in our polling for municipal elections since 1991 is that the issue of taxes has steadily fallen in importance, election after election. I wouldn't suggest that tax rates aren't important, but they aren't as important as they used to be. It used to always be crime and taxes. Now it's crime and something else.

Should local government take action on global warming, even if it means local government has less money for other important services? The answers are strongly on the "agree" side (Figure 3). People are prepared to sacrifice some other services to deal with global warming.

This is a forced choice question on municipal funding (Figure 4). We asked the following:

Some people believe that local governments have an adequate tax base to provide services and infrastructure for local communities and that its important for local governments to live within their means. They say that the present arrangements for funding local governments should not be changed. Other people believe that local governments do not have an adequate tax base to provide services and infrastructure for local communities. They say that the provincial and federal governments should provide local governments with more regular and more flexible sources of funds. Which is closer to your view?

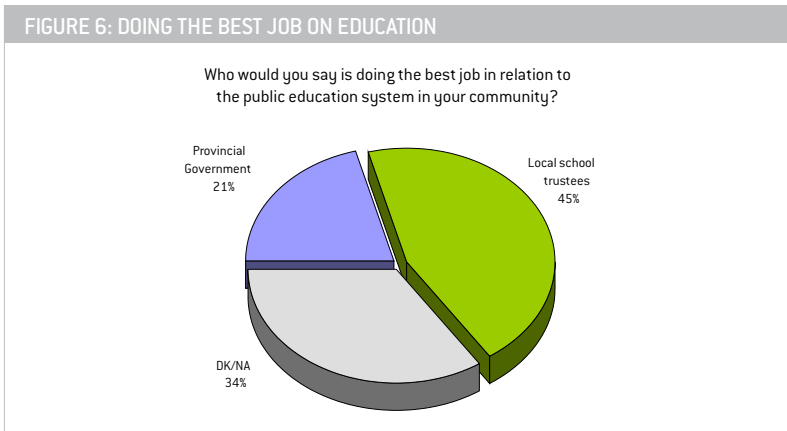
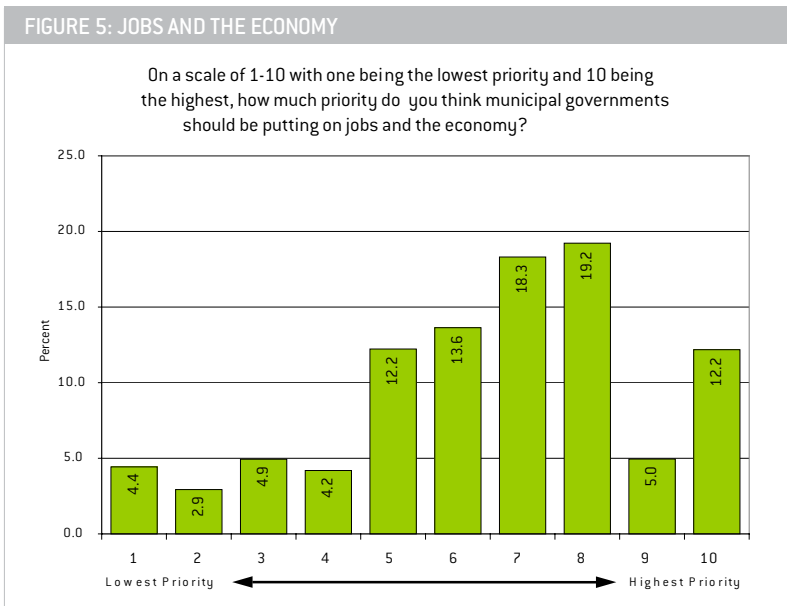
The results show that 71 per cent of people think that municipal governments should have more regular and more flexible sources of funding from provincial and federal governments (Figure 4). That is an overwhelming and positive result. People in BC think the same thing.



The responses are pretty consistent across the regions of Ontario, but this feeling is stronger in northern Ontario.

The next question involves a 10-point scale on jobs and the economy (Figure 5). We asked, “How much priority do you think municipal governments should be putting on jobs and the economy?” You can see that overwhelmingly people believe that municipalities should be dealing with economic issues.


We asked some education questions, starting with, “Who would you say is doing the best job in relation to public education in your



community?” Here we have local school trustees at 45 per cent and the provincial government at 21 per cent (Figure 6). Responses in the various regions of Ontario are similar to each other.

What is the main problem facing public education in each region? This was an open-ended question. Lack of funding was overwhelmingly perceived by the public in every part of Ontario as the main issue facing the public education system (Figure 7).

FIGURE 7: TOP THREE EDUCATION ISSUES BY REGION	
TORONTO	SOUTHWEST ONTARIO
1. Lack of funding	1. Lack of funding
2. Quality/standards	2. Quality/standards
3. Crowded classrooms	3. Not enough teachers
REST OF GTA	CENTRAL ONTARIO
1. Lack of funding	1. Lack of funding
2. Crowded classrooms	2. Crowded classrooms
3. Quality/standards	3. Discipline, violence/safety/drugs
EAST ONTARIO	NORTH
1. Lack of funding	1. Lack of funding
2. Lack of discipline	2. School closures/not enough schools
3. Crowded classrooms	3. Violence/safety/drugs



Innovative Strategies: Ideas for Sustainable Communities is a collection of articles by prominent local politicians, environmentalists, and community leaders who demonstrate how to turn progressive ideas into action .

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- How members of CUPE Local 4156 teamed with the District School Board of Niagara to save energy and money;
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- Economist Hugh MacKenzie on municipal financing;
- Toronto's Model Inner City School initiative;
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