

ALBERTA PLANNING EXCHANGE

The
Newsletter of the Community Planning Association of Alberta



November 2003

Board of Directors

Chair

Tom Baldwin

Vice-Chair: North

Armin Preiksaitis

Vice-Chair: South

Nick Paladino

Directors

Tim Burton

George Gehrke

Archie Grover, Honourary

Phyllis Kobasiuk

Allison Kolody

Bert McFadyen

Mark Oberg

Cathy Olesen

Don Schultz

Gloria Wilkinson

Student Director

Lisa Kahn

Secretary Treasurer

Sue Sych

ALBERTA ANNUAL PLANNING CONFERENCE & EDUCATION SESSION 2004

April 5 to 7, 2004
Capri Centre
Red Deer, Alberta

The Community Planning Association of Alberta CHAIR'S REPORT

The planning for the Community Planning Association of Alberta's 2004 *Alberta Annual Planning Conference and Education Session* is well underway. Association Directors Tim Burton and Allison Kolody are this year's Conference Co-Chairs. The coordination of the Education Session is being led by Association Directors Gloria Wilkinson, Don Schultz and Lisa Kahn. They are all doing a wonderful job in putting together the agendas for these events.

The theme for the 2004 *Alberta Annual Planning Conference* is a very timely and important one. It represents a topic of great interest to municipal governments, land developers, community organizations, development officers, economic development proponents, planners and many more. The Conference will be built around the theme of servicing our communities and regions. Presentations will focus on partnerships, processes and problem areas associated with initiatives of this kind. Please plan to attend.

By the time you receive this edition of the Newsletter, the Alberta Association, Canadian Institute of Planners and the Alberta Development Officers Association will have held their Conferences. By all accounts both conferences were very successful and well attended. On behalf of our Association, I am pleased to extend our congratulations and compliments to our colleague organizations on the success of their annual conferences.

It has been almost a year since Sue Sych became the new Secretary-Treasurer for the Community Planning Association of Alberta. Sue has been doing an outstanding job. Sue's work on the conference, newsletter, the financial affairs of the organization and various other tasks has been excellent.

In closing, I would like to acknowledge the passing of a strong supporter of the Association, a wonderful community leader and good friend to many of us associated with planning, Lorraine Fraser. Lorraine was a long-time elected official with Improvement District No. 8 and the Municipal District of Bighorn. Lorraine's leadership greatly influenced the planning and development of the Bow Corridor area. She was a strong advocate for her municipality and region, as well as a builder of a large network of friends and colleagues that assisted her in her role as an elected official. Lorraine will be dearly missed by family and friends, though fondly remembered by many.

Tom Baldwin,
Chair,
Community Planning Association of Alberta

ANNUAL PLANNING CONFERENCE 2003 – STUDENT ESSAYS

SHAPING THE FUTURE

submitted by
Debra Korevaar

The annual Community Planning Association of Alberta Planning Conference discussed issues around sustainable community planning for the next generation. Being part of this next generation means that the decisions made by planners today will affect the well-being of my life and will influence the challenges ahead of me. This essay discusses what community planning means to me and how the CPAA conference topic fits into my role as a future community planner.

Community Planning

The Basics

Planners tend to joke about *what exactly do planners do?* Well, a little bit of everything and anything it seems because of the change and diversity that is often involved. So, what is community planning? The term community comes from two root words: common and unity. Bopp and Bopp, in "A Practical Guide to Building Sustainable Communities" (2001), say that to be in "community" is to share a common oneness with other people, the focus of which can address all parts of life or just a specific aspect. Community exists when any group of people enter into a sustained relationship with one another to improve themselves and the world they live in. They make decisions together, depend on each other and commit themselves to the group's well-being. A community provides people with a sense of shared identity and destiny.

The Canadian Institute of Planners defines planning as "the scientific, aesthetic, and orderly disposition of land, resources, facilities and services with a view to securing the physical, economic and social efficiency, health and well-being of urban and rural communities." Thus, community planning involves defining and developing a local vision and then designing strategies for moving from the present to the future that are consistent with this vision. It involves an understanding of all aspects of the community: its strengths, capacities, assets, issues, natural and cultural resources. Community involvement is also vital to the practice and success of planning. As professionals, community planners build on local knowledge and resources to work toward creating and maintaining an environment that satisfies the community's needs and is enjoyable to live and work in.

The Inspiration

Planning basically involves any way of decision-making about the future. However, effective community planning is not a destination but a direction; it is shaping the future, not imposing the future. It is the process and journey toward a better quality of life for people and the communities they live in as a whole. Community planning embodies various principles such as sustainability, equity, viability, diversity, livability and vitality. Many people have been inspired to write about the effects of planning on the future and about the critical role that planners and planning play in a community. This is evidenced by quotes such as the following:

"We do make a difference – one way or the other. We are responsible for the impact of our lives. Whatever we do with whatever we have, we leave behind us a legacy for those who follow." – Stephen Covey

"As for the future, your task is not to forsee it, but to enable it." – Antoine de Saint Exupery, poet (1900-1944)

"A hundred years after we are gone and forgotten, those who never heard of us will be living with the results of our actions." – Oliver Wendell Holmes, U.S. Supreme Court Justice

"Growth is inevitable and desirable, but destruction of a community character is not. The question is not whether your part of the world is going to change. The question is how." – Edward T. McMahon, The Conservation Fund

"A good plan today is better than a perfect plan tomorrow." – George S. Patton

"If you are failing to plan, you are planning to fail." – Tariq Siddique

The Journey and the Challenge

The Agora Group covers some of the complex dimensions of planning. It says that every plan is an ideology, therefore planning needs to recognize that it is often value-based. As well, every plan is still a guess and it is dependent on a host of environmental factors. We can estimate the future but it can never be known with total accuracy. Planning must remain flexible for the possibility of a different future than the one predicted.

Vision plays a strong role in the life of a community. The challenge is to work toward making the vision a reality. This is the challenge undertaken by community planning. Planners work as facilitators of this vision, assisting the community in

turning their vision into reality. While most people and professions are concerned about the present, planning shapes the future. Yet because it is carried out in the present, it must remain accountable to the present.

A Little About Me

The Basics

I am currently a planning student in the Faculty of Environmental Design at the University of Calgary, just embarking on the journey of my MDP. A rural southern Albertan girl, I grew up on a farm in the irrigation district near Taber, the Corn Capital of Canada and land of the lo-o-ong sun (and yes, I did used to sell corn alongside the highway)! Growing up in rural Alberta gave me a childhood full of fond memories. It has also given me special insight early on into rural and small community planning issues that many planners may not be exposed to until later in life.

The Inspiration

I was first inspired to study community planning after several summer work terms at the Town of Taber. It was so interesting to tie in my rural background with community planning. I had the opportunity to work on a wide variety of projects (as small-town planners must do) and then I realized- aha! – this is what I want to do.

The Journey and the Challenge

Now, through my studies both at the University of Lethbridge and the University of Calgary, and through work in different communities, I have had the opportunity to learn more about community planning issues and responsibilities. Attending and volunteering at events such as the annual CPAA conference complements this learning. I am able to meet and network with local planning professionals and gain real-world advice. The CPAA conference is an excellent occasion to discover and discuss the issues planners are facing. I gained more insight into the issues facing rural and smaller communities. These issues include: economic diversification, access to government programs and services, local capacity building, financial resources and infrastructure development, regional and strategic partnerships to facilitate community development, and promoting the smaller communities of Alberta as a great place to live.

Volunteering also enables me to get my name and face "out there" and to contribute to a successful event such as the CPAA annual conference. Involvement in the

ANNUAL PLANNING CONFERENCE 2003 – STUDENT ESSAYS

CPAA Conference is also an opportunity to determine how the skills I am obtaining now (and will continue to build on) will help me deal with similar situations in the future. The conference covered the basics, solidified my interests and helped to focus the journey ahead of me. This, I believe, is invaluable for me as a planning student and future community planner. I am able to see what possibilities lie ahead and work to prepare for future challenges now- focus the vision to shape my future.

Amusing Planning Quotes

I hope you enjoy the following quotes as much as I did!

“A common mistake people make when trying to design something foolproof is to underestimate the ingenuity of complete fools.” – Douglas Adams, *The Hitchhikers Guide to the Universe*

“Laws are like sausages, it is better not to see them being made.” – Otto von Bismark, chancellor of Prussia (1815-1898)

“Charettes are what you do until sanity prevails again.” – Patrick Condon, landscape architect

“ ‘Smart growth’ is a code word for whatever the user of the term wants to achieve concerning metropolitan development. Yet different users of the term have totally different goals, so ‘smart growth’ can mean almost anything. In spite of its diverse and often conflicting meanings, all parties superficially endorse ‘smart growth’ because it is clearly superior to the alternative: ‘dumb growth’.” – Anthony Downs, writer

“I have not failed. I’ve just found 10,000 ways that won’t work.” – Thomas Edison, inventor

“Men often oppose a thing merely because they have had no agency in planning it, or because it may have been planned by those whom they dislike.” – Alexander Hamilton (1755-1804)

“The home is where part of the family waits until the others are through with the car.” – Herbert Prochnow

“The trouble with land is that they’re not making it anymore.” – Will Rogers

“The suburb is a place where a developer cuts down all the trees to build houses, and then names the streets after the trees.” – Bill Vaughn

2003 CPAA CONFERENCE STUDENT ESSAY COMPETITION

submitted by
Nicole St. Arnaud

Dear CPAA Board,

I am writing this letter to tell you how much I appreciated the CPAA conference in Red Deer. I found that the sessions that I attended and discussions that I had with professionals really helped me to see what planning is in the working world. The conference greatly contributed to my understanding of community planning in action. I especially enjoyed the education session, and the sessions on the Oak Ridges Moraine, Watershed Planning, and Farm Friendly Planning. Having the opportunity to volunteer was also valuable as it exposed me to more people and allowed me to become more involved.

My interest in planning has always been the natural environment. I have found that my course work at the University of Calgary glosses over this aspect somewhat. I have been discouraged. I felt that in practice, although the natural environment is addressed, it is not really considered. The sessions on the Oak Ridges Moraine and Watershed Planning renewed my hope. I met planners who were genuinely concerned about the natural environment and were working to change the way that we address the natural environment in planning processes. Herb Kuehne, Manager of Municipal Infrastructure of Associated Engineering Alberta Ltd, spoke about the way that floodplains were defined and addressed in planning. He emphasized the importance of floodplains for supporting biodiversity and the health of the watershed and suggested that we should be more conservative about development in floodplains. John Waller spoke of an important natural feature in Ontario and how the public, municipalities, and the provincial government worked together to preserve the ecological and hydrological function of the area. These sessions gave me new hope that my interest in the natural environment may be valued in the planning profession and not buried in concerns of parking spaces and street standards.

The education session was also very valuable to me. This summer, I will be embarking on my thesis research in the Crownsnest Pass area. I will be studying recreational use in public land and trying to make recommendations for an access management plan for the area. I found Mathew MacNeil’s Planning for Change

model which he applied to affordable housing strategies very applicable to my area of research. One of the main problems with the recreational use in public land in the Crownsnest Pass area is that users do not see the environmental damage that they are causing, and there is a high degree of asymmetrical antipathy (one user’s use of the area ruins the experience for other users). Using a planning for change model in implementing a management plan may be a good way to address this problem.

Community planning is a broad term that encompasses many different types of activities and interests. The conference in Red Deer exposed me to yet a few more areas of interest. Other planning conferences that I have attended have not addressed the natural environment, farm interests, and inter-municipal interests as well as the CPAA conference did. It was nice to hear about the experiences of smaller municipalities as most of my exposure to community planning so far had been with the city of Calgary. This showed me that community planning encompasses not only your distinct community, but the communities around you, whether they are natural communities, farm communities, or other municipalities. It is important to take a broader look at planning for your community.

The topics that were most useful to me at the conference were the education session, Watershed Planning, and Farm Friendly Planning. As discussed above, the education session exposed me to a new model that I will be able to use in my thesis, Watershed Planning gave me new hope for consideration of the natural environment in planning, and Farm Friendly Planning made me realize how important it is to think of communities beyond your boundaries when planning for your community.

The value of my experience at the conference is not only in the learning that took place in the different sessions, but in the discussions I had with practicing planners in various areas. I met many interesting people and ran into some old acquaintances. I had the opportunity to meet practicing planners and ask them some questions about their work environment and how they address different problems on the job.

These experiences helped me to see how my interests and abilities might fit into the world of community planning.

Thank you for this opportunity. I have been very impressed with the efforts that CPAA has spent to include and mentor students. The experience of having contact with professional planners is invaluable to my learning experience.

THE ALBERTA ANNUAL PLANNING CONFERENCE 2004

April 5, 6 & 7, 2004 – Capri Centre, Red Deer, Alberta

“Servicing Our Communities and Regions: Opportunities, Processes and Partnerships”

As Alberta’s population continues to grow rapidly, both our urban infrastructure and our rural areas face increasing stresses and strains. Water resources, waste disposal systems, public transportation, parks and recreation, housing and utilities are all experiencing serious pressures from population growth. While we can expect a variety of solutions to be proposed for addressing these growth pressures, inter-municipal, regional and public-private partnerships offer both new and previously tested perspectives and opportunities.

SOME OF THE INVITED SPEAKERS

- Honourable Honourable Mark Norris, Minister of Alberta Economic Development
- Honourable Ed Stelmach, Minister of Alberta Transportation
- Honourable Gene Zwozdesky, Minister of Alberta Community Development
- Jay Ramotar, Deputy Minister, Alberta Transportation
- Walter Paszkowski, Director of Economic Development, County of Grande Prairie
- Louise Kidney, Senior Advisor, Business Opportunities, Alberta Innovation & Science
- Mark Seasons, Assistant Professor, School of Planning, University of Waterloo
- Albert Cooper, President, Peace Air
- Ron Mattiussi, Director of Planning and Corporate Services for the City of Kelowna
- Paul Ruffell, President and Chief Operating Officer, EBA Consultants Ltd.
- Randy Conrad, Conrad and Associates
- Bill Smith, Mayor, City of Edmonton
- Carolyn Kolebaba, Reeve, Northern Sunrise County
- Ken Kobly, Mayor, Town of Beaumont
- Shane Erickson, Project Developer, Qualico Communities

Conference Agenda Topics

- ✓ Telecommunications Technology and Small Town Development
- ✓ Planning and Designing Public Transportation Systems
- ✓ Working Together on Community Facilities and Services
- ✓ Opportunities in Solid Waste Management
- ✓ Planning for the Developed Area/Wildland Interface
- ✓ Innovative Housing in a Changing Market
- ✓ The Future of Alberta's Transportation Systems
- ✓ Water for Life

EDUCATION SESSION 2004

Monday, April 5, 2004 ~ 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

“Sustaining Community Engagement”

Building on last year’s *Partners in Planning* workshop, Education Session 2004 will explore how we foster long-lasting citizen involvement in our planning endeavours. We will focus on how to turn issue-specific community activism into durable grass-roots community planning organizations.

Moderators: Gloria Wilkinson and Don Schultz, Directors, C.P.A.A.

CONFERENCE & EDUCATION SESSION REGISTRATION FEES

CPAA ALBERTA ANNUAL PLANNING CONFERENCE 2004

April 5 to 7, 2004

Registration Fee paid by February 20, 2004.....\$210
Registration Fee after February 20, 2004.....\$240

Registration fee for Conference includes:

- Conference Reception – April 5th (7:00 to 10:00 p.m.)
- Conference Sessions – April 6th (9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.) and April 7th (10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon)
- Lunch and Banquet – April 6th (11:45 a.m. and 6:00 p.m.)
- Coffee Breaks

EDUCATION SESSION 2004

April 5, 2004 – 9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Registration Fee.....\$195

Registration fee for Education Session 2004 includes:

- Working Lunch
- Session Workbook

STUDENTS

Registration Fee (*Conference & Education Session*).....\$50

Please forward Conference and Education Session 2004 registrations and requests for booth space to the Association's Secretary Treasurer, Sue Sych, by phone/fax (780-597-2428); e-mail (cpaa@telus.net); or by regular mail to: Community Planning Association of Alberta, P.O. Box 176, Brownvale, Alberta T0H 0L0

* There will be **NO REFUNDS**, however, registrations are transferable to another delegate.

* Extra Lunch & Banquet tickets will be available at the Registration Desk.

* Display space is available for \$100 per space (includes one banquet ticket). Tables are available if necessary.

HOTEL ACCOMMODATIONS

The Capri Centre,
3310 – 50th Avenue,
Red Deer, Alberta T4N 3X9
Reservations: **1-800-662-7197 (TOLL FREE)**

Room Rates (plus Provincial Tax & G.S.T.):

Standard.....\$90
Superior.....\$115
Deluxe\$129

Please make your own room reservation. When registering, remember to tell the Capri Centre that you are a delegate of the 2004 Alberta Annual Planning Conference.

SILENT AUCTION

Don't miss this year's Silent Auction. Items will be displayed during the Conference and will be auctioned off immediately following the Conference Banquet.

2003 ALBERTA ANNUAL PLANNING CONFERENCE SUMMARIES

KEYNOTE ADDRESS: MAKING SMART GROWTH WORK Cheeying Ho, Executive Director, Smart Growth B.C.

INTRODUCTION

Smart Growth is a province-wide, non-profit, non-governmental organization, funded by foundations, grants and donations. Smart growth works with individual communities in order to increase and create livability within a community.

There were five different elements to Ms. Ho's speech:

- What are the problems with sprawl?
- What is smart growth?
- Ten smart growth principles.
- Smart growth strategies.

PROBLEMS WITH URBAN SPRAWL

There are many questions that one is faced with when dealing with the problems of urban sprawl. Are you eating up your basic beauty? Are you losing your basic attraction? Is it good filling up everything you see until you see the base of the Rockies?

The problem with sprawl in Alberta is that it is eliminating the very thing that people love so much about living in Calgary – the Mountains. Alberta's population has grown over 10% in the past five years, and by doing so, many natural resources and space has been infilled with housing and other accommodations.

The challenge for Alberta is to find a way to accommodate population growth, encourage continued economic development and increased wealth, while protecting the beauty of the land and natural assets.

Sprawl is poorly planned developments characterized by the conversion of natural or agricultural land to residential suburbs, commercial centres and business parks that are separated from one another by roads and parking lots. Sprawl means long distances between homes and work or shopping, heavy reliance on roads and automobiles, and the destruction of the very feature that induces many to live in rural developments – the natural landscape.

STRATEGIES FOR ADDRESSING URBAN SPRAWL: SMART GROWTH

Definition: *Smart growth*: urban development approaches that are fiscally, socially and environmentally responsible.

Smart growth is:

- Compact, complete, vibrant communities.
- Good public transit, bikeways and walkable neighbourhoods.
- Greenspaces, parkland.
- Secure and productive agricultural land base.
- A range of affordable housing options.
- Investment in existing communities.
- An actively engaged citizenship.

TEN SMART GROWTH PRINCIPLES

1. *Build complete, compact communities that avoid sprawl*

This implies mixed land uses through zoning by-laws, which provides incentives for higher densities, for infill

and redevelopment projects.

2. *Create walkable communities*

This suggests a five-minute walking distance from homes to transit and shops. This would provide elements for traffic calming, pedestrian oriented street design, shops and homes facing the street.

3. *Promote development patterns that encourage the use of sustainable transportation.*

By creating a plan for regional transportation, a community can integrate transportation planning with land use, air quality, affordable housing and economic development goals.

Effective transit policy must be tied with density.

4. *Foster distinctive, attractive, vibrant communities with a strong sense of place.*

This implies mixed land uses, a creation of public places by preserve heritage buildings and ensuring a pedestrian-oriented design.

5. *Protect and preserve green spaces and Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA's) in urban and suburban areas.*

By identifying ESA's, green zones and urban growth boundaries, a community can develop conservation covenants; create parks, greenways and stewardship protection by-laws.

6. *Ensure the integrity of a secure and productive agricultural land base.*

Don't waste land by building outwards when you can build upon existing density.

7. *Provide more choice in housing types, sizes and prices*

This suggests the encouragement for housing with retail and businesses in the downtown as well as infill development.

Revise zoning by-laws and building codes to permit a wider variety of housing types.

Link regional housing strategies with regional economic development strategies.

8. *Promote efficient infrastructure and alternative development standards.*

We need to reward and facilitate green development, adopt LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) standards and use the green infrastructure.

9. *Strengthen and direct development towards existing communities.*

A community needs to support economic development strategies that enhance local communities and invest in existing neighbourhoods rather than greenfield sites.

10. *Ensure an early and ongoing role for community in engaging in planning, design and development processes.*

This can be done through design Charettes, Official Community Plan reviews, Regional Growth Strategies, Neighbourhood Concept Plans, Local Area Plans, Public hearings and Advisory committees.

SMART GROWTH STRATEGIES

- *Urban containment boundaries*
Set boundaries for development, e.g. greenbelts & agricultural land reserves
- *Regional growth strategies*
Coordinated long-term vision and plan adopted by

2003 ALBERTA ANNUAL PLANNING CONFERENCE SUMMARIES

municipalities in a regional district.

- *Official Community Plans / Municipal Development Plans*
Statement of policies and vision.
- *Use of zoning and land use by-laws*
Regulate use of land, location of building, structures.
Regulate density (e.g. dwellings per area or lot, the percentage of parcel area that may be covered by buildings, and the ratio of building area to parcel area).

CONCLUSION

Benefits of reducing sprawl

- Compact centres and walkable neighbourhoods.
- Protection of farmland, forest land, greenspace.
- More efficient use of infrastructure.
- Less pavement and pollution to groundwater.
- Less time spent driving.
- More affordable housing.
- Preserve the things we love!

*Submitted by Lisa Kahn, Student Director,
Community Planning Association of Alberta*

LUNCHEON SPEAKER:

Brad Pickering, Deputy Minister, Alberta Municipal Affairs

Mr. Pickering gave an update on the initiatives of the department relating to the theme: Sustainability – Planning for the Future. There is a proposed amendment to legislation that would allow municipalities to levy transportation fees for new subdivisions and developments and to offset the related costs associated with developments and growth pressures. This would also help fund transportation infrastructure costs. The Minister of Municipal Affairs' council has developed a framework that defines the relationship between the Provincial Government and Alberta's municipalities. There is a strong focus on regional partnerships, especially through the Regional Partnership Initiative, believing that there is much to be gained from municipalities working together and sharing resources. Some examples include the attraction and retention of investment, quick reaction to opportunities and threats, effectively manage growth and provide services while also addressing environmental issues. The Alberta Government also believes that local problems and issues can best be solved locally in the region.

Alberta Municipal Affairs is in a partnership with Municipal Infrastructure Management System (MIMS) with the objective of developing decision-making tools to help municipalities better manage their infrastructure. The system will allow municipalities to capture inventories and condition assessments of roads, water, sanitary sewage and storm drainage systems. Municipal Affairs has provided \$2 million in grant funding to the MIMS. Another project, Title Mapping, is a joint initiative that provides titles mapping data for the entire province. This gives municipalities a low cost access to reliable and current title mapping that can be linked to other applications like property tax assessments. By year end, all Alberta municipalities will be able to access

the data that links land titles to the base provincial map. The United States is further ahead in regards to Smart Growth; however, we can learn from them and hopefully, catch up to them. Alberta Municipal Affairs encourages municipalities to plan strategically towards Smart Growth. A manual is expected by fall providing answers to legal and procedural questions regarding the appointed Subdivision and Development Appeal Boards to ensure consistency across the province. *✍*

*Submitted by Karen Kreis, Student Coordinator,
Alberta Annual Planning Conference 2003*

LUNCHEON SPEAKER:

Dr. Mike Percy, Dean of Business, University of Alberta

Dr. Percy spoke about the successes of Alberta in Canada and North America. He briefly touched on the Alberta Growth Forecast and the impacts of Kyoto. Professor Percy predicts that Japan and Europe will become weaker economic states while Canada will become stronger. Alberta, in particular, will be a super star with its economic expansion and continued sustainable growth. As much as \$188.7 billion went into petro-chemicals and the oil sands. The United States' economy will continue to slow due to home security and the SARS outbreak, also to impact Ontario. There is the possibility capital investment will decrease at some point, which is the driving force behind Alberta's success. With Alberta's prosperity, there is immigration, which benefits the federal and provincial government. It is the local governments that suffer the economic and social costs of in-migration since the impacts occur at the local level.

As for Kyoto, Canada has signed on whereas the United States has not, putting the oil and gas industry at a disadvantage. By 2010, there will be a 6% decrease in the emissions by the industry. There is no certainty beyond 2010, which takes the Kyoto Accord into its second stage of compliance. One problem with the Accord is that the targets are known but the cost and who will carry them is not. Nevertheless, Kyoto may not be as bad as was initially thought; thus Alberta will continue to prosper with capital investment over the next two years and Calgary will benefit enormously. Over the long term, there is an expected increase in services, wages along with a push for labour safety technology. There are incentives for collaboration with regional groupings and regional specialization. Agriculture will continue to consolidate and specialty crops will become more evident but commodity prices may continue to fall. Overall though, the oil sands will continue to drive the Alberta economy with a positive outlook for the future. *✍*

*Submitted by Karen Kreis, Student Coordinator,
Alberta Annual Planning Conference 2003*

2003 ALBERTA ANNUAL PLANNING CONFERENCE SUMMARIES

URBAN INTENSIFICATION: *GROWING INWARDS*

- **Rob Taylor, President,**
Connaught Community Association
- **Lucas Rojek, Chairman,**
Beltline Planning Group
- **Bob van Wegen, Second Vice President,**
Connaught Community Association

This presentation explored the unique character and development of an important part of Calgary's urban fabric. The area known as the *Beltline*, located just south of the downtown core, is a high density mixed-use community with a growing residential population of approximately 15,000 people. This inner city community is described by Lucas Rojek as the second half of Calgary's downtown heart. As members of the very active Beltline Community Association, Rob, Lucas and Bob, presented their vision for the area with a strong focus on civic engagement and smart future development. As an alternative to suburban growth, the high density Beltline Community is a pedestrian friendly environment that promotes lifestyle choices and reduces dependence on the automobile. The community's location and physical layout provides residents with easy access to downtown, employment, shopping, services and quality public spaces without the need for a car.

Through further intensification of this already intense area of Calgary, the presenters strive for continued high quality development that incorporates a diverse range of medium to high density residential mixed-use developments. Attention to streetscape, physical form and a fine grain type of development will contribute to the already unique atmosphere of the area. This spontaneous, organically developed community has established a strong and proud voice for its future development, working hard to further the Beltline as an increasingly vibrant and important residential mixed-use component of the downtown. The presentation outlined three core principles for future development of the Beltline Community:

1. **Density:** Increasing density and intensifying.
2. **Variety:** Promoting a variety in land use and built form.
3. **Quality:** Maintenance and promotion of quality development with unique character: good design, public realm: streetscape, sidewalks, trees, boulevards.

The Beltline:

- Linking to Cheeving Ho's Smart Growth Strategies – Beltline is a good example of smarter growth.
- Strong civic engagement.
- Intensifying what is already an intense area of Alberta.
- Comfortable pedestrian inner city environment.
- Business Revitalization Zones are working with the community towards common goals.
- Spontaneous, organically developed area of the city
- The community sees Calgary from the centre, not the outside in.
- Livable inner city.

- An alternative to suburban growth – a competitor for the suburbs.
- Medium to high density residential: want to provide lots of housing choices / variety of incomes.
- Development that uses existing infrastructure.
- Community provides a lifestyle choice; multi-modal transportation.
- Accessibility to work and necessities without the need for a car.
- Strive to evoke a pride in the downtown – Residential component needs to increase.
- Half of the heart of the city. The other half is the downtown. The beltline is one part of the vibrant whole and provides a good link to other areas of the city.
- Not seeking too much conversion of existing, but instead a higher density build out of the remaining areas.
- High quality streetscape.

Community Building:

- Community newspaper "The Beltline Outlook" is key for strong communication link with the community. Best means given the population of the community.
- Stress quality in the paper and ensure it is delivered to every address in the community.
- Promote variety within and across the community.
- Power through the community association.

Challenges:

- Creating a family friendly environment in the core of the city.
- Attracting empty nesters in order to free up family houses.

Questions:

- How do you balance commercial/ office with residential?
-- Try to develop comfortable mixed use.
- Is the Canadian Pacific Railway the biggest barrier?
-- The biggest challenge is the high traffic volume on 11th and 12th Avenue.
-- Trying to make access to downtown as permeable as possible.
- Is there opposition to your intensification initiative?
-- There has been a change, 15 years ago there would be but now the resistance is minimal.
-- The most resistance is in the re-development of heritage or historically important sites.
- How do you deal with the high land costs and the attempt to create affordability?
-- One example is a project slated for the old ATCO site. It will provide 370 affordable rental units.
- What are you seeking for official support?
-- Amalgamation of Victoria Park and Connaught.
-- Blueprint for the Beltline – Special area studies.
-- Public realm and parks.
-- Parking and transportation standards.
-- Innovative financing. ✍

*Submitted by Ryan Perry, Student Coordinator,
Alberta Annual Planning Conference 2003*

ABOUT PLANS

..... The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo Municipal Strategic Plan 2003-2006

By: Tom Baldwin, Chair, Community Planning Association of Alberta

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo recently released its Municipal Strategic Plan 2003-2006. The Plan provides excellent insight into the strategic directions to be taken by the Regional Municipality over the next few years.

Our Vision and Our Mission

The Council for The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo has adopted the following Vision and Mission for the municipality:

Vision: A balanced future with opportunity for all.

Mission: Continually improve quality of life within our communities by acquiring resources to provide valued services.

Key Action Areas

The Municipal Strategic Plan 2003-2006 addresses the following key action areas:

- ✓ Deliver Best Value;
- ✓ Empower Our People;
- ✓ Engage Our Citizens;
- ✓ Champion Innovation; and
- ✓ Collaborate Effectively.

The following are examples of the description and targets assigned to a few of these key action areas.

Deliver Best Value

We will make the best use of resources (people, systems, time and money), and recruit and retain quality people. We will focus on the diversity of core services at a reasonable cost; we will prioritize service delivery; we will provide services that are measurable and responsive to change.

Targets by 2006:

- ◆ Balanced plan to deliver basic services and “quality of life” infrastructure.
- ◆ New facilities, as identified in the capital budget, are open for use.

Champion Innovation

As a learning organization, we will think strategically, promote creativity, take calculated risks, challenge the status quo, develop best practices, and continually improve.

Targets by 2006

- ◆ Comprehensive regional municipal environmental plan incorporated into our way of doing business.
- ◆ We have a regional technology strategy.
- ◆ Community strategy for diversification of economic opportunity and citizen retention.

As an overarching statement, the Council for The Regional Municipality has included the following in its *Municipal Strategic Plan 2003-2006*:

◆ **We trust and value:**

Our people - we value safety, meaningful work, work-life balance, learning, mutual support and respect.

Sharing information - we talk to each other about the way we work together.

For Further Information:

To view the complete Municipal Strategic Plan, visit The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo's website at www.woodbuffalo.ab.ca.

The Community Planning Association of Alberta ??? How To Reach Us ???

Do you want to become a member of the Community Planning Association of Alberta? Do you need information regarding the Alberta Annual Planning Conference? Are you interested in community planning in Alberta? Please see our website (www.cpaa.biz) or contact Sue Sych, the Association's Secretary-Treasurer, at:

Community Planning Association of Alberta

P.O. Box 176
Brownvale, Alberta T0H 0L0

Telephone..... 780-597-2428

Fax..... 780-597-2428

E-mail..... cpaa@telus.net

THE COMMUNITY PLANNING ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA REPORT

Scholarship Program

At the most recent meeting of the Community Planning Association of Alberta's Board of Directors, Gloria Wilkinson provided an evaluation of the Association's scholarship program. Gloria's report was very positive, as the outcomes associated with this Program have been excellent. The Board of Directors has decided to continue with the scholarship program as is. As noted by Gloria, the program has been an effective way to advance the Association's goal for contact with planning students in Alberta.

Education Session 2003

Association Director Don Schultz put together an extensive evaluation of the 2003 Education Session. The evaluation was developed through input from those people that attended last year's Education Session. This type of information is invaluable to the Association in terms of planning for the 2004 Education Session and, perhaps more importantly, ensuring that the Session is a relevant one for those attending it. For those of you who provided comments on the 2003 Education Session, please accept the Association's sincere thanks as your input was very useful.

New Executive Director, Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties

The Association's Board of Directors extended its best wishes to Gerald Rhodes, the new Executive Director of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties. We are looking forward to working with Gerald and to continuing our excellent relationship with the Association.

Nomination Committee

Association Directors George Gehrke and Mark Oberg will be the members of the 2004 Nomination Committee. If you are interested in becoming a member of the Association's Board of Directors, please do not hesitate to contact George or Mark.

Annual Reception, Environmental Design Students

Lisa Kahn, the Association's Student Director, is organizing the Board of Directors' annual meeting with the planning students enrolled in the University of Calgary's Environmental Design Program. The meeting will probably be organized for the early part of the new year. These meetings provide the Association with an excellent opportunity to connect with the planning students, while making them aware of the Association and opportunities for them to become involved in the activities of the organization.

Silent Auction

Please consider providing the Association with an item for its annual fund-raising Silent Auction. This annual event is held as part of the *Alberta Annual Planning Conference*.

**DON'T MISS THE 2004
ALBERTA ANNUAL
PLANNING CONFERENCE
~ REGISTER NOW!!**

COMMUNITY PLANNING
ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA
**2004 ALBERTA ANNUAL
PLANNING CONFERENCE**

***“Servicing Our Communities
and Regions:
Opportunities, Processes and
Partnerships”***

April 5, 6 and 7, 2004
Capri Centre
Red Deer, Alberta