

Editor's Introduction

One hundred years ago reformers in Canada were talking about the need for town planning to deal with inefficient suburban development, reckless land speculation, ineffective transportation systems, and unhealthy urban living conditions. While the specifics of concern have changed over the century, planners today worry about many of the same problems that faced our ancestors. What does it take to design cities that are safe and attractive for alternative transportation? What can we do to make it possible for vulnerable populations to be active and mobile in our cities? How can we design our communities to be more sustainable and efficient? What kind of development do we want? Although our cities are larger and wealthier than they were in 1910, the questions planners ask every day in their practice have not changed as much as we might think. By contrast, though, the answers that we hear across the country reflect the different trials and tribulations of contemporary life.

Each summer the Institute of Urban Studies teams up with the Association of Canadian University Planning Programs and the Canadian Institute of Planners to produce a special issue of the *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* on Canadian Planning and Policy. This issue presents a collection of recent work from planning and policy scholars from across the country and beyond. The first three papers consider contemporary experiences in trying to promote economic development, address inequities, and advance regional planning approaches. First, Neil Bradford reflects on the competing ideologies that underlie approaches to economic development in London, Ontario, a mid-sized city that has struggled with the decline of its manufacturing sector. Geneviève Cloutier, Léa Méthé-Myrand and Gilles Sénécal evaluate planning experiences aimed at revitalizing distressed communities with a special focus on the participation of social and local actors in Montreal. Nicolas Douay examines the extent to which metropolitan regional planning in Marseille and Montreal are continuing traditional planning approaches or advancing towards collaborative planning.

Two papers discuss transportation issues in two of Canada's largest urban centres. Jacob Larsen, Ahmed El-Geneidy, and Farhana Yasmin present data from a Montreal study that finds that people walk farther than many transportation planning models have typically suggested. Ren Thomas reports on a study of young people in Vancouver that provides useful insight on the challenges faced by those who do not have access to automobile transportation.

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In the final paper, David Hendrickson raises an important question often overlooked in discussions about how to plan more sustainable cities: what should we be doing about the over-consumption at the root of many of our resource challenges?

Although planners today may not see the City Beautiful as a preferred planning strategy, they remain as committed to civic beautification (through urban design) as were the early town planners. Although planners may criticize the City Scientific model as overly-rigid and naïve they have not given up on a comprehensive regional planning approach. A century of planning has made a difference in the quality of urban life in Canada but it has not obviated the need for continued attention to what it takes to plan for good communities. We hope that the papers included here will inspire planners and policy-makers to keep searching for new and improved strategies to make our cities better in the years to come.

L'introduction du rédacteur

Certains textes font référence au tournant communicationnel et collaboratif comme nouvelle approche de planification, en opposition au modèle rationnel traditionnel. Mais ils reconnaissent aussi la difficulté de la mise en pratique dans des cas concrets, tant à l'échelle micro locale qu'à l'échelle métropolitaine. Ces nouvelles approches requièrent une ouverture et une disponibilité à la diversité des acteurs, mais aussi du temps et des énergies supplémentaires que l'on n'arrive pas toujours à ménager. Les planificateurs d'aujourd'hui ont peut-être besoin d'une formation renouvelée, en particulier en termes de communication et de négociation.

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