

Moving from Theory to Practice: Research that Examines Implementation of Canadian Plans

This volume of *Canadian Planning and Policy* (CPP) is the tenth in collaboration between the Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP), the Association of Canadian University Planning Programs (ACUPP), and the *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* (CJUR). The monograph is a deliberate link between the Canadian planning academy and our professional planners' national institute, and between theory and practice.

As it happens, most of the articles in this year's monograph address implementation issues for Canadian plans. This is not an accident, since CPP seeks out research that informs professional practice and plan implementation certainly fits that mandate. Monitoring and implementing plans is a field that is under-researched (Baer 1997; Berke et al. 2006; Talen 1996) and Canadian studies are relatively rare (Linovski and Loukaitou-Sideris 2013; Seasons 2002).

Clara MacCallum Fraser and Leela Viswanathan start this year's issue with a case study of one of the most difficult Canadian land use policy issues—how should we implement the Crown duty to consult First Nations? This issue has confounded federal and provincial planners for over a decade, but MacCallum Fraser and Viswanathan literally take the issue to a new level, considering how the duty to consult should be executed in municipal governments. They use Hamilton's Red Hill Valley Parkway as a case study to explore how municipal planners should consult First Nations communities in order to meet Crown obligations dating back to the Royal Proclamation of 1763. The municipal planners were operating without much guidance, since current legislation and court rulings are inadequate to guide professional practice. At the same time, most First Nations communities will require additional capacity-building if they are to meaningfully engage in the municipal planning process within the vast territories currently covered by outstanding land claims (Walker 2008).

Frances Rawlyk and Robert Patrick also identify needs for additional institutional capacity to implement plans protecting the sources of our drinking water.

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Although the deaths in Walkerton focused Ontario's attention to the need for source water protection (SWP), this issue is even more important in the Prairie provinces, where half the urban population of Alberta and Saskatchewan depend upon the water from a single river system: the South Saskatchewan. Rawlyk and Patrick's case study of that river basin find that most of the agencies responsible for SWP implementation needed better data, improved training, more enforcement powers and tighter linkages to other organisations.

Mark Stevens and Alisha Mody evaluate twenty municipal sustainability plans in British Columbia. Practicing planners often have difficulty identifying exactly what sustainability should mean and how the concept should be implemented. Stevens and Mody evaluated a broad sample of documents against a set of 38 factors that promote implementation of plans. They found that most plans contained weak provisions for implementation efforts and little monitoring of results. The authors provide direct and useful recommendations to ensure that sustainability goals and objectives are achieved in municipal plans.

More compact urban form is a common recommendation to achieve reduction in greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions, which is a common municipal sustainability objective and a priority of the CIP's program to address climate change (Cappe & Brown 2010). A research team led by Maged Senbel examined a municipal form-based code as a tool to assist a small community to reduce GHG emissions. These codes are a smart growth tool that have replaced zoning bylaws and land-use districts in several hundred American municipalities, in hopes of creating more compact development patterns (Talen 2013). Their case study was Revelstoke BC, the first Canadian community to adopt a municipal form-based code. Senbel, van der Laan, Kellett, Girling and Stuart demonstrate that in a small city such as Revelstoke (2011 population 7100), form-based codes may be an improvement compared to zoning for creating more compact form, but they are unlikely to change the development pattern in a sufficiently major way to produce the outcomes that needed to reduce absolute GHG emissions, such as sufficient density to support a shift from automobiles to public transit or from individual furnaces to district heating. The authors conclude that while there may be other compelling reasons to adopt form-based codes, reducing overall GHG emissions is an unlikely outcome in a small town, even under the densest development scenarios.

Finally, Jessica Wegener, Mark Seasons and Kim Raine help us understand implementation issues in local food systems planning, another current topic where the profession is just beginning to develop protocols. They use Waterloo Region as a case study to identify gaps and co-ordination issues in local, regional and provincial food policies. One of their more practical recommendations is that the term "agriculture" be a separate land use with specific and supportive policies in local and regional plans. This simple and obvious change may be the first step to better food system planning in many municipalities that have underestimated their potential to assist local food production.

This annual publication, which is a collaborative effort between CIP, ACUPP, and CJUR, has a goal to provide a forum for detailed peer-reviewed research on planning in Canada that invites reflection by practitioners, academics, and students.

We also aim to publish this useful research in a timely fashion, to assist investigators in getting their results out to practitioners as soon as possible. Our editorial team has averaged 6-7 months from first submission to delivery of printed copies over the past five years, which is lightning-fast in an era of three-year publication marathons in other academic journals. This service is appreciated by researchers and we have received more good material than we could publish recently. So ACUPP has begun discussions with CIP to publish *Canadian Planning and Policy* more frequently, feature it on the revised CIP web site and to link it more closely with *Plan Canada*, which reaches every CIP member.

We look forward to another decade of service to the Canadian planning academy and profession.

David L.A. Gordon

Guest Editor, 2013 *Canadian Planning and Policy*

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