

# The Land Economist



PHOTO: Ambassador Fine Custom Homes

In February, this impressive 18,000 square foot manor garnered Ambassador Fine Custom Homes of Mississauga the Canadian Home Builders' Association's National SAM Award for Best Custom Home over 4,000 square feet. Systems include five energy efficient furnaces, five heat recovery ventilators, six air conditioners, and in-floor heating. See page 2 for other Ontario award winners.

Winter 2010 - 11 Vol. 41, No. 1

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Professional Journal of the

**Association of  
Ontario Land  
Economists**



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# Ontario winners at CHBA SAMs

Ontario firms took four main honours at the housing industry's National Sales and Marketing Awards at the Canadian Home Builders' Association conference in Banff in February.

**Ambassador Fine Custom Homes Inc.** of Mississauga won the award for single-detached custom home over 4,000 square feet, as noted on page 1.



**Phelps Homes Ltd** of Grimsby, won the award for new single-attached homes for the *Voronoff Model* in *The Residences of Jordan Village*.

**Doug Tarry Homes** of St. Thomas won the award for single detached production home under 1,500 square feet with *The Morningdale* in *Orchard Park*.



**Empire Communities** of Thornhill won the coveted Marketing Excellence award as well as best brochure/kit and best signage/logo for *Schoolhouse*, the conversion of the former Loretto College in Toronto into condominiums. Creative, concept and production was by 52 Pick Up.

The Grand SAM award for combined excellence in building and marketing went to ParkLane Homes of Vancouver.

tain an 'offer to connect' from distributors. Rates dropped to 71.3 cents per kWh for rooftop solar photovoltaic projects and 44.3 cents per kWh for ground-mounted (compared to 80.2 and 64.2 cents under MicroFIT). OPA expects to start accepting applications in March.

## LEED and architectural design don't trump neighbourhood - OMB

In January, the OMB turned down an argument that a project's Modernist design and commitment to LEED certification should allow it to override neighbours' concerns about massing and height.

The case was an appeal of a Toronto Committee of Adjustment (COA) decision to allow replacement of a bungalow in the former City of Etobicoke with a new two-storey home 2 1/2 times the size of nearby homes, topped by a tower reaching 2.2 m higher than permitted in the zoning bylaw. A neighbour appealed, saying the project was out of character with the surrounding homes.

The OMB decision pointed out that the City of Toronto's Official Plan "repeatedly addressed the theme of character", calling it a "cornerstone". Unlike some other centres, the City had also defined the components of character to include the "height, massing, scale and dwelling type of nearby residential properties".

The policy goes on to say that "No change will be made through rezoning, minor variance, consent or other public action that are out of keeping with the physical character of the neighbourhood."

Persuaded that the proposal did not meet the criteria for COA approval, OMB member Marc Denhez was not swayed by arguments that the project should get special treatment as a "Modernist" symbol of "reinvestment", or that, as a LEED project with third-party certification, it would promote the City's goal of increasing environmental sustainability.

The OMB should approach claims of environmental sustainability with caution, the decision says. 'Greenwashing' can also apply to construction. Green building labeling systems "do not represent a shortcut around the *Planning Act*". Further, 'Certification by a (private) third party' is "no substitute for a transparent and legally-mandated public process, and no guarantee of good planning", nor does it claim to be.

## Info on Brownfields incentives

Municipalities have invested in a wide variety of incentive programs for contaminated sites, Environmental lawyer Dianne Saxe recently told website readers, and "now there is a consolidated source" for locating them. The Ministry of Municipal Affairs has an online map of municipalities with brownfields policies at [www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=8901](http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=8901). There is also a chart showing municipal program elements, contact information and links to policies at [www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=8982](http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/AssetFactory.aspx?did=8982).

## News Briefs

### Changes to FIT program

Ontario's microFIT (Feed-in Tariff) program has been hailed for encouraging small private renewable energy projects such as rooftop solar (10 kW or less). Offering to buy the resulting electricity at long-term, high-return prices, the Ontario Power Authority (OPA) has seen applications far exceed expectations. It also spurred a new industry: commercial aggregators who lease land or rooftops for multiple installations.

While these companies certainly help to produce new capacity, they were seen to be taking advantage of a cost and pricing structure aimed at individuals who cannot take advantage of economies of scale. Last fall, OPA changed rules for both the microFIT and the larger FIT programs to shut them out.

In February, it released draft rules and contracts for a new Commercial program (C-FIT), to bring them back in. C-FIT has more commercial terms, \$500 per megawatt application fees, and a requirement for proponents to ob-



## Toronto Mayor upsets the transit cart

Shortly after Toronto's new Mayor Rob Ford effectively threw out the seven-years-in-the-making, \$8.15 billion, light-rail-transit-centred 'Transit City' plan, he suggested that developers would pay for all or part of the extension of the Sheppard subway line from Don Mills station to Victoria Park. Reports suggest Ford wants to contract a P3 consortium to raise the \$3.4-5 billion cost and do the building, repaid by a combination of tax increment financing and development charges, plus agreements for air rights and increased density over stations.

There has been some skepticism about whether the private sector would take this on, and lots of concern that even if they do, taxpayers will end up with large financial liabilities. On the other hand, Metrolinx has said the proposal should help the Eglinton LRT get built from the provincial funding.

An article in the Feb 17 Globe and Mail pointed out that P3 is fine but it takes time to sharply increase planned densities, OMB appeals would be "almost certain", private consortiums would want the Province to update laws on financing measures, and Queen's Park "would be pressed to do that before the October 6 election".

A Star piece added that success of P3s in the Far East and Europe is of little relevance to Sheppard: "Simply put, ... there probably aren't going to be enough (riders) to justify an expanded subway – and related development – for decades to come."

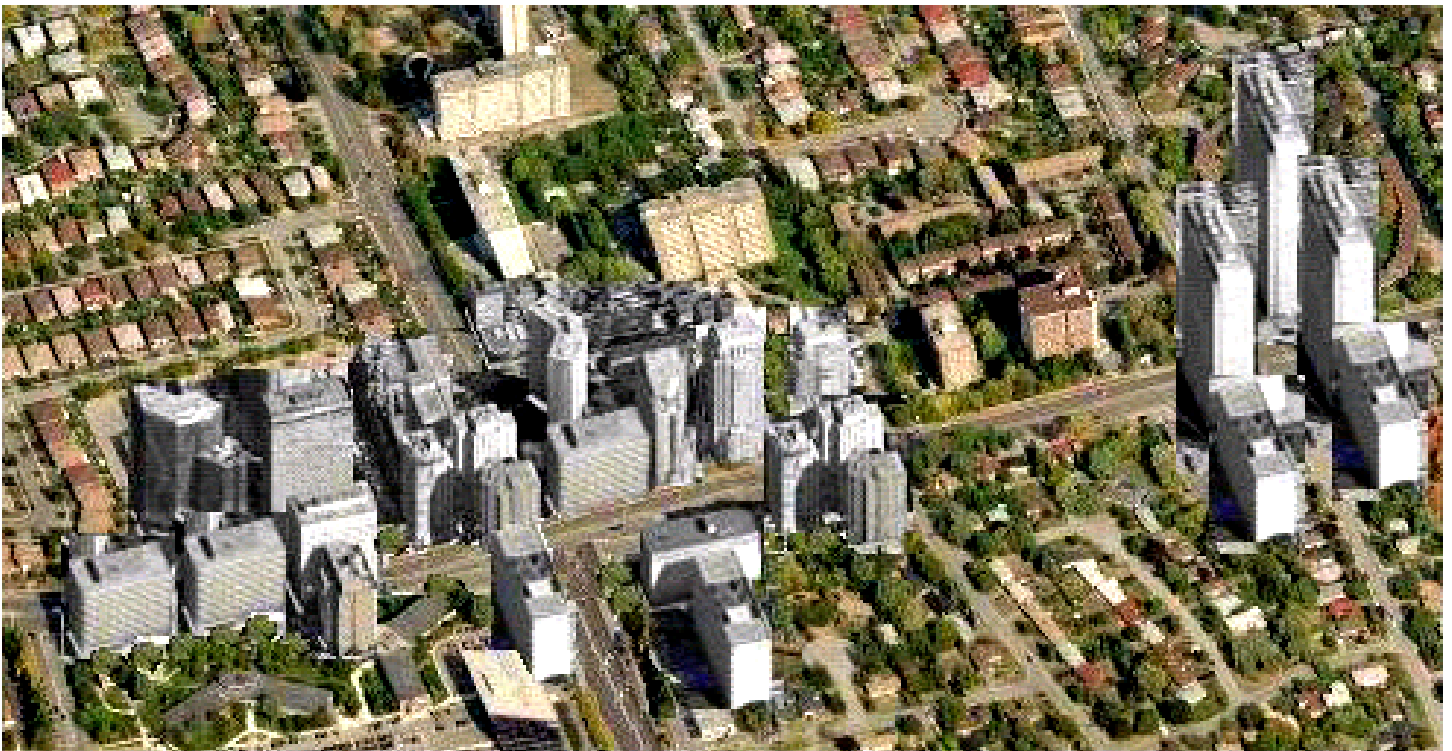
On March 1, the Sun expanded the list of concerns: "Will the market and the local community accept the potential 'manhattanization' of the Sheppard corridor? Who will subsidize the operating costs in the initial years ...?"

On the other hand, in an article starting "Looks like the backroom boys are back at City Hall", NOW Magazine (Feb 24-March 3) quoted a BILD Toronto representative saying: "if there is a willingness from the city and the TTC to work with (us), then there'd be a buy-in from the development industry".

The National Post's *Posted Toronto* panel on Feb 22 had Matt Gurney saying it is "refreshing to see Toronto looking for private-sector funds", while Chris Selley stated he'd be happy with private building, but Ford's "idea is not a suitable replacement for the *plan* that came before it, because none of the objections to that plan are reasonable enough to risk – to almost guarantee, in fact – getting absolutely nothing instead".



PHOTO: Secondarywaltz via Wikimedia Commons



Graphic shows projected densities that would be required along Sheppard Ave east of the Don Mills station for private financing to approach feasibility.



REMY PROJECT Rendering: Patrick Cotter Architect Inc.

*Oris Consulting/Penta Homes/Patrick Cotter Architect's Remy project was the first mid-rise wood frame building to receive a building permit after the BC code was amended in 2009 to allow that construction for housing to 6 storeys. Ontario proposal would allow other occupancy types too.*

## Wood frame for buildings up to 6 storeys

If accepted, proposed changes to the Ontario Building Code (OBC) would increase the allowed height for wood frame construction to six storeys from the current four, and introduce a new horizontal building separation concept for podiums to facilitate mixed uses.

The move is aimed at encouraging mid-rise and infill development, by decreasing construction costs and increasing design flexibility. It could apply to residential, office and mercantile uses (Group C, D and E occupancies).

The maximum gross floor area of the buildings would be limited to that currently allowed for four-storey combustible buildings (7,200 m<sup>2</sup> for residential and mercantile buildings and 14,400 m<sup>2</sup> for office buildings). However, larger building areas could be divided into smaller 'buildings' by fire walls, as long as each has firefighter access.

Even with the extra fire protection and structural measures required for five- and six-storey wood buildings, they are reported to cost 10-15% less than traditional non-combustible construction. Developer Dana Westermarck of Oris Consulting in BC told the Journal of Commerce in September that switching to wood frame construction from concrete and steel for the Remy project in Richmond BC (see photo) saved them 12% on construction costs, or \$4.8 million. "That's not pocket change."

The additional fire protection and structural measures proposed for Ontario include:

- limiting building height to 18 metres between the average grade and the floor level of the top storey (including the podium)
- requiring a higher fire sprinkler standard (NFPA 13), plus mandatory sprinklering of crawl spaces, concealed spaces such as attics, and all combustible balconies and roofed decks

- limitations on exterior cladding combustibility for all exterior walls in addition to those walls near or at the property line
- clarification of fire blocking requirements in concealed spaces and crawl spaces, which will apply to all buildings subject to NFPA 13 requirements
- increased structural load factors and a requirement for the alignment of shear walls resisting horizontal loads

The impact of Ontario's proposed new definition of a 'podium portion of a building' is still unclear. Although it allows for a wide variety of mixed uses with a horizontal building separation, the total height of the building can't be more than the height allowed for the occupancy type above the podium. A 3-hour concrete horizontal fire separation would be required where there is no Group E (mercantile) major occupancy (4-hour if there is). Limited to two storeys, the podium also would have to meet the most conservative current requirements for buildings of any height and any area for the same type of occupancy in the podium.

Other jurisdictions allow wood construction for higher buildings as well. "We are seeing eight to nine storeys in Europe, the U.K. and now Australia as well," Ineke van Zeeland, manager of codes and standards for the Canadian Wood Council, points out. And that has encouraged new products and technologies.

In the March 2011 issue of Construction Canada, David Moses of Moses Structures and Sylvain Gagnon of FP Innovations Buildings Systems describe cross-laminated timber panels as "poised to significantly change the way Canadians design and build with wood framing". See the article at [www.kenilworth.com/publications/cc/de/201103/76.html](http://www.kenilworth.com/publications/cc/de/201103/76.html). Also, Remy project architect Patrick Cotter describes design and panels at [www.cotterarchitects.com](http://www.cotterarchitects.com).

**Ontario released its second round of proposed changes to the building code in late February.**

**Comments are due by April 1.**

**Some highlights:**

## Energy Benchmark Options

The consultation paper sets out three options for a new energy efficiency benchmark for housing and other small residential buildings. The change would take effect as of December 31, 2016

Option	Efficiency increase over Dec 31, 2011 requirements	Corresponding EnerGuide rating (old version)	Corresponding EnerGuide rating (new version)
1	10%	81	79
2	15%	82	80
3	20%	83	81

A new benchmark for large buildings and small non-residential ones is also being discussed. Year-end 2011 will require these buildings to exceed the current Model National Energy Code for Buildings level by 25%. Options for year-end 2016 are to require either 10% or 13% beyond that.

## New Objectives

Further proposed changes would clarify that the code is designed to

- help protect atmospheric quality, and specifically to limit construction/operation-related greenhouse gas emissions and release of air pollutants
- help protect water and soil quality by limiting the risk of pollutants
- help conserve resources by limiting the probability of excessive demand on the infrastructure for use, treatment and disposal (think hydro grid and landfills)

RM

**Details of all proposals and the review process can be found at [www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page9261.aspx](http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page9261.aspx)**



# DENSITY TAX:

## An Equitable Method to Recover Infrastructure Costs and Encourage Compact Urban Form

It is commonly accepted among planners that urban sprawl is a major problem and that compact urban form should be encouraged to allow for more efficient use of infrastructure and to support alternative modes of transportation. But a new instrument is required to show the public through personal financial incentives how living in a denser urban environment is a better choice.

The instrument we propose is density tax. Density tax is an equitable way of asking certain residents to pay more for municipal services based on infrastructure efficiency, and encouraging developers to build compact, sustainable urban developments. It also offers an opportunity to add a measure of congruence between provincially mandated growth targets and municipal property taxation policy.

In this system, applicable municipal property taxes would be determined by a combination of assessed value and relative density (based on number of residents and/or jobs per net hectare). The municipality would determine a base value for the density tax portion, which would be multiplied by the property's 'density tax factor' to determine the density tax.

### Growth plan target = tax factor of 1

The minimum density targets found in the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe may serve as the standard by which to measure the relative density of a given property. Properties with densities lower than the minimum density target would have higher tax rates than the standard, and properties that exceed the target would have lower tax rates.

For example, the Growth Plan's minimum density target of 50 residents per net hectare (excluding urban growth centres) may be met by a detached house with three residents on a lot with approximately 18 metres frontage and 33 metres depth. The density tax will assign a factor of one to a property like this.

In comparison, if the subject property is a detached house on a one hectare urban area property occupied by a family of five, it would be equal to one tenth of the minimum density target. It would have a density tax factor (DTF) of ten, and attract density taxes

by Thomas Rees, BURPI, RPP, PLE  
and Lisa Brylowski, MPPA

ten times those for the property that matches the minimum density target.

### Higher density = lower DTF

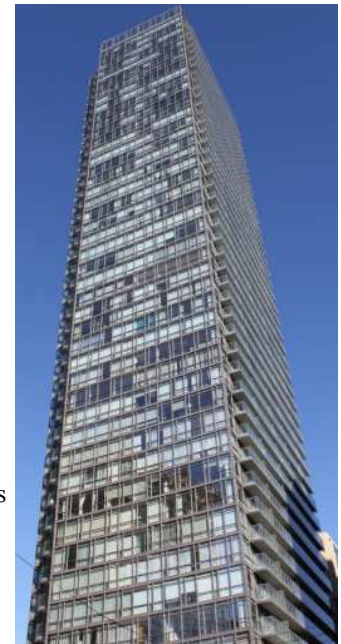
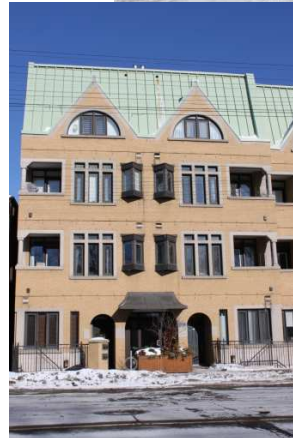
A high-rise apartment or condominium building could have a density of 500 residents per hectare – ten times the minimum density target. In this case each residence on the property would be subject to a density tax factor of 0.1, and attract density taxes only one tenth of those for the property that matches the minimum density target.

The density for an employment use would be based on the number of jobs provided per net hectare. Mixed-use developments would benefit from the combined densities of residents and jobs per net hectare. Home-based businesses could also benefit from the combined densities.

It should be possible to make the density tax revenue neutral, to show that the municipality is not adding more taxes in the short term, but rather providing a more equitable system to collect taxes reflecting the infrastructure required to service a specific property.

A municipality could introduce a density tax as a very small proportion of the overall property tax and then increase it incrementally over several years. It could also be phased in by only applying it to new developments at first. Or the municipality could identify certain neighbourhoods or districts for a pilot project to review and study the effects of the density tax before applying it universally.

A density tax would encourage developments which minimize the costs of infrastructure (e.g. sewers, roads, utility lines) while contributing to viable transportation alternatives (i.e. pedestrian-friendly development, convenient public transit). In the longer term it also would provide municipalities with a sustainable and equitable source of revenue to replace aging infrastructure.



Since the minimum density targets are set in the recently implemented Growth Plan and the actual density of a given property is not open to interpretation, it would be difficult for taxpayers to contest or appeal the applicable density tax. By harmonizing provincial growth targets and municipal property taxation, it would also create a new relationship between land use planning and municipal revenue.

A property tax system based on density and the conventional system based on assessed value each have their advantages. Used in combination, the benefits of both systems can be achieved.

It is our hope that urban planners, developers, politicians and municipal administrators consider the advantages of density tax, and courageously champion its adoption throughout Ontario, starting with the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

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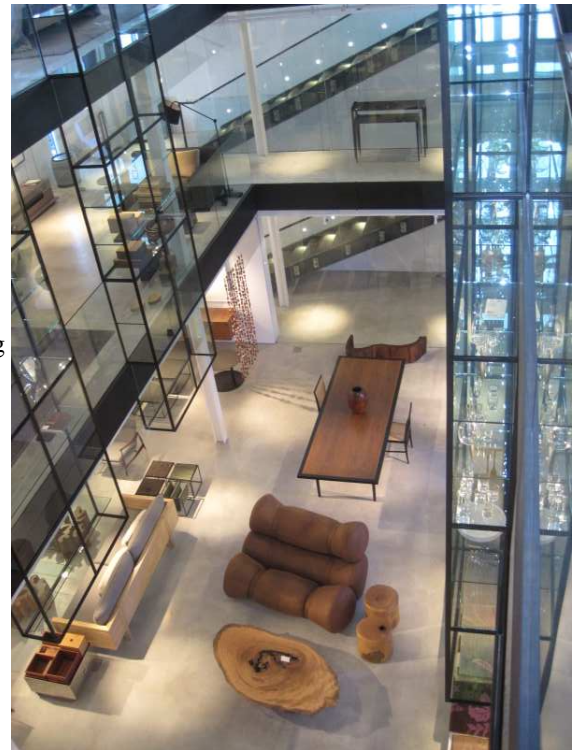
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*Members of the Association of Ontario Land Economists (AOLE) are entitled to use the widely recognized Professional Land Economist designation (PLE). See [www.aole.org](http://www.aole.org).*

## Renovation Tour: 415 Eastern

Internationally renowned interior designers Yabu Pushelberg have totally transformed the building at 415 Eastern Avenue in Toronto. Originally a Consumers Gas pumping station, and then the printing facilities of the Chinese language World Journal, it has become *Avenue Road*, a stunning furniture showroom. AOLE's fall tour group enjoyed networking, hors d'oeuvres and drinks while listening to stories of the renovation and admiring the contemporary designer furniture.



## Carras on GTA Investment

In October, George Carras of RealNet Canada gave AOLE's Annual Meeting dinner a good look at the upcoming performance of the GTA's investment real estate markets.

He started with a look at how property transactions in Calgary, Toronto and Vancouver were recovering from the recession:

- Calgary's figures looked like an L: it pretty much crashed when the recession hit and while the number of transactions was up slightly, dollar volumes were flat at about \$500 million.
- Toronto appeared to be on its way to a U: it bottomed out at 200 transactions worth nearly \$125 billion in Q2 2009 (well below year 2000) and while it was still well below 2008, with a lot in the pipeline it's heading back to pre-recession levels.
- Vancouver's figures show a V shape: its drop matched year 2000 figures and the market has rebounded beyond Q3 2008

Average cap rates for office, retail, and apartment properties had trended downward over the previous year, mirroring the trend in 5-year bond rates, he said. Industrial cap rates had continued the slow rise started in 2007.

Although dollar value and sales volumes in the GTA are both down for the 3rd quarter, Carras pointed to the surge in new home sales and the strength of residential land transactions. Toronto has been at or near the top of North American housing markets for the past few years. With 16,000 multiples starts in 2009, it was

also the biggest multi-family market in North America. Montreal came in second, and the nearest US city was New York, with a little over 8,000 multiples.

Carras noted that the United States is not where the future lies for real estate investment dollars. "What's really more relevant to our market is China."

Statistics Canada shows 155,000 Chinese arrived in Canada between 2001-6 -- more than from any other country. In June, Canada signed an Approved Destination Status treaty with the China that will encourage tourism. Also, the Chinese have a culture of purchasing and holding housing units as long-term investments. However, government-required minimum downpayments there are high and rising, and lenders are barred from lending for a third home. So, people will be looking for other markets, and the GTA offers good opportunities.

If population expansion here continues as expected, the condo universe -- currently 254,000 -- is expected to grow by 24% in the next three years and 230% in the next 20 years.





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## AOLE Xmas Party

The Association started a new tradition on November 24, 2010 with an informal pre-Christmas holiday gathering.

Quince Restaurant on Yonge offered a wonderful ambience where everyone could gather for a couple of hours of networking, meeting old friends and welcoming new members.

With a good flow of people coming and going from 6:00 to 9:00 pm, we spread a lot of good cheer (and some door prizes).

Don't miss next year's event!

## AOLE



## 2010 AGM

The 2010 Annual General Meeting of the Association of Ontario Land Economists was held October 21, at the Royal Canadian Yacht Club (St. George facility).

Treasurer Keith Hobcraft reported that 2009-10 membership growth resulted in total income of \$40,268, comfortably above the budgeted amount. With low administration costs and fewer Journal issues last year, expenditures came in well below budget at \$24,065, producing a \$16,000 excess of revenue over expenses. In 2010-11, income is expected to remain at the same level, while expenditures return to approximately \$34,400, producing an excess of \$5,800. He also announced that he would not be continuing as Treasurer beyond 2010.

Membership Chair John Morrison reported that membership has climbed to more than 200. Applications come in regularly online from people with excellent credentials. We have accepted 12 new members, with three more pending and two to be reviewed.

Michael Cane reviewed the Program of events. Highlights included the presenta-

tions by York University Professor James McKellar on Megacities, and Waterfront Toronto

President John Campbell on revitalization, and the renovation tour at 'Avenue Road'.

Internet Chair Mike Real noted that since the launch of the new website last fall, there has been an average of 100 visits per month. He encouraged members to add information to their online listings.

Secretary John Blackburn asked members present to affirm a procedural change allowing an AOLE President to serve two or more consecutive terms. Returning President Andrea Calla of Tridel and candidates for the 2010-11 Board of Directors were then voted into office (see list above).

Calla identified strengthening the Association and increasing participation as key goals for the coming year. This could include reviewing membership, activities, bylaws, and member surveys.

RealNet President George Carras then followed with his insights into the real estate investment market in the Greater Toronto Area. See article on page 5.

## Legislative Beat *cont'd from Page 6*

"The commercial reality is that public and private investments have been made on the basis of existing settlement area boundaries and planning approvals," BILD said. "To redraw these boundaries, which were established and approved through a public process, in order to 'align land supply' with outdated population and employment forecasts is short-sighted and doesn't pass the test of transparency." Simcoe County wants a Provincial Facilitator appointed to assist in resolving certain issues.

Queen's Park continues to work with municipalities in the GGH. About half of the lower tier municipalities have conforming Official Plan amendments which are being held up because the OPs in upper-tier municipalities have been appealed to the OMB, either in whole or in part, by the province or other parties. This has occurred in the Regions of York, Durham, Waterloo, Niagara, Halton (ROPA 37) and Peel, as well as the cities of Toronto and Barrie. In ROPA 38 for Halton Region, and in Hamilton, Orillia and Kawartha Lakes and the Counties of Haldimand and Brant, conformity work has been done but is still awaiting a decision from the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing.

Recently, Waterloo Region submitted an OMB appeal because of modifications made by the Ministry to its new OP. As reported in *Novae Res Urbis*, the province requested modifications in order to recognize the appropriate authority of the Aggregate Resources Act. The Region is concerned about groundwater quality as a result of mineral and aggregate extraction activities. This will be a classic trade-off between environmental and economic objectives related to supply for building projects.

*Andy Manahan, Executive Director of the Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario, is a member of AOLE's Board of Directors and its Legislative Chair.*

## Provincial Election - October 6

With Liberal leader Dalton McGuinty having been Ontario Premier since 2003, it is clear that the opposition parties' strategy is to criticize his record in this provincial election campaign. Both PC Leader Tim Hudak and NDP Leader Andrea Horwath have already focused on pocketbook issues such as HST, eco fees and electricity pricing. This early period sound bite criticism is bound to ramp up but will be followed by more detailed and hopefully more substantive party platforms.

In addition to traditional speech-giving, sloganeering and advertising during the 2011 campaign, there will be an increase in the use of social media. While this exposure is primarily designed to woo younger voters, expect at least one tweet to send out an unnecessarily controversial or off-party message tweet!

Other issues are bound to put pressure on the government. Last year, for example, Finance Minister Dwight Duncan wanted to impose a public sector wage freeze in an effort to curb the deficit (see Vol. 40, No. 2), but the province did not follow through on this threat. This has angered certain mayors who must bargain with unions in the municipal sector but will likely be hampered by increased costs through arbitrated settlements.

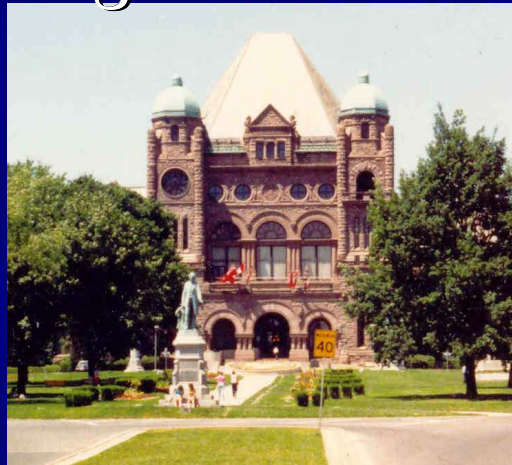
Finally, it is worthwhile to note that although the Premier aims to win a third majority government, in an early January TV interview he hinted that he will not remain for the full third term pending a Liberal win in October. While this might be of significance to political pundits and insiders will it really matter to the voting public?

## 10-Year Infrastructure Plan

Following the Budget (typically delivered in late March), it is anticipated that Infrastructure Minister Bob Chiarelli will announce a 10-year capital plan for infrastructure in early spring. The plan is expected to encompass alternate infrastructure delivery methods based not only on the success of many Infrastructure Ontario projects but also on the fact that there is limited government funding to cover the upfront costs of capital construction.

Former Public Infrastructure Renewal Minister David Caplan began consulting on a 10-year plan in spring 2008 (see Vol. 38, No.2) but this longer-term planning was essentially placed on hold because of the global financial crisis later that year and the subsequent implementation of infrastructure stimulus programs.

# The Legislative Beat



By Andy Manahan PLE

## Proposed Changes to Municipal Class EA Process

A posting on the Environmental Registry concerns amendments recommended by the Municipal Engineers Association for relatively minor infrastructure upgrades such as intersection improvements, roadside parks, culverts as well as replacement or reconstruction of 40-year old bridges.

If approved, clarification will be provided to municipal and private sector proponents around existing provisions for an integrated environmental assessment and land use planning process. This would minimize duplicative public consultation for the same project, allowing these straightforward projects to proceed in a timely fashion.

A report commissioned by RCCAO in 2010 found that Ontario municipalities endure delays of up to 20 months for many straightforward Municipal Class EA projects.

For information on other proposed changes, go to [www.ebr.gov.on.ca](http://www.ebr.gov.on.ca), and key in Number 011-1391.

## 2nd Round of Building Code Consultations

On February 22, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing released the second round of potential changes to the Ontario Building Code for public review. (See article on page 3.) These include some significant issues, such as:

- allowing 6-storey wood frame buildings (up from 4 storey)
- further water conservation measures
- further phased-in increases for energy conservation and

- adding a new code objective for reducing greenhouse gasses

Accessibility changes recommended last year in the AODA advisory committee's Final Proposed Accessibility Standard for the Built Environment are not included in this consultation. The Ministry of Community and Social Services' Accessibility Directorate says it is responding to requests for further research, to make sure that any requirements are clear, consistent, and enforceable.

## Places to Grow – Northern Ontario

On March 4, Ontario released its 25-year *Growth Plan for Northern Ontario, 2011*. The plan's policies, which will affect almost 90% of the province's land area, are built on six themes: economy, people, communication, aboriginal peoples, infrastructure and environment. It

aims to strengthen the north's economy and sustainability by diversifying traditional resource-based industries, piloting regional economic planning areas, furthering education and training initiatives, stimulating new investment and entrepreneurship, and nurturing new and emerging sectors with high growth potential. These include: advanced manufacturing, agriculture, aquaculture & food processing, arts, culture and creative industries, digital economy and broadband, forestry and value-added forest industries, health sciences, minerals and mining supply and services, renewable energy and services, tourism, transportation, aviation and aerospace, and water technologies and services.

## Places to Grow – GGH

The *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* legislation, released in June 2006, contains provisions for a five-year review of population and employment forecasts. The Ontario Growth Secretariat (OGS) has already begun this initiative.

OGS has put forward *Proposed Amendment 1* to the Growth Plan related to the Simcoe Sub-area which includes Simcoe County, Barrie and Orillia. Partially as a result of concern for the Lake Simcoe watershed and growth pressures, the province is seeking to focus growth through intensification and reallocation of population to serviced settlement areas (or urban nodes). The Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD) provided comments on the proposed Amendment 1 to Infrastructure Minister Chiarelli on the January 31 deadline. A main point of contention is the concept of an interim settlement area boundary.

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