

The Land Economist

Summer 2011 Vol. 41, No.2

News Briefs 2

What deals! • Required setbacks for wind turbines • Lien Act new s 33.1 now affects condos • ecoENERGY home retrofits extended

Union Station Plans 3

Welcome New Members 4

Developments at Meaford Legion 4

Cash-in-lieu issue heats up 5

Conservation easements have value for land-owners 6

Bylaw Review 7

Letter on Density Tax 7

Congratulations AOLE bursary winners! 7

Legislative Beat 8

Provincial Election October 6 • 10-year Infrastructure Plan • Places to Grow • Reducing Hidden Housing Costs

Professional Journal of the

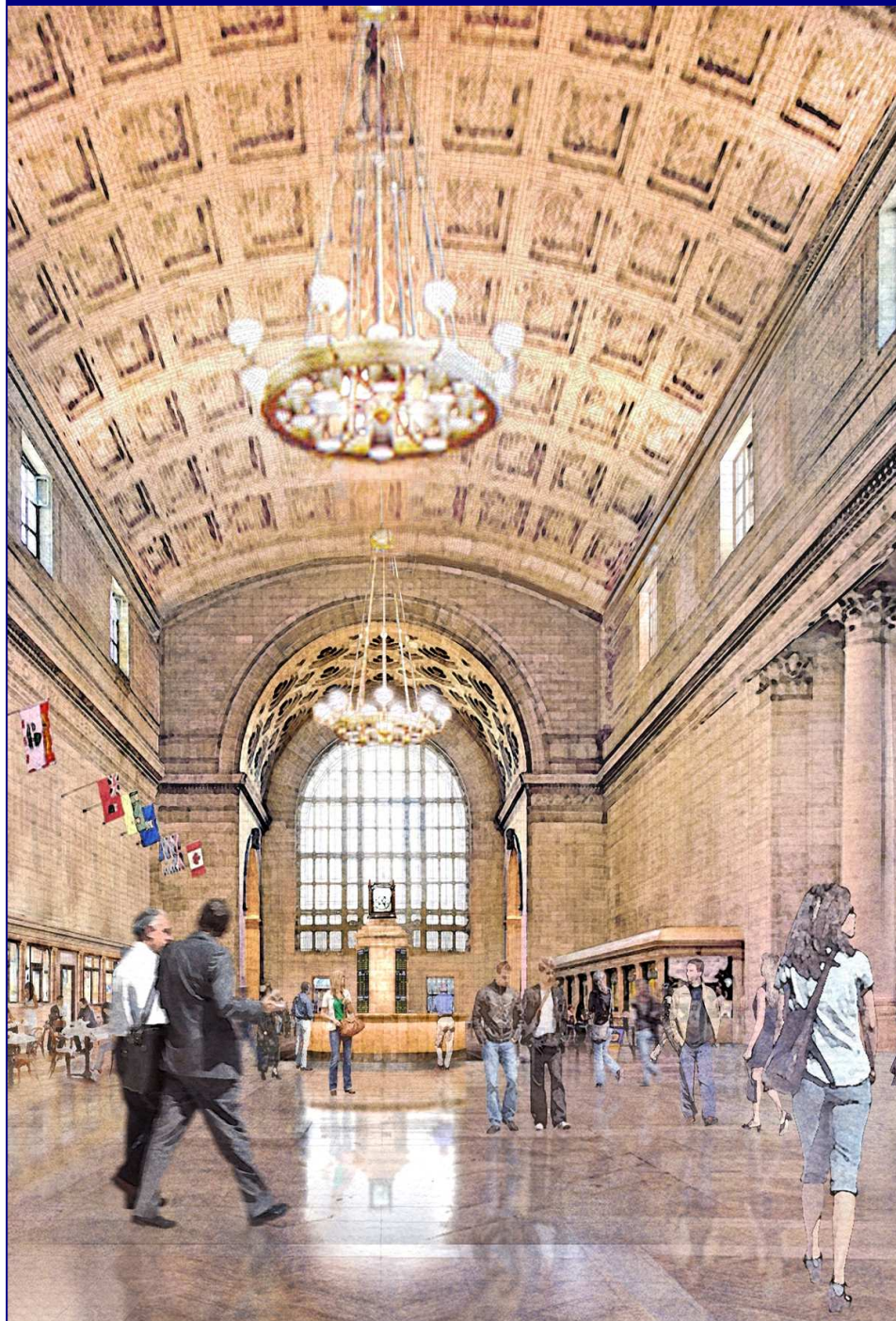
**Association of
Ontario Land
Economists**



PO Box 26010, 2345 Yonge St.
Toronto, ON M4P 0A8
Tel: 416-283-0440
Fax: 1-866-401-3665 (toll free)
Email: admin@aole.org
Website: www.aole.org

Journal Chair: Keith Hobcraft
Journal Editor: Rmoyes@idirect.ca

ILLUSTRATIONS: NORR Architects Engineers Planners



AOLE's April 26 meeting featured NORR Architects Engineers Planners' project director Paul Noskiewicz speaking on the revitalization of Toronto's historic Union Station. The \$640 million project is restoring historical areas, digging out space for new concourses and tying this major transportation gateway into both the existing downtown and new developments to the south. See page 3 for more details.

What deals!

TORONTO

In May, Canadians were agog about the news that a Toronto condominium had sold for a record-breaking \$28 million.

The 9,038 sq ft penthouse suite tops the west building in Four Seasons Hotel and Private Residences at Bay and Bloor.



ILLUSTRATION Courtesy Four Seasons Private Residences

Completion of the project developed by a joint venture of Menkes Developments, Lifetime Developments and Alcion Ventures is expected in 2012. For more info, see www.yorkvilleresidences.com

LONDON

A month earlier, a similar buzz was hitting papers in the United Kingdom — but there, the stakes were higher. The UK's highest condo sale apparently took place in 2007, at £135.4 million (approximately \$209 million CAN today).



The Telegraph newspaper reported in mid April that the buyers were thought to be Ukrainian. They were said to be spending another £60 million on finishes for the three-floor suite at One Hyde Park.

The complex, completed in January, had almost £1 billion in sales for 45 apartments, the paper said. An update in July gave more detail about the project by

Christian and Nick Candy — developers who are credited with starting the luxury flat boom in London in 2009.

See www.telegraph.co.uk and search “UK’s most expensive flat” or “One Hyde Park” (in quotation marks).

Required setbacks for wind turbines

A couple of legal decisions in Ontario appear to support current requirements for setbacks between wind turbines and residences. Meanwhile, for England and Wales, the House of Lords is considering some significant increases.

First, Ontario. On June 20, anti-wind-turbine crusader Ian Hanna was denied permission to appeal the March [Divisional Court decision](#) in his case involving Ontario’s noise-related required setbacks. For industrial turbines generating more than 50 kW, these are commonly 550 m.

Hanna, a farmer, had argued that Ontario should have used the “precautionary principle” set out in Ontario’s Environmental Bill of Rights to require higher setbacks or refuse approvals, since there is medical uncertainty as to how safe these turbines are for human health. While the court ruled that Ontario had followed the processes properly, it did say that individual cases can be appealed to the Environmental Review Tribunal (ERT).

On July 18, that Tribunal ruled on another very important case: *Erickson v Director, Ministry of the Environment*. The ERT found Katie Erickson and the Chatham-Kent Wind Action Group hadn’t proved that Sunoco’s Kent Breeze project would harm human health.

However, in a July 28 post in its www.canadianenergylaw.com blog, law firm Stikeman Elliott said the “decision is by no means a conclusive endorsement of the safety of wind turbines ... the ERT explicitly acknowledged the risks and uncertainties associated with wind turbines and noted that the science behind the health effects of wind farms is in its infancy and is neither exhaustive nor conclusive.”

So -- what is going on over the pond? A bill before the United Kingdom’s House of Lords has passed second reading, with wide-ranging discussion, and is set to go to committee, but a date for this has not

yet been scheduled, says a July 11 entry from Timothy Pitt of UK law firm CMS Cameron McKenna in www.law-now.com.

At present, Pitt’s article says, there is no set legal distance in England, “although planning policy noise limits suggest a separation of around 350 metres.” Guidelines in Wales suggest a distance of 500 m. In contrast, “Scotland suggests a guideline distance of 2 km, largely due to the visual effect of the turbines ...”

The bill proposes minimum setbacks for England and Wales depending on the height of the turbine blades, as below.

Current setback proposals before UK’s House of Lords

Height of wind turbine generator (to highest point of blade)	Minimum distance to residential premises (including farmhouses)
<= 25 m	N/A
> 25 m to 50 m	1,000 m
> 50 m to 100 m	1,500 m
> 100 m to 150 m	2,000 m
> 150 m	3,000 m

Lien Act new s33.1 now affects condos

As of July 1, 2011, Ontario requires land-owners to publish a notice of their intent to register a condominium project under the Condominium Act. It must be published in a construction trade newspaper at least 5 and not more than 15 days before the description is submitted for approval. This will allow contractors, suppliers, etc. a chance to preserve their liens against the project as a whole, before sales to home buyers get finalized. Owners who fail to publish can be liable for damages. See <http://dcnonline.com/article/id45083>

ecoENERGY home retrofits extended

The federal government has renewed the popular program until March 31, 2012. Maximum grants per dwelling unit during the life of the program (Apr 2007 to Mar 2012) are \$5,000. Cap for owners of multi-unit buildings is \$1 million. Can make a second application to reach the maximum. No double-ups. See <http://oee.nrcan.gc.ca/>

Plans will bring Union Station into the 21st C

Members attending AOLE's meeting on April 26 got a good look at the \$640 million revitalization plans for Toronto's primary multi-modal transportation hub and cherished railway heritage site – Union Station.

Paul Noskiewicz, project director with NORR Architects Engineers Planners, gave a quick recap of the landmark's history from its 1913 conception and 1927 opening in the heyday of rail travel, through threats of demolition in the 1960s, historical protection in the 1970s, split jurisdictions and sales culminating in the current multi-concourse approach for the much-needed restoration and revitalization. Funding is coming from the City of Toronto, and governments of Ontario and Canada.

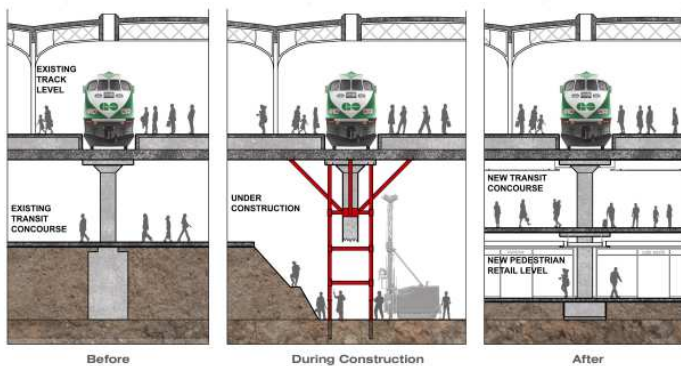
The station handles 65 million passengers a year, Noskiewicz said – 43 million riding GO Transit, plus 20 million using the Toronto Transit Commission and 2.4 million on VIA rail. GO alone expects to double its volume in the next 20 years.



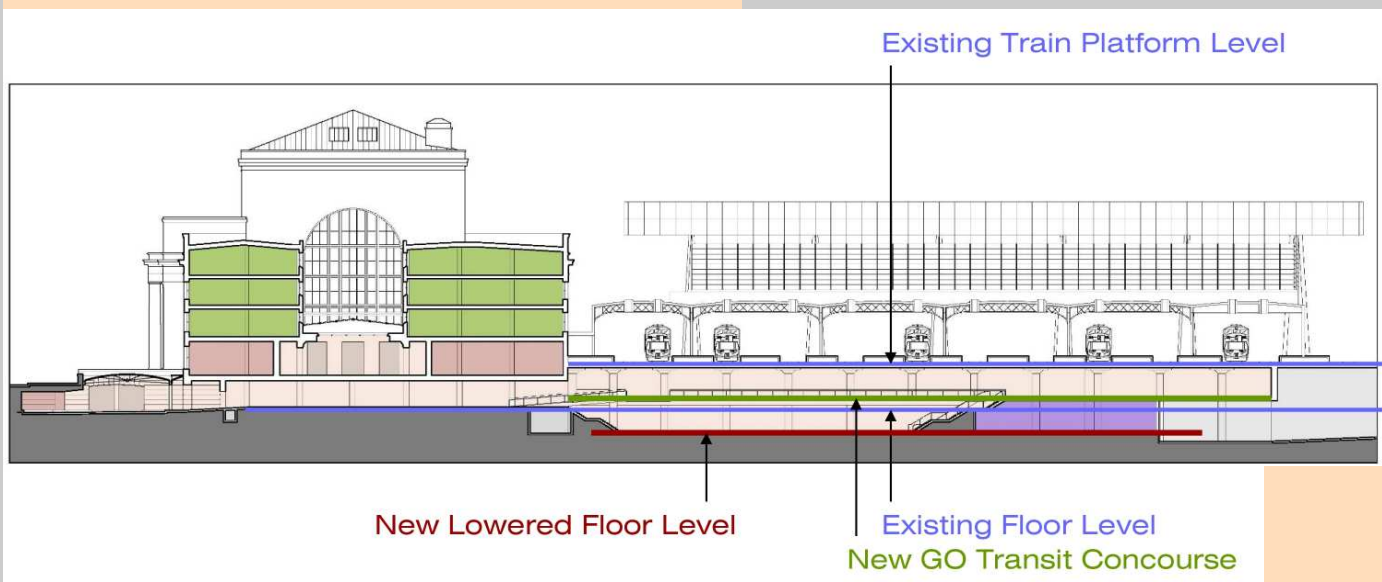
The new York Street multi-level concourse opens to passengers in 2013. Then, work on the Bay Street concourse (above) goes into high gear.

The project will restore the beloved Great Hall buildings along Front Street, repurpose under-used spaces and add an entire new passenger retail concourse below the existing transit concourse and train tracks. It will triple the space for GO and house MetroLinx offices. It also will have new ties into PATH and the urban fabric, including down to the Air Canada Centre and major redevelopments towards the Gardiner expressway. GO plans to introduce a huge "green roof" over the tracks, with large glass portions. As well, mechanical/electrical/energy systems are being updated. Construction began in 2010, with major structural work for the plan's key "dig down" (see boxes at left and below). Using steel and glass roofs, it is also expanding into the old taxi access moats. To keep operations functioning throughout the project, the York Street portion is being completed first, along with the northwest connections into PATH. *(More details available at www.NORR.com/portfolio.aspx and www.toronto.ca/union_station/.)*

Discussion after the main presentation was fascinating, ranging from how passenger parking and drop off is being handled (the new south entrance, plus the City's redevelopment plans for Front Street), to whether Toronto's new Mayor has made any comments on the project (approvals went through the former Council) and how deep the market really is for more retail (very differing opinions).



The "dig down" approach includes shoring, partial removal, replacement and extension of 185 supporting columns. It creates 134,500 sq ft of new retail and 128,000 sq ft of transit concourses.



Welcome New Members

Matthew Cory, MCIP, RPP, PLE
Principal
Malone Given Parsons Ltd.
Markham, ON
905-513-0170 ext 138
mcory@mgp.ca

Ted Cymbaly, MCIP, RPP, PLE
Senior Associate
Weston Consulting Group Inc.
Vaughan, ON
905-738-8080
tcymbaly@westonconsulting.com

Anthony Ierullo, MCIP, RPP, PLE
Manager of Strategic Initiatives
Town of Aurora
Aurora, ON
905-726-4742
aierullo@aurora.ca

Antony Lorus, RPP, CMC, PLE
Associate Partner
Hemson Consulting
Toronto, ON
416-593-5090 ext 34
alorus@hemson.com

Randy Ramadhin, PLE
Consultant
Haffwood Services Ltd.
Toronto, ON
416-744-1366
randy@condoinvest.ca

Stephen Willis, MCIP, RPP, PLE
Vice President, Planning and
Sustainable Community Design
MMM Group Limited
Ottawa, ON
613-274-3200 ext 3540
williss@mmm.ca

*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.*



ILLUSTRATION courtesy Brightstar Corporation

Developments at Meaford Legion

This \$15 million 50-unit seniors life lease project in Meaford is the first to come onto the market under a joint venture arrangement between Brightstar Corporation, Royal Canadian Legion Ontario Command and local branches. Several others are anticipated, following the same joint venture template.

“We are very excited about this concept,” says Brightstar President John Blackburn. “It opens up innovative opportunities for Legion Branches to secure their financial position by delivering expanded services to new members, to building residents and to the wider community.”

While many local branches are faced with declining membership and aging facilities, they often have very desirable locations. Redeveloping those can meet well-documented needs for seniors’ housing, take advantage of initiatives aimed at allowing seniors to age in place, and at the same time provide the Legion with continued land and building ownership, new income, and new clubhouse and banquet rooms.

The building will be owned by the Legion. Retirees will purchase an individual open-ended life lease interest in a unit including the right to use common facilities. The portion paid up front is treated as an equity loan, which helps to finance the construction of the building.

On occupancy, the life lease interest is registered on title. It can be resold for market value when the person leaves or passes away. The original leaseholder (or estate) receives 95% of the market value, while 5% goes to the Royal Canadian Legion for future endeavours. As owner, the Legion must approve new life-lease agreements.

Market value for life leases tends to track values in the condominium market but at a somewhat lower level, which helps keep units affordable, Blackburn says.

After occupancy, the residents will pay charges consisting of two portions:

- a base monthly rent based on the portion of life lease interest purchased (if the buyer puts down the complete price of a unit, there is no rental cost)
- the operating fee, similar to a condo fee, which covers their share of exterior and common area maintenance, utilities and property management

In this joint venture, Brightstar Corporation provides risk capital and money to get the developments under way, and will handle all the planning and development process, as well as the building, marketing and sales. Construction is anticipated to start in the spring of 2012 with occupancy within 12-14 months. The Legion will run the completed project – a good fit with its hospitality and community service expertise.

“The Royal Canadian Legion residents live independently in a community of like-minded people in their neighbourhood,” says Blackburn. “Their investments are protected in a similar manner to the equity growth in a single-family home. Now that’s a smart lifestyle option!”

Legion Branch 32 (Meaford) Past President Ron James told a Simcoe Media Group reporter at a preview that some Legions in other provinces have similar projects, but “Meaford will be the first in Ontario”.

For more information, contact johnblackburn@brightstarcorp.ca.

Cash-in-lieu issue heats up

by Mark Penney MA, MCIP, RPP, AACI, PLE

Combining intensification in suburban municipalities with cash-in-lieu-of-parkland policies has been creating some extraordinarily high and unanticipated charges recently.

Several GTA suburban municipalities have been reviewing their rates used for calculating cash-in-lieu (CIL), particularly the rates applied to high-density residential development. High-density development in the suburbs isn't new, but the densities associated with this 'built form' have increased considerably as a result of intensification policies and in response to market demand.

CIL at twice the value of entire site

A dated section of the Planning Act provides municipalities with the ability to collect CIL at a rate of one hectare of land per 300 units. With typical high density development at 500 to 600 units per acre, this can result in a CIL of 1.67 to 2 times the value of the entire development site.

Most municipalities realize that is excessive, and as such, they have taken measures to reduce the charge to something "less than" the rate of one hectare per 300 units.

However, even the "less than" rates can range from a fixed rate of \$10,000 per unit to 1.2141 hectares per 1,000 population (extrapolated using a person-per-unit ratio) and result in a total parkland charge that is greater than the value of the entire site.

Today, CIL rates across the Greater Toronto Area are best described as inconsistent, confusing, and without a commonly applied methodology.

Between the municipalities of Richmond Hill, Markham and Vaughan, for example, market prices for 'finished' condo units are relatively consistent, but the cost of park levies varies widely.

In our opinion, the market value of high-density development land in the suburbs is predicated upon the traditional CIL levy of 5% of the value of the development site.

Until recently, this rate was applied in the City of Toronto, being the pre-eminent high-

density market in Ontario (recently increased to 10%, on average). While suburban municipalities have traditionally applied a higher rate for CIL, the relatively low density (floor space index) and larger suite size traditionally associated with high density development in the suburbs, coupled with a credit for on-site parkland, kept the "net" charge relatively low.

Now, however, with increasing development densities and escalating land values, combined with the inability to provide on-site parkland as a result of the small size of most high-density development sites, the current CIL charges are untenable.

Methodology punishes high density

While suburban municipalities welcome higher development densities, their methodology used to determine CIL does not consider the influence of such densities in the CIL equation, and, as a result, the ensuing parkland charge effectively punishes high(er) density development.

Furthermore, most suburban municipalities use revenue generated from CIL to acquire parkland in low-density (greenfield) neighbourhoods. This highly inequitable strategy is contrary to smart growth policies, may contravene the Provincial Policy Statement, and is certainly inconsistent with the mantra of "let growth pay for growth".

From a real estate appraisal perspective, questions abound regarding the influence of high CIL charges on the market value of high-density development land. Given that CIL charges are predicated on the value of development land (as required under the Planning Act), determining the market value of a development site "encumbered" by an extraordinarily high and unanticipated parkland charge is critical.

With several outstanding appeals advancing in the coming months, the cash-in-lieu of parkland issue will receive greater attention by municipalities, landowners, developers and the Province.

Mark Penney is a real estate appraiser and registered professional planner with GSI Real Estate & Planning Advisors Inc. He specializes in litigation-related appraisal and planning matters, including expropriation and value impact assessment. For more info, contact realestate@gsiadvisors.com.



Conservation easements have value for landowners

by Kristie Virgoe

The practice of conservation easements for natural heritage properties has been in use in Ontario for just over 20 years.

In that time, with the support of more than 120,000 volunteers and growing, the land trusts of Ontario have successfully protected more than 9,000 acres through conservation easements – bringing the total land protected by these groups to more than 70,000 acres. These properties protect some of the best examples of Ontario's ecosystems including wetlands, alvars, escarpment, coastal meadows, mature forest, prairie, bluffs, and farmland.

Conservation Easements allow landowners to protect all or part of their property from development, tree cutting, water taking, removing vegetation, or similar disturbance in perpetuity while still maintaining ownership.

Restrictions on development

In simple terms, a landowner signs away certain rights to their property through 'restrictive covenants'. These restrictions are held, monitored and reported on by a land trust or other conservation body.

Since the restrictions are attached to the title of the property, they are legally binding on all future landowners. This means the owner can sell, donate, or will their property to whomever they choose, and still protect the easement.

Establishing the restrictive covenants for a property is a very personal choice. Development is the number one pressure on natural areas in Ontario, so most landowners start with removing or limiting the ability to subdivide or develop their property. From there the easement terms will vary considerably depending upon the land's features, the extent of the restrictions, their effect on value, and the owner and holder's needs. The chal-

lenge for both parties is to ensure the restrictions are adequate to protect the features identified by the landowner while making them realistic to monitor and enforce in perpetuity.

These conservation agreements have value. The Income Tax system recognizes this by allowing land trusts and other conservation bodies to issue a receipt for donations and gifts in the form of easements, which landowners can use for claiming a tax credit or deduction on their income tax returns.

So, once the restrictions have been agreed upon by the landowner and conservation easement holder, the property undergoes two appraisals; one without regard to the restrictions and one with.

These values lie at the core of the conservation easement program, yet assigning value to restrictions is quite challenging for appraisers.

It is often difficult to find an easement in a comparable geographic location with similar restrictions. Other interests (such as common law easements, covenants and leases, or utility rights-of-way) have often been used for different purposes with different conditions and value implications, which limits their usefulness.

Throw into the mix that some areas of the province may already have protection through legislation such as the Green Belt, Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Plan, Environmental Protection Act, etc. Also, there is rarely a conventional "market" for easements, as they are most often donated to governments or conservation charities. Once easements are acquired, they are



Heather Elliott donated a conservation easement for her 139 acre property to the Kawartha Heritage Conservancy in 2009. As well as being eligible for tax benefits, this legal agreement permanently protects the property's provincially significant wetlands, upland forests and streams, trails, plants and animals, and key spawning areas.

PHOTO: Kawartha Heritage Conservancy

usually intended to be held in perpetuity and not transferred.

OLTA to offer 'Comparables' data

The Ontario Land Trust Alliance recognizes that there is a growing need for information on conservation easements for landowners and our members. We are exploring the opportunity of developing a database that will provide meaningful data while still protecting landowner privacy and anonymity.

With more than 90 conservation easements across the province, this would allow comparative information to be accessed much more efficiently.

It is a project that will take some time with limited resources, but our hope is that we will be able to add benefit to appraisers, land trusts, and landowners by offering this service. More details and a timeline should be available this winter.

Kristie Virgoe is Program Manager with the Ontario Land Trust Alliance – an umbrella organization formed in 2002 that provides organizational support, education, training, and funding assistance to 33 community-based land trusts across Ontario. For more information, see www.olta.ca

Bylaw Review

A key project of the Association this year is the review and updating of its bylaws. “Most of the provisions still date back to the 1963 Letters Patent when the Association was first incorporated,” says Jon Hack of Sierra Planning and Management, the Board Member spearheading this initiative.

“There have been a number of changes since then — in the industry as a whole, the scope and breadth of land-related disciplines, equality, new technologies, and so on. We need to reflect those in our operations and governance.”

Hack has brought some options to the Board, based on approaches taken by other associations. As well, a small task group headed by AOLE’s membership chair, John Morrison of Royal LePage Real Estate Services, is looking at current membership categories and whether they need updating.

A draft will be prepared shortly, and sent out to members for input. “We are not making wholesale change,” Hack said. “This is an evolution and updating of a very successful organization.”

LETTER

Dear Sirs,
Implementing a density tax as described in the article on page 5 of Volume 40, No 1 (Winter 2010-2011) would certainly change the structure of our cities. In my home town of Saint John, NB, for example, an average 30-year old bungalow assessed at \$125,000 on a 100 x 150 foot lot currently pays tax of \$2,187.50. Under a Density tax, I calculate the tax haul would be \$4,500. This is certainly an enormous differential — over double the tax! The savings would accrue to those living in a condominium tower 16 storeys high. Their tax bills, which are \$1,225 under the current system, would drop to less than \$100 per year under the proposed system.

I can’t imagine a Density Tax being implemented anywhere without a civil war. Major changes would be required for a new ‘environmental economy’. Do we have the time to make those changes? I think taxing land instead of buildings would result in the more efficient use of land in cities.

Paul Cusack, PEng, DULE, PLE
Cusack Real Property Consulting



From left: AOLE Director Michael Real presented this year’s AOLE bursary to Amanda Hannays, Dylan Howatt, Rachel Mazur and Frank Lee.

Congratulations AOLE Bursary Winners!

The Association of Ontario Land Economists sponsors an annual bursary award to the group of students in the graduating class of Seneca College’s Real Property Administration Program (Assessment and Appraisal) with the highest grade on their Urban Planning Group Project. The group project involves selecting, researching and preparing a written report and delivering an oral presentation to the class. This year’s winning project dealt with a controversial OMB application on a proposed rezoning of a corner lot to allow a garage to be built facing the opposite direction to the house. There had been local opposition and numerous submissions — both pro and con. Professor Paul Sloggett says the group put on an excellent presentation featuring photos, a skit and interviews with the homeowner, city officials and neighbours. Keep an eye out for these graduates in the future: Amanda Hannays, Dylan Howatt, Rachel Mazur and Frank Lee!

Legislative Beat ... cont’d from Page 8

89 local municipalities have not yet adopted an OP amendment. A number of the adopted upper- or single-tier municipal plans have been appealed to the OMB although the Ministry’s web site points out that the “reason for the appeal may not be related to the Growth Plan in all cases.”

Reducing Hidden Housing Costs

The Residential Construction Council of Ontario (RESCON) and RCCAO have launched a campaign to bring awareness to the link between government-imposed costs and regulations and rising housing prices.

In high growth jurisdictions within Ontario, these costs exceed \$80,000 per unit, making the aspirations of home ownership exceedingly difficult for many families.

Economic development is hampered as well when workers are priced out of the local housing market and employers are unable to draw upon a nearby workforce

(an objective of Places To Grow is to have a balance of jobs and housing in communities in order to reduce overall commuting).

During the provincial election campaign period, we want MPPs and candidates to consider the following proposals:

- establish a Commission of Inquiry
- develop an Action Plan to implement specific recommendations
- develop and publish an annual Housing Impact Index

Both RESCON’s report on government-imposed costs and RCCAO’s report on alternatives to development charges are available under Research & Reports at www.rccao.com. August 2, 2011

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

The federal election results this past spring provided a wake-up call for Ontario Liberals that complacency is not an option in the 2011 campaign.

The federal outcome also showed that the Tories can win seats in the Toronto area (both in the 416 and in former Liberal strongholds in the 905). Furthermore, the new official opposition status of the federal NDP has buoyed Ontario's NDP.

A major focus in Tory leader Tim Hudak's campaign is to provide tax relief to hard working families. According to "Changebook", the PCs platform document, income taxes will be lowered by 5% on the first \$75,000 of taxable income. If elected, the PCs will also allow all couples to share up to \$50,000 of their income for tax purposes. In addition, consumers would be able to opt out of time-of-use pricing for electricity.

NDP leader Andrea Horwath has positioned her party as promoting "change that puts people first", such as removing the HST from "daily essentials including hydro, home heating and gasoline, and shifting the tax burden back to corporations that have already seen big breaks."

The PCs have also promised to remove the HST from these items but upped the ante by promising to remove the debt retirement charge from home hydro bills.

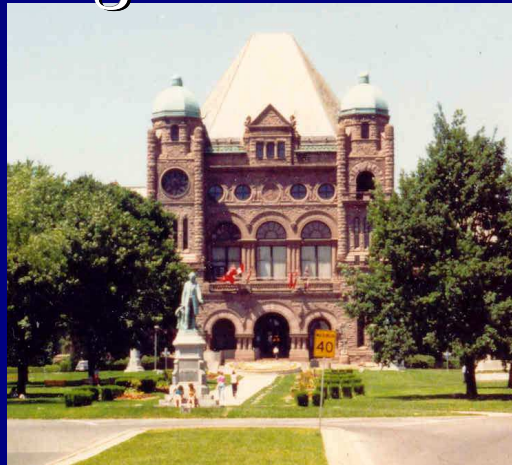
Finally, the election of Elizabeth May federally as the first Green MP has given hope to Ontario Greens that a breakthrough is possible in Ontario. While major media did not allow May to participate in the 2011 televised debate, the Green Party has launched a campaign to include Mike Schreiner in the Provincial Leaders' debate.

10-Year Infrastructure Plan

Minister Bob Chiarelli released the province's first-ever 10-year infrastructure plan on June 24th.

The Minister's cover note to "Building Together: Jobs and Prosperity for Ontarians" states that the plan is "intended to provide clarity, sustainability, and greater predictability in our infrastruc-

The Legislative Beat



By Andy Manahan PLE

ture policies and to keep Ontario economically competitive." Over the next three years, the Province will invest more than \$35 billion (the PCs have committed to the same level if elected).

In an effort to ensure that the document survives beyond electoral cycles, the Plan does not provide spending by sector and does not indicate which projects will be funded. Thus, more general references are made such as "expanding Ontario's network of high-occupancy vehicle (HOV) lanes", "adding at least 500 centreline-kilometres of highway where warranted by growth and demand", or "completing the 27 major hospital projects under construction, and continuing to invest in hospital expansions and redevelopment projects, subject to fiscal capacity."

The "fiscal capacity" caveat is intended to be overcome through an expanded role for Infrastructure Ontario, including both traditional forms of procurement as well as Alternative Funding and Procurement (AFP) delivery for new asset classes. Groups of smaller projects of a similar nature could be bundled together and delivered by Infrastructure Ontario.

The Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO) is working with the Ontario Good Roads Association to determine whether it makes sense to bundle municipal bridges. Our goal is to conduct a local case study in a select part of the province and, if the evidence shows that there is value in the bundling

approach, then replicate the AFP model elsewhere.

The Building Together report is quiet on funding tools but it is clear that because of fiscal constraints a shift to user pay approaches will be required in the future.

This could include relatively straightforward measures such as allowing single-occupant drivers on HOV lanes to pay for this privilege or it could encompass road pricing for the construction of new highways (such as the 407 East expansion).

Places to Grow

The Ministry of Infrastructure has released a progress report marking the fifth anniversary of the establishment of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

The Ontario Growth Secretariat has conducted computer modelling to understand how the Plan could impact future land development and travel patterns. For example, a commute that took 30 minutes in 2006, including 10 minutes of delay, would see a one-and-a-half minute increase in delay in 2031 under the Growth Plan scenario. In contrast, the same commute would take an additional 14 minutes in 2031 in the absence of the Growth Plan.

Comparative scenarios show that over half of all development will occur through intensification within built-up areas (defined in 2006). Without the Growth Plan, intensification rates have been projected to be 22%. The Province's regional approach will, if implemented and funded appropriately, ensure that there is a better link between infrastructure investment and efficient land use.

Multi-residential building activity in the GTA has overtaken single-family housing starts in recent years and average densities are expected to increase by as much as 20% in the next two decades.

As reported previously, while many municipalities have approved Official Plan (OP) documents and are in conformance with the Growth Plan, over half of the

The Legislative Beat continues on page 7