

# The Land Economist

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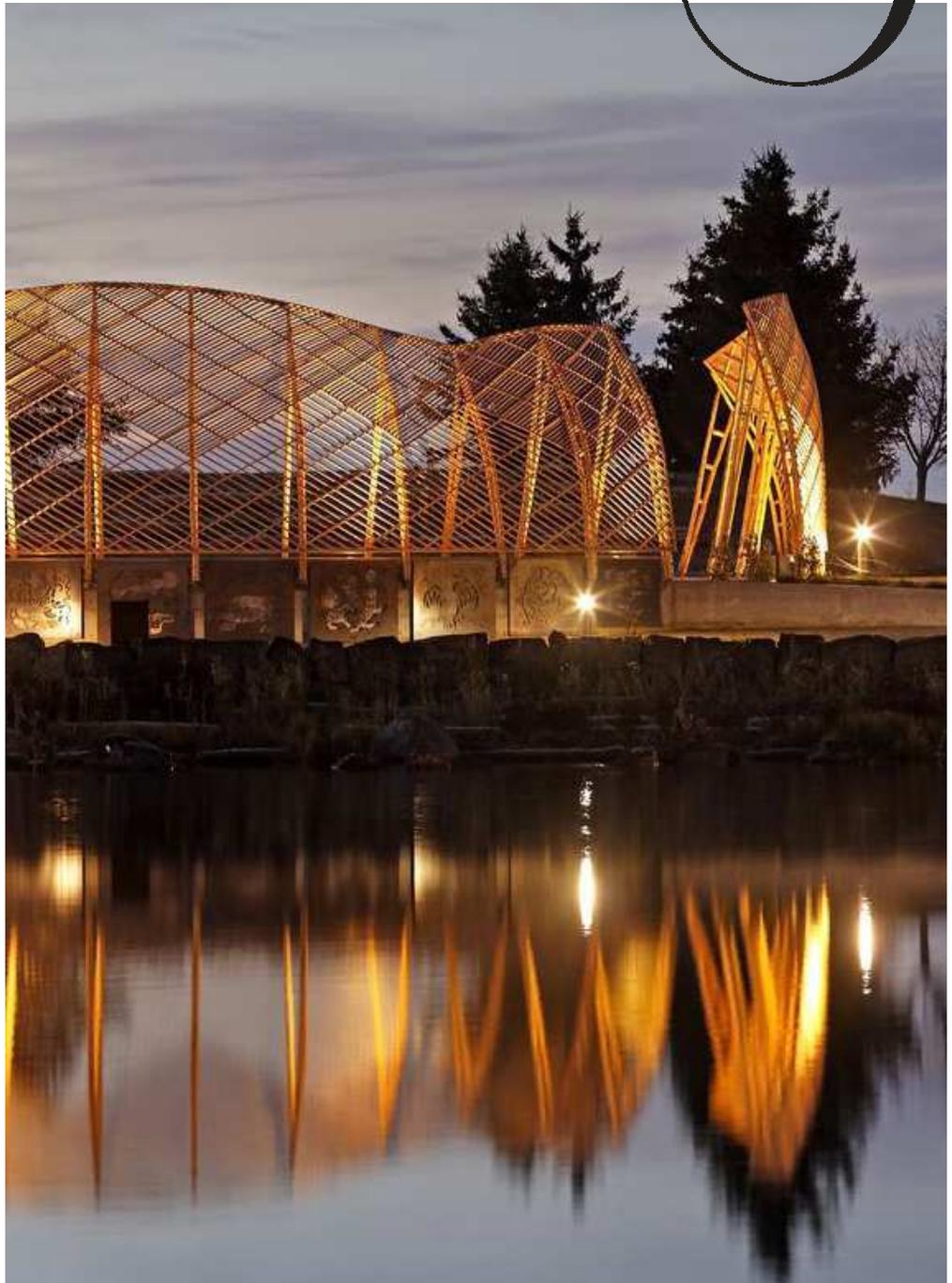
**PROFESSIONAL JOURNAL**



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**The Gathering Circle at the Spirit Garden in Thunder Bay won the Ontario Wood Works! 2012 Jury Choice Award, presented in November. See page 4 for more on winning projects.**

PHOTO: CNW Group/Ontario Wood Works!

## NEWS BRIEFS

### Code Change Proposals out for Public Comment

Comment deadlines are fast approaching for two public consultations that will affect Ontario buildings.

#### Care/Seniors Homes

Comments are due February 28 on proposed changes to the Ontario Fire and Building Code requirements for enhanced fire safety for vulnerable persons. Key elements include:

- Phasing in mandatory sprinklers for all existing care occupancies with more than four occupants, retirement homes under the Retirement Homes Act and long-term care homes
- Mandatory sprinklers for all newly constructed retirement homes under the Retirement Homes Act, consistent with features already required for other vulnerable occupancies

See [www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca](http://www.mcscs.jus.gov.on.ca) > Office of the Fire Marshall > Consultation on TAC Recommendations for full details.

#### Accessibility

Comments are due March 1 on proposed changes to the Ontario Building Code requirements for accessibility. This is the next step in Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) standards for the built environment.

The Code already incorporates a number of requirements for accessibility. Proposed updates and changes focus on:

- **Renovations** (smaller businesses without ramps or elevators would have to provide barrier-free upgrades when doing extensive renovations; e.g., 860 mm clear doorway width and an "ambulatory accessible stall" - for those with canes and walkers.)
- **Barrier-free path of travel** for common access/circulation (e.g., 860 mm widths, 1:15 slope ramps, power door rough-ins, roof amenity access, option for T-shaped turning spaces.)
- **Vertical access** (elevators in more and smaller buildings)
- **Visitable suites** (at least 15% of units in multi-unit residential buildings having access to one bedroom, bathroom and kitchen; varying unit types, and dispersed through the building; suite doors with power door rough-ins, main entrance doors with power door operators)
- **Adaptable design** and construction (kitchen walls built to support counters at varying heights)
- **Visual fire alarms** (all hard-wired smoke alarms, including in single family homes, to include visual)
- **Washrooms** (new requirements and features)

A study estimated costs for four types of buildings would increase by the following amounts :

- **Office building - 0.59%**
- **Apartment building - 0.88%**
- **College residence - 1.99%**
- **Community school/rec centre - 1.05%**

See [www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page10160.aspx](http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page10160.aspx) for full details.

#### Labour Agreements

Three-year construction sector labour agreements in Ontario are due to expire on April 30, 2013. Fifteen unions have signed a Unity Coalition, agreeing not to try to raid each other for the 2013 and 2016 period. See [www.liunlocal183.com](http://www.liunlocal183.com) > Jan 21 news release.

### Minto 2012: Five LEED Projects

In November, Minto's 20-storey commercial office tower and Ottawa head offices, 180 Kent Street, received the first LEED Core and Shell Platinum certification of an office tower in Canada.

This followed four other projects certified in 2012: Stonefield Flats community in Ottawa (LEED for Homes Silver, and the largest LEED for Homes multi-family community in Canada); and three Toronto projects: Spring @ MintoGardens and and mintoSkyy (both LEED Gold), and Minto Richgrove Townhomes (LEED Silver). Minto was also named Ontario Home Builders' Association's 2012 Builder of the Year.



180 Kent Street (CNW Group/The Minto Group)

### European Real Estate Market

Interested in what's going on in the European property market? Check out Property Investor Europe. Here are a few sample headlines from recent Dailies:

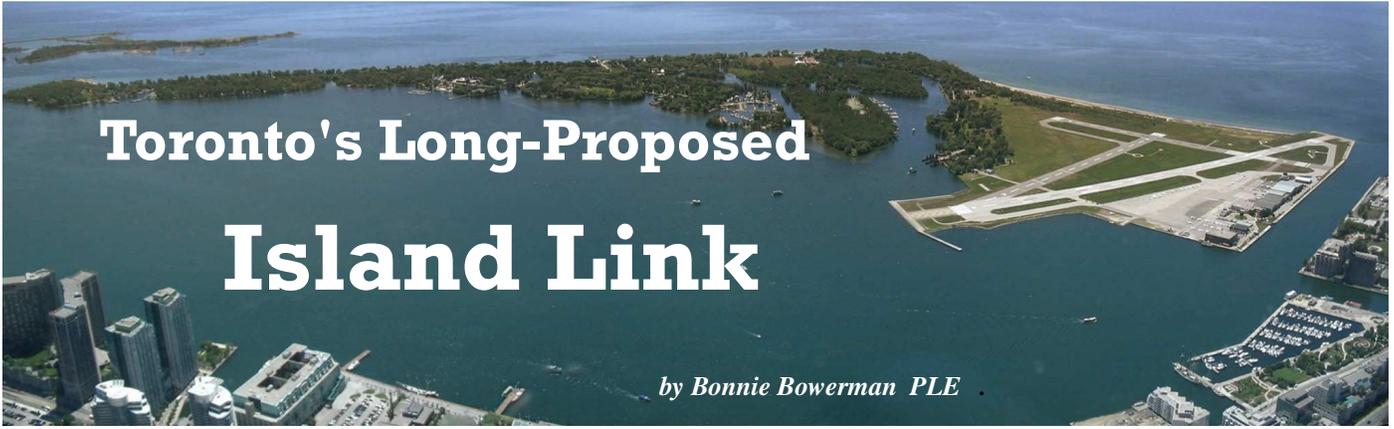
- Transport system for giant Grand Paris project could boost listed property capitalization by up to 6% and add €1.7bn to commercial values even before completion: JP Morgan Cazenove
- Quatari Diar, Qatar's property development arm, puts €3bn plans to build hundreds of luxury properties at London's Chelsea Barracks back on track
- Sovereign wealth funds' allocations could reach 20% in real estate - AXA's Vaquier
- Norwegian Orkla buys €94m Oslo office from NPRO - €24m above the most recent valuation
- Baltic RE investment to grow to at least €300m from €190m in 2012, yields to fall - Newsec

See [www.pie-mag.com](http://www.pie-mag.com)



### Canadian Architect Awards

Two Ontario projects were honoured with Awards of Excellence by Canadian Architect Magazine this fall: the Pan-Am/ Parapan Games Athlete's Village, (above), by Dundee Kilmer Integrated Design Team, and the GO Roof at Union Station by Zeidler Partnership Architects. For more details and project images, see [awards.canadianarchitect.com](http://awards.canadianarchitect.com)



# Toronto's Long-Proposed Island Link

by Bonnie Bowerman PLE

Up until 162 years ago, the Toronto Islands were not islands, but rather a nine km peninsula formed over time by the erosion of the Scarborough bluffs. Alluvial deposits carried by the east-to-west, counterclockwise current in Lake Ontario gradually came to rest in a graceful crescent of sand spits and ponds.

Severe storms in 1852 and 1858 flooded sand pits on the peninsula eventually cutting the 220 metre swath that now forms the eastern gap – creating a problem that would perplex and confound Toronto City politicians for the next 161 years – while simultaneously nurturing North America's largest urban car-free community/ park (570 acres). Cut adrift, the islands became the city's playground – a place to sail, sun, swim, canoe, dine, dance, picnic, and relax. Cottages, yacht clubs and hotels were built. In 1867, the city acquired almost all the land not privately held and devoted lots of thought to access. Sailboat ferries gave way to 60-foot horse drawn ferries, and then steam. Remember the Trillium?

It was way back in 1896 when a city council committee first suggested that a "fixed link" be built connecting Toronto Islands to the city shore. The proposal was to extend Bathurst Street south – crossing the western gap via a swing bridge – and allow the Bathurst Streetcar to do a loop on the island. The cost of the project was \$150,000 – \$60,000 of it for the bridge. It was deemed prohibitive.

In 1912 an ambitious plan was tendered by the newly formed Toronto Harbour Commission that would have resulted in two bridges linking both ends of the islands to the city. Five smaller bridges over the various lagoons would allow motorists to drive around the island.

In August 1935, the Federal government pledged \$1 million to build a 1,500 foot long and 60 foot wide auto street car tunnel under the western channel – in concert with plans for the development of the Toronto Island Airport. The contract was awarded that September and digging commenced – only to have the funding pulled by a change in the Federal government, and the hole at the foot of Bathurst Street backfilled. The airport, of course did get built and opened in 1939, named the Port George VI Island Airport after the reigning monarch.

In 1960, an underground tunnel under the western gap was once again suggested at City Hall. That was followed by talk of an overhead monorail a few years later. Once again, both failed to take form.

Finally in 2009, the Toronto Port Authority proposed a 240 metre tunnel to help deal with the increasing number of passengers using the renamed Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport (BBTCA). It ran afoul of the port authority's regulations which prohibit the building of a bridge or similar fixed link between the mainland and the Toronto Islands. In October 2011, those regulations were

amended to allow only a pedestrian walkway. Construction of the pedestrian walkway **solely** for the use of airline passengers and workers commenced on March 20, 2012, only 116 years after the basic concept of linking the islands and the mainland was first tabled at council.

The walkway will cost an estimated \$82.5 million, to be funded by the private sector and paid for by airport users via the existing BBTCA Airport Improvement Fee. It is expected to be operational by the spring of 2014. Due to security issues and the current layout of the airport, this walkway is not contemplated for general public use.

For those who are not just travelling to the BBTCA, the idea of getting to the Toronto Islands by any other means than by ferry, boat or water taxi – will have to wait – perhaps for another 116 years? And North America's largest urban car-free community/park will continue to be car-free and vibrantly unique.

.....  
*Bonnie Bowerman is vice president, underwriting, for Romspen Investment Corporation and a member of AOLE's Board of Directors.*

## Airport Passengers Only

*After 107 years of rejected links, tunnelling for an \$82.5 million, 800-foot-long, pedestrian-only tunnel under the Eastern Gap is under way now. It is expected to open in the spring of 2014.*





See [www.woodworksontario.com](http://www.woodworksontario.com) for more details on awards.



*Ontario Wood Works! awards presented in November include: Ontario Wood award - Centre INNOVO in Hearst (1), which sourced all wood within a 30-km radius; Institutional/Commercial >10M - District of Thunder Bay's Social Services Administration Board Office (2); Northern Ontario Excellence - Water Garden Pavilion in Thunder Bay (3), by the same architects and engineers as the Spirit Garden shown on page 1; Multi-Unit - 360 Lofts in Ottawa, which maximized wood structure height (4). Other awards: Green Building - Vale Living with Lakes Centre, Laurentian University, Sudbury; Interior - Metropolitan Pharmacy, Toronto; Residential - +HOUSE, Mulmur; Institutional/Commercial <10 M - Kingston Park Revitalization, Chatham.*

## **AOLE CELEBRATES HALF CENTURY**



**Save this Date!**

**Wednesday, June 12  
RCYC Island Clubhouse**

**Guest Speaker:  
Hon. Hazel McCallion**

**Join President Andrea Calla,  
Board members and industry  
colleagues old and new  
for this special event, dinner and  
celebration of your Association.**

# Modernizing the TTC

There was a lot of interest in Toronto Transit Commission chief customer service officer Chris Upfold's wide ranging and down-to-earth presentation to AOLE members Oct 18. The Association's annual general meeting event followed a fraught year for transit: service levels, union unrest, competing plans and jockeying for authority hit the headlines on a far-too-regular basis. And it took place just two weeks before the city council gave final approval to the plan for four new light rail lines, and six weeks before the detailed master agreement was inked with the TTC and Metrolinx. (Goal for completion of three lines - Eglinton, Finch West and the Scarborough RT - is 2020. The Sheppard East extension is expected to take until 2021.)

The TTC faces challenges, Upfold told AOLE members: e.g., the percentage of revenues from fares, peak demand and the costs of extended services. However, its ten streetcar lines alone handle more passengers daily than the entire GO network. The four new lines won't increase TTC passengers by more than 10%. By 2015, Presto Smart Cards could allow some form of demand management.

Until recently, the TTC's business strategy "wasn't looking beyond 13 years," Upfold said. "In London (where Upfold worked before the TTC), that is short term. Long term is 40 years." The team is committed to modernizing the TTC. Key elements include "a focus on the core business - moving people in the fastest and most efficient way possible.



PHOTO: Toronto Transit Commission

Many roles will change, and new skills will be required. We'll get better at measuring performance, holding people accountable, and challenging mediocrity." Simple metrics are already being used to measure and improve customer service. Motivation, sharing planning, and involving front line staff in developing new approaches are central, Upfold said.

## Staff arguments against Scarborough subway extension

Last fall, Toronto Transit Commissioners asked TTC staff to look at the feasibility of upgrading the proposed Scarborough LRT to a subway extension. Here's their January report's conclusion:

*"The Scarborough RT corridor could be effectively served by either light rail or subway. A subway replacement would offer the benefit of a transfer-free ride*

*through Kennedy Station and a higher speed than light rail. A light rail replacement would offer the benefit of greater geographic coverage and better local walk access for twice as many residents and workers, and would cost less to build."* (Ed note: Metrolinx's estimate for light rail cost is even lower, at \$1.8 billion.) *"The Scarborough RT has reached the end of its service life. TTC staff have been*

*strongly recommending, for over a decade, that action be taken immediately to replace the existing system with a modern, reliable, high-capacity system capable of accommodating both current passenger demand – which has been suppressed because of capacity constraints – as well as future projected demand. However, owing to budget pressures and ongoing uncertainty over jurisdictional matters, no action has been taken ...*

*(causing deterioration of the service) ... Metrolinx has formally approved funding and implementation of light rail transit in this corridor to replace the aging Scarborough RT. Given these facts, the Commission should avoid another prolonged debate over the future of the Scarborough RT, which might jeopardize Metrolinx's commitment to fully rehabilitate and expand the deteriorating Scarborough RT."*

See <http://ttc.ca>, (search "TTC Commission Meetings" > 2013, January 21 > Supplementary Agendas and Reports.

Comparison of Options for Scarborough RT		
	Convert to Light Rail	Extend Subway
<b>Route Length</b>	9.9 km	7.6 km
<b>Number of Stations</b>	7	3
<b>Speed (Projected)</b>	36 km/h	40 km/h
<b>Customer Convenience Advantage</b>	Improved transfer at Kennedy Station	Eliminate transfer at Kennedy Station
<b>Residents &amp; Employees Within Walking Access of Stations</b>	47,000	24,000
<b>Priority Neighbourhoods Served</b>	3	1
<b>Demand forecast 2031</b>	8,000 passengers/hr	9,500 passengers/hr
<b>Capacity</b>	to 16,000 passengers/hr	30,000+ passengers/hr
<b>Annual Ridership</b>	31 million	36 million
<b>Cost (2011 \$)</b>	\$2.3 billion	\$2.8 billion

# President's Message

The Association of Ontario Land Economists is celebrating its 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary this year – what a tremendous achievement! At the Board, we've been going back through records and assembling photographs and documents. That is making me very proud of our history and the involvement of our members.



We've planned a big celebration for June 12. Mark that date on your calendars now – you will all want to be there. It will be a great party, remembering the past and looking forward to the future, with some very special guests.

Fifty years! That is such a long time. Our industry has seen a lot of change, and been through so many cycles since AOLE was incorporated. That kind of history helps to give you experience and perspective – and avoid under- or over-estimating challenges.

We've needed that over the past couple of years. There have been lots of people

forecasting housing bubbles and imminent doom. In fact, we have seen stability and flexibility. Yes, the market has been slower since last April. But we always knew a slowdown was inevitable. We did not fall off a cliff and – bar some unforeseen outside shock – the future looks promising. The economic fundamentals are good, interest rates are still at historically low levels, and employment is still growing.

There are definite signs of life in the US economy – job creation is up; auto sales are up. Those are good things for Ontario's manufacturers and its economy.

The Conference Board of Canada has just predicted that Toronto's real GDP will grow at 2.8% this year, and average 2.7% for each of the next three years. In Ottawa-Gatineau, where the federal government is cutting jobs significantly, GDP is only expected to grow at 1.3% this year – not great, but it is expected to

grow. And the region's manufacturing sector – centred in information and communications technology – is forecast to expand. Here are other Ontario centres with the Conference Board predictions for GDP growth in 2013 in brackets: Hamilton (2.3%), Kingston (1.7%), Kitchener-Cambridge-Waterloo (2.7%), London (1.9%), Oshawa (2.6%), St. Catharines-Niagara (1.4%), Sudbury (1.7%), Thunder Bay (1.8%), Windsor (2.4%).

Slow but steady growth is a positive outlook ... as all of us Professional Land Economists know, from experience.

*Andrea Calla*

## Welcome New Members!

**Stephen Bedford**, MCIP, RPP, PLE  
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## AOLE Annual Meeting 2012

The Association's 2012 Annual General Meeting was held October 18, at the Royal Canadian Yacht Club in downtown Toronto. Following are some highlights reported by executive board members:

The audited **FINANCIAL STATEMENTS** for April 1, 2011 to March 31, 2012 were approved. The operating fund balance at the start of the year was \$37,116. Revenues were \$44,662, while expenditures totalled \$42,802, resulting in an operating fund balance at year end of \$38,976.

**MEMBERSHIP** is currently approximately 210, with plans for growth.

**PROGRAM** events have been popular. Along with information sessions, a second RICS-AOLE golf tournament is in the works, and the Association's 50th anniversary celebration promises

to be a 'Not To Be Missed' event. Thanks to outgoing Chair Mike Cane, and incoming co-chairs John Blackburn and Bonnie Bowerman.

**BYLAW REVISIONS** are out for legal review and will be brought to the membership for approval in 2013.

**THE LAND ECONOMIST** Journal continues its success, and welcomes contributions and suggestions.

Our watching **LEGISLATIVE BEAT** is very informative. Infrastructure and planning continue to be key issues.

The **WEBSITE** is a useful tool for members and the public. An online payment system is scheduled for 2013.

**ELECTIONS** affirmed the Executive Committee and Board Members (see list on page 7).

# AOLE Executive Board - 2012-13

## President

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## THE LEGISLATIVE BEAT . . . cont from page 8

specific revenue tools to pay for more transit but has stated his opposition to tolls on existing highways.

Metrolinx and the City of Toronto are in the midst of public consultation processes and a number of community and business groups are weighing in on the conversation. RCCAO released a report at the end of January on 'Financing Roads and Public Transit in the GTHA' that can be accessed at [www.rccao.com](http://www.rccao.com).

### GGH GROWTH FORECASTS

Proposed Amendment 2 could be classified as a housekeeping issue but it is based on a mandated five-year review of the Growth Plan to determine whether population and employment forecasts remain accurate (See Vol 41, No 1). The consultation document prepared by the Ontario Growth Secretariat provides new forecasts for 21 upper- and single-tier municipalities for 2031, 2036 and 2041. At a public meeting held in December a

more detailed background document prepared by Association of Ontario Land Economists member Hemson Consulting was distributed to stakeholders. Hemson's technical report provides a range of assumptions and the methodology used to arrive at the numbers for both the GTHA and for the outer ring of the GGH.

OGS staff indicated that Plan objectives, such as more efficient use of land and infrastructure, have resulted in a more balanced housing mix and, in recent years, about 70% of growth occurring within existing built-up urban areas. Computer modelling indicates that under the Growth Plan approximately one-third the amount of greenfield land will be urbanized by 2031 as compared to a "no Growth Plan" scenario. A 10-year review of the full Plan is scheduled for 2016.

### GREENBELT EXPANSION

Then-Premier McGuinty announced on January 10<sup>th</sup> that the province would expand the Greenbelt for the first time

since it was created in 2005. By adding the provincially owned Glenorchy lands in Oakville, the Greenbelt will increase to nearly two million acres of protected land across the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

A new Urban River Valley designation has also been created to enable municipalities to protect publicly-owned land such as open space and parkland.

In December, the Ministry of Natural Resources released a technical paper to assist planning authorities in the identification and delineation of key natural heritage features (KNHF), including certain wetlands, within the Protected Countryside of the Greenbelt.

As well, through the provision of Land Information Ontario data, future maps will better define areas where no development or site alteration is permitted (e.g., within 120 m of a KNHF).

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



# The Legislative Beat

By Andy Manahan, PLE

## PROROGATION

As a result of Premier McGuinty's mid-October announcement to resign and prorogue the legislature there is less to report on policy initiatives than there might have been otherwise. There are differing views over the reasons for the announcement but the minority government certainly was not working too effectively based on metrics such as passage of bills and implementation of policy.

Of course, a prevailing view is that the Liberals were getting heat over controversial issues such as the ORNGE air ambulance hearings and the pre-2011 election gas plant closures, and that prorogation was designed to hide certain information by shutting down all party committees.

On top of that, there must have been frustration that the results of the early September by-elections did not result in the elusive majority that the Premier was hoping to achieve.

Although the riding of Vaughan remained Liberal, the vacated riding of former PC MPP Elizabeth Witmer in Kitchener-Waterloo was won by the NDP's Catherine Fife.

It is also worth noting that the introduction of Bill 115 in late August – designed to rein in spending by imposing contracts on public school teachers and limiting their ability to strike – was a political miscalculation.

The move did not bolster public support for the Liberals and created a sense of instability at the beginning of the school year. Repeal of the Putting Students First Act, 2012 took place on January 23,

2013, only four months after it had been proclaimed, and just prior to the Liberal leadership convention.

## NEW LIBERAL LEADER

Kathleen Wynne emerged as the winner on January 26th. In addition to the many fine qualities of the new Premier, there was some thinking that other leadership candidates (and party delegates) gravitated to Ms. Wynne rather than Sandra Pupatello because the latter did not have a seat. This would have necessitated a by-election in Windsor-Tecumseh (in former finance minister Dwight Duncan's riding) that would have further delayed recalling the House.



The legislative session begins on February 19th with a Throne Speech. While these are generally uneventful, under the current minority government the opposition parties could collectively vote against the Speech, thus precipitating a general election. A more likely outcome would be for the opposition to once

again call for the ORNGE and gas plant cancellations to be investigated through legislative committees. The new Premier's mediation skills will be put to the test in this environment.

## METROLINX INVESTMENT STRATEGY

As has been reported on these pages before (Vol. 38, No. 3), in late 2008 Metrolinx approved its regional transportation plan for the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA). The political masters at Queen's Park, however, decided that it would be preferable to postpone consideration of an investment strategy that would recommend revenue tools to help pay for this expanded transit system. Now, Metrolinx must deliver an investment strategy by June 1st.

Fortunately, Premier Wynne truly understands the importance of this issue, having served as Transportation Minister in 2010-2011. Prior to her first caucus meeting, Wynne said that the issue "is not whether we're going to create a revenue stream ... it's which of those tools we're going to use."

It is interesting to note that outgoing finance minister Dwight Duncan made comments a few days before the leadership convention about the importance of new sources of revenue for public transit expansion. While it is good to see that he finally had the courage to make such a statement, it also reinforces how toxic this issue is to most politicians.

In an October 2012 PC 'white paper', opposition leader Tim Hudak proposed to have Metrolinx take over the TTC's subway and LRT operations and eventually regionally important highways and bus routes, with the TTC continuing to be responsible for local bus and streetcar services. In addition, public-private partnerships would be used to expand the regional transportation network, with subways being the preferred mode in "heavily populated areas like Toronto."

Unfortunately, Hudak's caveat is that no subway investment would occur until the provincial budget is balanced, likely by 2017-18. He has not put forward any

*Continued on page 7*