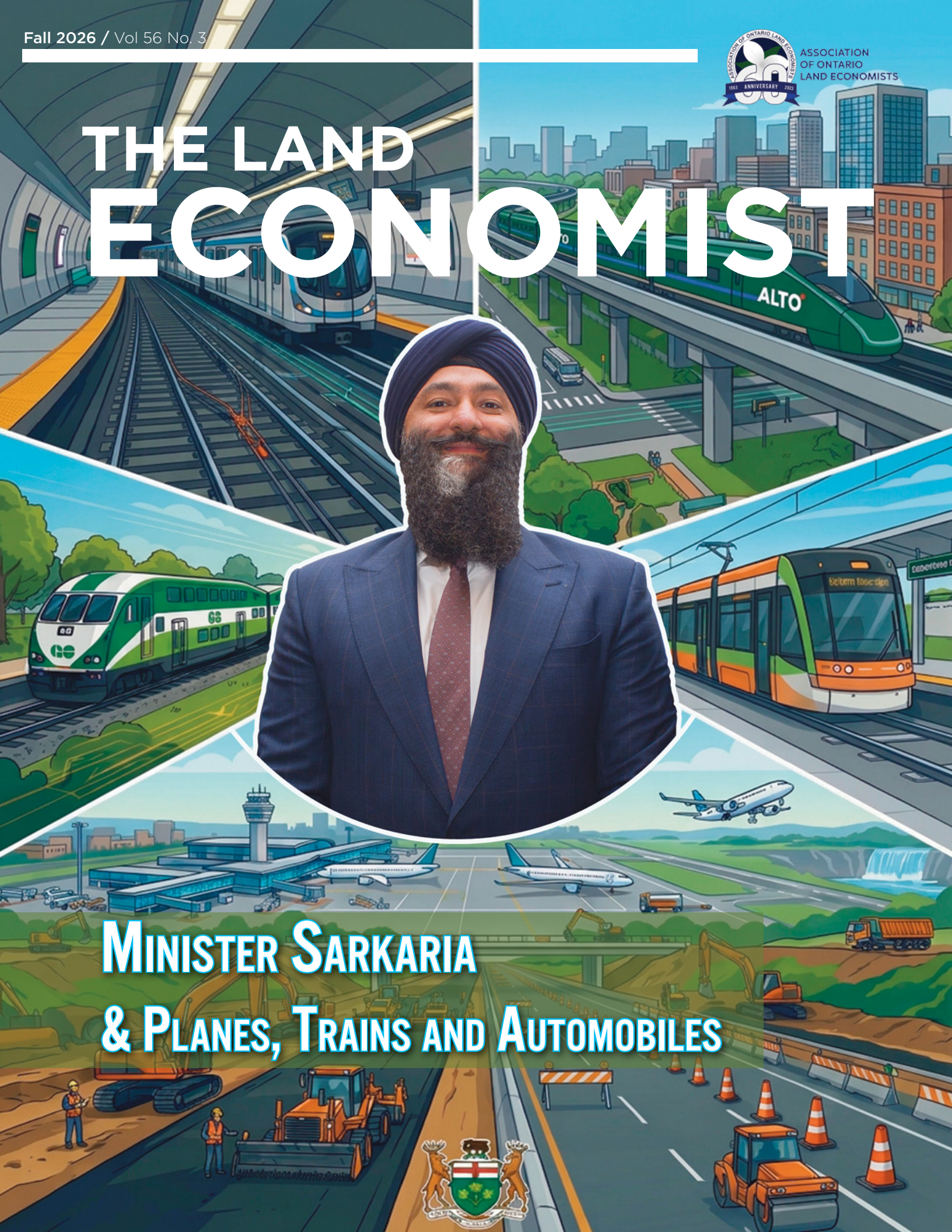
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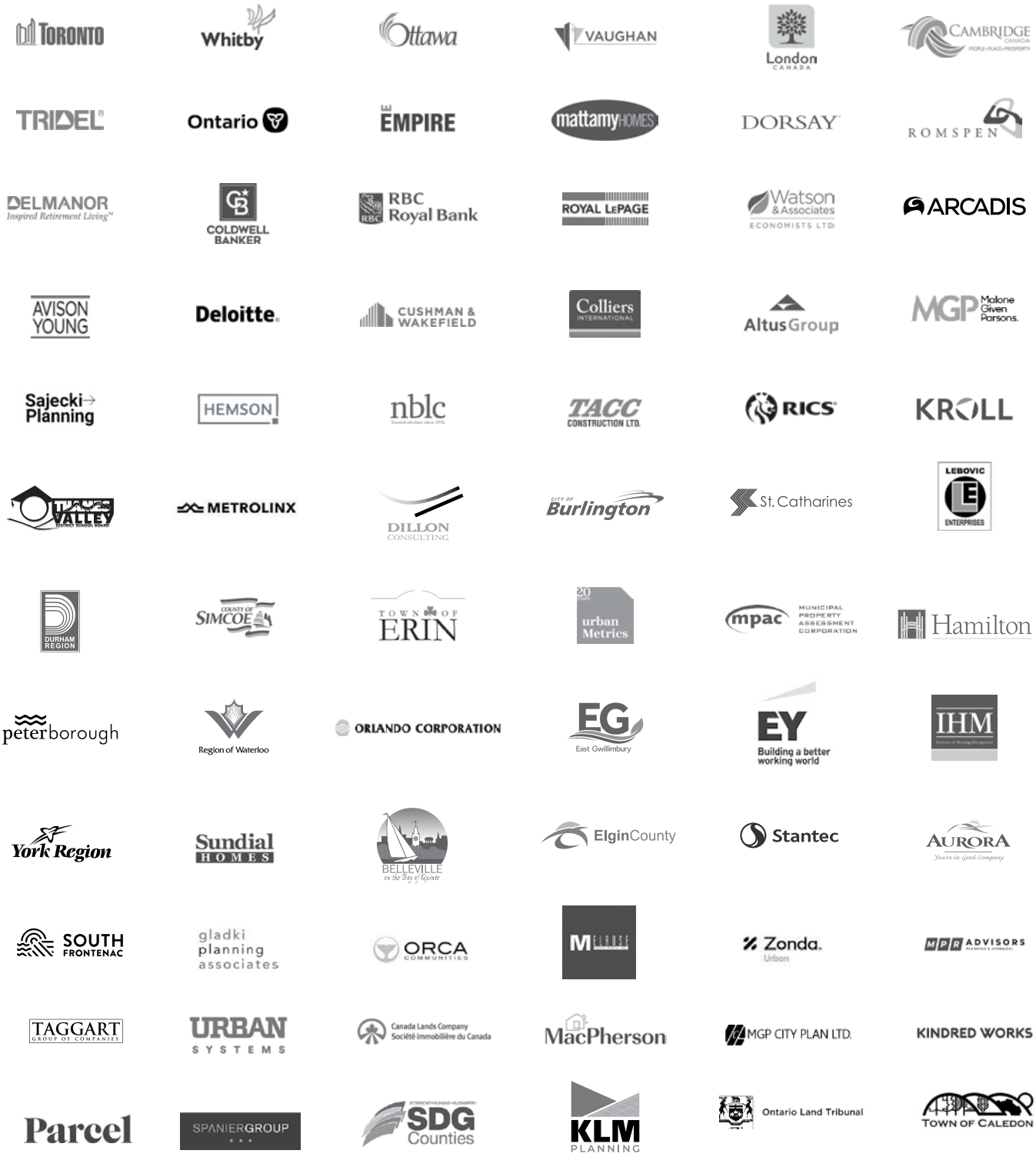
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PROFESSIONAL MAGAZINE

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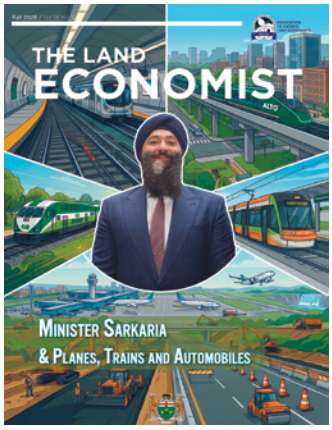
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About the Cover
The front cover draws inspiration from the Ontario Minister of Transportation's keynote address, where he spoke about plans to expand the Niagara District Airport, recent subway and LRT completions, funding for new TTC Line 2 trains, GO Train service enhancements, highway expansions, and funding for road and bridge repairs. The title *Planes, Trains and Automobiles* offers a playful nod to the iconic movie starring John Candy and Steve Martin.

Sudbury's New $200 Million Arena Project

By Pat Brennan



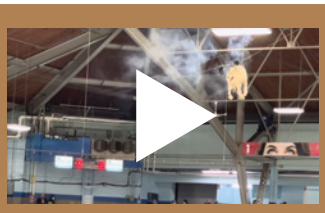
Rendering of the Greater Sudbury Event Centre

SUDBURY - A large grey wolf has been running wild in this city for more than 75 years and the locals want him to keep doing it.

The wolf is the mascot of the Sudbury Wolves of the Ontario Hockey League and each time that team scores a goal a wolf howl fills the arena and a wolf scoots across the ceiling of the arena towards the bench of the visiting team.

The taxidermized wolf has been howling and running since 1952 and it is going to keep doing it in the $200 million arena now under construction in downtown Sudbury.

Residents were asked to vote on the items they wanted to see retained from the current area and the howling wolf was the outstanding selection.



Video of the wolf mascot in action.

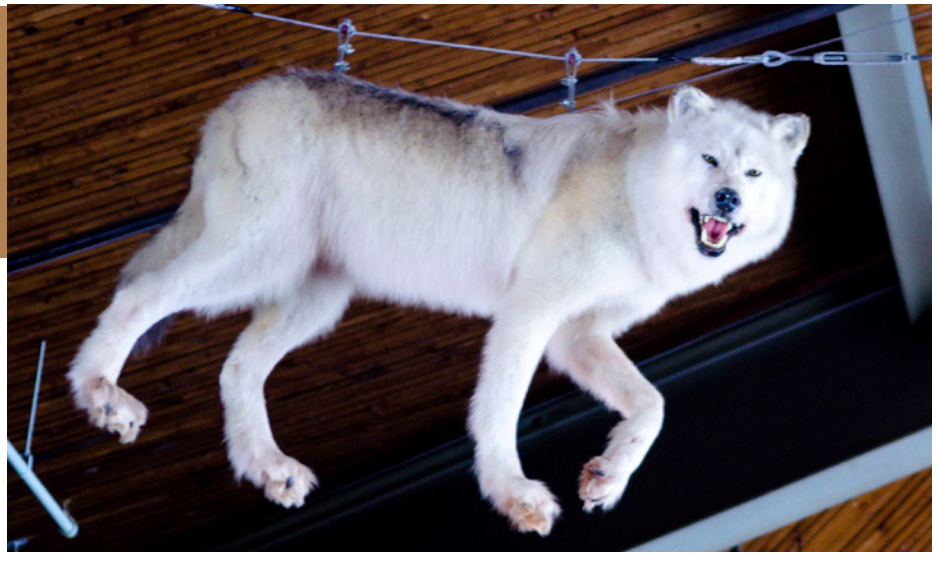


Photo by Pat Brennan

I hope they retain another icon from the 74-year-old arena. It is where Stompin' Tom Connors introduced his hit song Sudbury Saturday Night where the girls are playing bingo and the boys are getting stinko. There is a life-size statue in front of the arena with Stompin' Tom stomping on a piece of plywood and strumming his guitar. Watch Music Video





Stompin' Tom Connors' statue, photo by Pat Brennan





The new arena was designed by the Toronto architectural firm Brisbin, Book, Beynon. It will seat 5,800 for hockey and 7,200 for musical performances. It is being built by PCL Construction and is seen as the start of a refurbishing program for downtown Sudbury.

Brisbin, Brook, Beynon is also designing new concourses for the Boston Gardens, home of the Boston Bruins; also, a new dressing room for the Boston Celtics of the NBA.

At least 67 young men who grew up in Sudbury played in the NHL. There are currently 20 former Wolves playing in the NHL, the most from any junior hockey team in Canada.

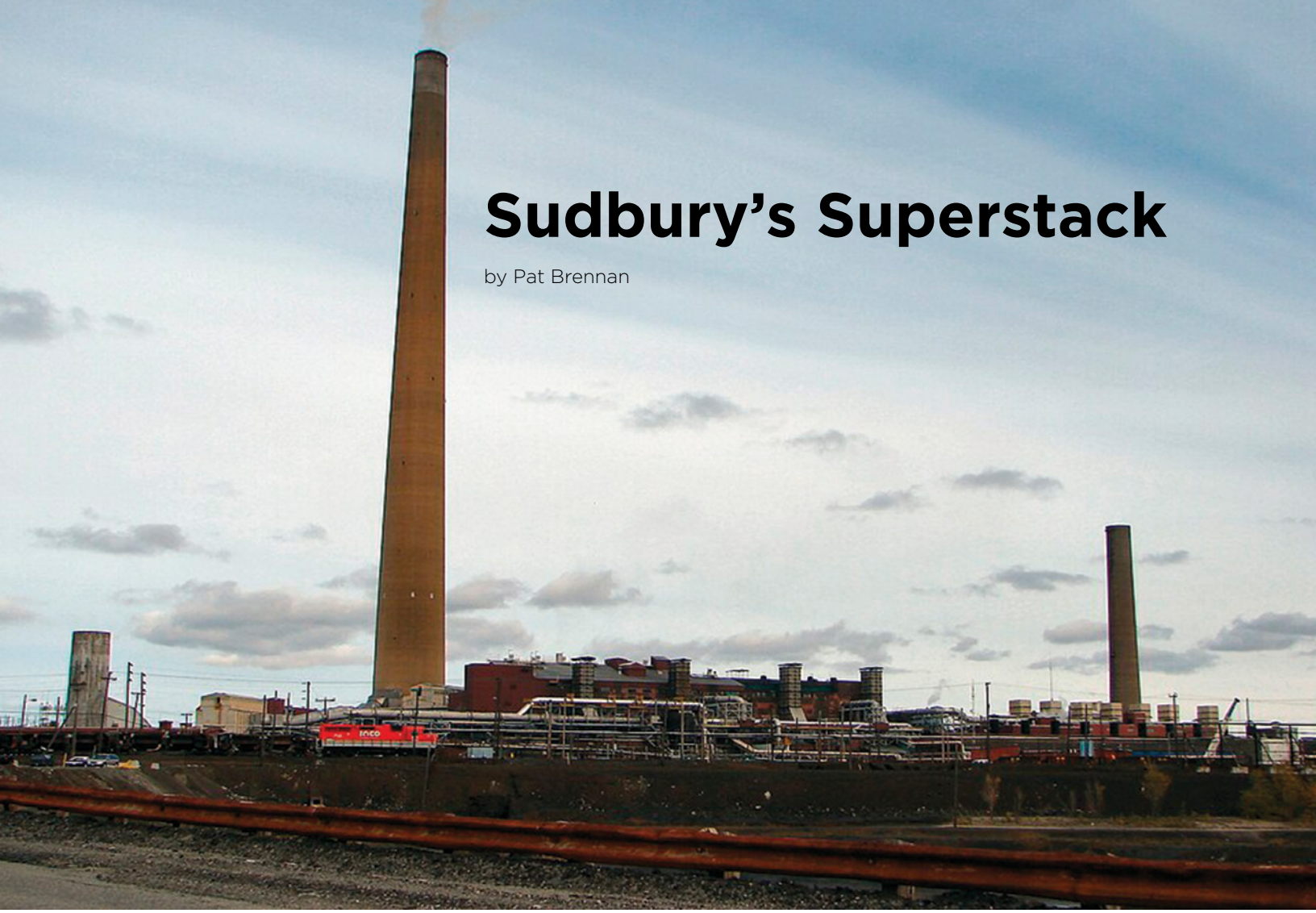
The Wolves expect to play their first game in the new arena if they make the playoffs in the spring of 2028.



Pat Brennan is a freelance writer and former real estate editor at the Toronto Star. You can reach Pat by phone at 647-898-9717 or at travelswithlefty@gmail.com

Sudbury's Superstack

by Pat Brennan



Inco's Superstack, photo by Pat Brennan

Residents of Copper Cliff are quite accustomed to the sound and vibrations from explosions occurring in the various mines below their homes.

That's why they're ignoring the thuds they hear and feel coming hourly from the world-famous structure in the heart of their town.

Their iconic superstack
– once the tallest chimney in the world –
is coming down piece by piece.

There are 16 men at the top of the 1,250-foot-high chimney chipping away at its concrete rim and dropping basketball-size chunks of concrete weighing 1,278 pounds down the interior of the chimney.

They started last summer, so by June this year the height is 1,088 feet. Work stops when the temperatures hit freezing because water is sprayed on the interior of the stack to eliminate sulphur dioxide dust on the walls.

The workers stop dropping the concrete basketballs one day each week so the concrete debris can be cleaned out of the bottom of the superstack.

The workers are standing on a steel-frame platform which drills into the concrete chimney for support to raise or lower the platform. The men operate various robotic devices on the platform to carve into the concrete stack and drop the large chunks down the smokestack's interior.

M.W. Kellogg Construction Company of Canada built the superstack using a slip-form device which allowed concrete to be poured non-stop for 90 days to reach the top. Concrete walls at the base are 40 inches thick and the concrete is 9.5 inches thick at the top.

The $25 million chimney is anchored into the solid rock of the Canadian Shield. Close to 1,000 tons of steel rods are intertwined in the concrete walls and a 1,000-foot-high metal sheet covers the interior to prevent the sulphuric acid in the smoke from deteriorating the concrete.



This image is from drone footage taken by Tim Lacroix of Lacroix Drone Services According to Lacroix Drone Services this was captured using a sub-250g drone, operated from a legal location, by a licensed operator and in accordance with Transport Canada guidelines.

The stack was built next to the world's largest nickel and copper smelter operated by Inco at Copper Cliff. The smelter burns the ore dug from the mines to remove nickel, copper and other exotic minerals, but produces sulphur dioxide which creates acid rain.

The acid rain kills all green vegetation and poisons water. Sudbury has 330 lakes within its boundaries – more than any other community in Canada. But the lakes were dead from acid rain and have no fish.

Inco was purchased by Rio de Janeiro-based Vale Base Metals for $19.5 billion in 2006

It then started a $1 billion campaign to design new technology to clean up its sulphur dioxide emissions which was so successful it eliminated the need for a superstack to further disperse the poisoned plume.

Sudbury was once known for its naked black rocks and poisoned soil that can't grow grass. U.S. astronauts were sent to Sudbury to train for exploring the moon as the landscapes were similar.

The restoration campaign has turned Sudbury green again and brought fish and birds back to its lakes. Environmentalist Jane Goodall monitored the green restoration program for two decades and said Sudbury is her hope for the future of mankind.

The huge smokestack had become an iconic symbol for Sudbury and Canada's dominance in the mining of precious metals. It lost its world title in 2007 when a 1,377-foot-tall smokestack was built for a gas-fired power station in Kazakhstan

Vale proposes to build a monument to the Superstack when it is completely gone in 2029 and is currently passing out commemorative coins that depict Superstack from its smoky hay days.



The Community Planning Permit System:

A Powerful Tool in a Challenging Market

By Nick Michael, Partner, NBLC (MCIP, RPP, PLE) and Margot Hayward, Senior Analyst, NBLC (PLE)

Ontario municipalities are under increasing pressure to approve more housing, reduce development timelines, provide greater certainty to the development industry, and ensure that growth contributes positively to the communities in which it occurs. The Community Planning Permit System (CPPS) offers a potentially powerful tool to advance all of these objectives.

A CPPS combines zoning, site plan control, and minor variance processes into a single development approval framework. Rather than requiring applicants to navigate multiple sequential approvals, the system establishes permitted uses, development standards, pre-approved ranges of variation for those standards, and potential conditions in advance. Applications that conform to this framework can then proceed through a significantly streamlined approval process, with many municipalities identifying a 45-day approval period, significantly shorter than a typical rezoning and site plan process.

The system can also provide municipalities with an opportunity to secure community benefits in exchange for additional height or density. Ontario Regulation 173/16 permits a CPPS to establish conditions requiring specified facilities, services and matters in exchange for increased height/density, provided the necessary policies are established and there is a proportional relationship between the value of the benefit and the additional development permission.

This creates an appealing proposition whereby municipalities can:

- Establish an appropriate base level of development;
- Identify additional density that can be permitted without a lengthy rezoning process; and,
- Use some of the value associated with that additional density to secure affordable housing or other community benefits.

But there is an important economic consideration that is sometimes missing from this discussion: **additional density only creates an opportunity for value capture when that density actually has economic value**.

In the current development environment, this distinction is critical. A CPPS that places significant financial or affordable housing obligations on additional density risks undermining the very development that the system is intended to facilitate.

In many markets today, the more immediate value of the CPPS may therefore be much simpler: make development easier, faster, more predictable, and less risky.

The Opportunity Presented by the CPPS

Ontario's conventional development approval process can create considerable uncertainty. A development proposal may require a zoning by-law amendment, site plan approval, and minor variances, with different processes, timelines, and opportunities for appeal. Even where the ultimate development outcome is generally consistent with municipal objectives, obtaining approval can take years.

The CPPS fundamentally changes this relationship. Instead of negotiating development permissions primarily on a site-by-site basis, municipalities establish a more comprehensive framework upfront. A community planning permit by-law can establish permitted uses and development standards while also identifying ranges within which those standards can vary. For example, the by-law may permit variation for building height, building length, setbacks, or lot coverage. This allows municipalities to accommodate reasonable site-specific circumstances without requiring a separate minor variance or zoning process.

For municipalities, this means undertaking more of the difficult planning exercise at the outset: determining where growth should occur, the appropriate built form, infrastructure considerations, public realm expectations, and the circumstances under which additional development should be permitted.

For landowners and developers, it provides greater clarity about what can reasonably be expected on a property before substantial amounts of capital are committed to design, consultants, and approvals.

The CPPS also moves more decision-making from Council and committees to municipal staff. This can remove relatively minor technical matters from lengthy political approval processes and allow applications that meet established municipal objectives to proceed administratively.

Taken together, these features can materially reduce approval time, entitlement risk, and uncertainty. These are not secondary benefits. In the current market, they may be the most valuable aspects of the CPPS.

Who is Using a CPPS?

While a CPPS is an established planning instrument in Ontario, until recently it was a relatively specialized rather than a widely adopted approach to regulating

development. Historically, municipalities have generally used the tool in areas with unique development constraints or where significant growth and intensification were not anticipated, such as shorelines, environmentally sensitive areas, and historic downtowns with significant heritage characteristics.

More recently, municipalities have begun investigating and implementing CPPS by-laws in more urban contexts where significant growth and intensification are anticipated. This represents an important evolution in the application of the tool. Examples include:

- The City of Burlington is advancing a CPPS to guide growth around its GO Stations, although implementation remains subject to outstanding appeals;
- The City of Guelph has implemented a CPPS within the Stone Road / Edinburgh Road Strategic Growth Area and the Downtown; and,
- The City of Waterloo has implemented a CPPS along the Erb Street Corridor, which may be extended to the Downtown in the future.

Numerous other municipalities are at various stages of exploring or developing CPPS frameworks for major growth areas. This includes the City of Barrie, who is currently studying the use of a CPPS to guide intensification and development within the Downtown and around the Allandale GO Station.

Collectively, these initiatives signal a shift in the role of the CPPS from a relatively specialized tool for managing development in constrained areas to one increasingly being considered as a mechanism for facilitating significant urban growth, providing greater development certainty, empowering staff to approve variances within established thresholds, accelerating housing approvals, and securing community benefits.

The Residential Market is Facing Significant Headwinds

Within the context of a CPPS, it is important to acknowledge that Ontario's real estate market has dramatically weakened in recent years.

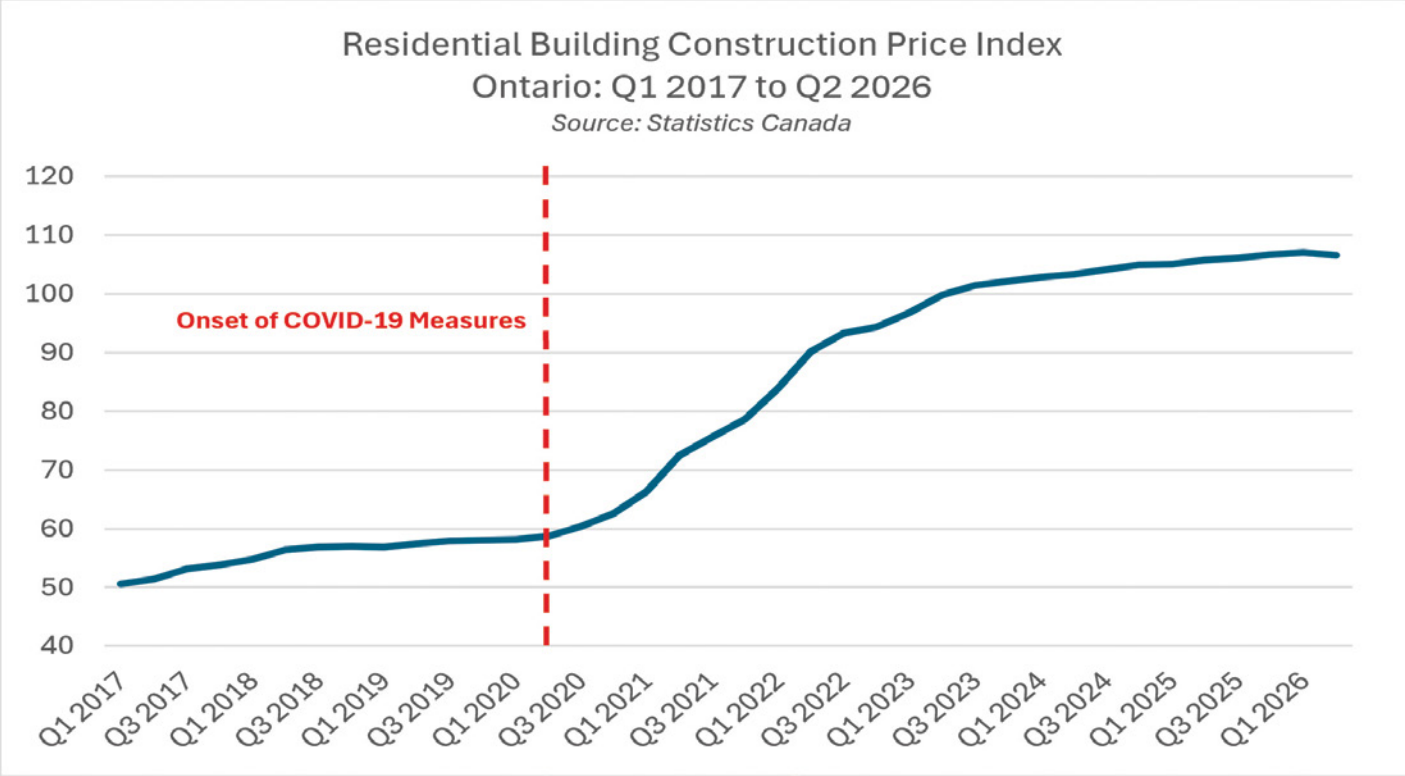
A major factor influencing current market trends is the relationship between development costs and revenues. Construction costs have rapidly surged since the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic **(Figure 1),** straining development feasibility across Ontario. Meanwhile, market prices have declined in response to rising interest rates, slowing immigration growth, economic uncertainty, retreat of investors, and other similar influences. These factors have tempered demand and have slowed the pace of real estate investment.

As a result, condominium apartment development continues to face significant feasibility challenges. Purpose-built rental housing has performed better in recent years, but feasibility is similarly challenged. Most rental projects rely on attractive government financing, reduced municipal charges, low-cost land acquisition, or other forms of support to make the numbers work.

These conditions have stalled residential investment across Canada's major cities, especially in high density markets. While townhomes and other low-density housing products are beginning to see early signs of recovery, higher-density residential development remains muted and characterized by an increasing number of project cancellations, a lack of new project launches, developer insolvencies, and declining land values.

The result is that many theoretically developable sites are not currently financially viable even before community benefits or affordable housing contributions are factored in. This reality fundamentally changes how municipalities should think about extracting value through a CPPS.

Figure 1



Prepared by NBLC using the Statistics Canada Residential Building Construction Price Index

CPPS: A Facilitation or Extraction Tool?

While a CPPS provides municipalities with the ability to extract community benefits through the development process, current market conditions significantly constrain the ability to do so without further impacting development feasibility. Reflecting this reality, many municipalities implementing CPPS frameworks are delaying or limiting the extraction of community benefits in the near term. Similar considerations are evident with other land use planning tools intended to secure community benefits, such as Inclusionary Zoning, where the Province has recently introduced a regulatory pause to reduce financial pressures on new residential development.

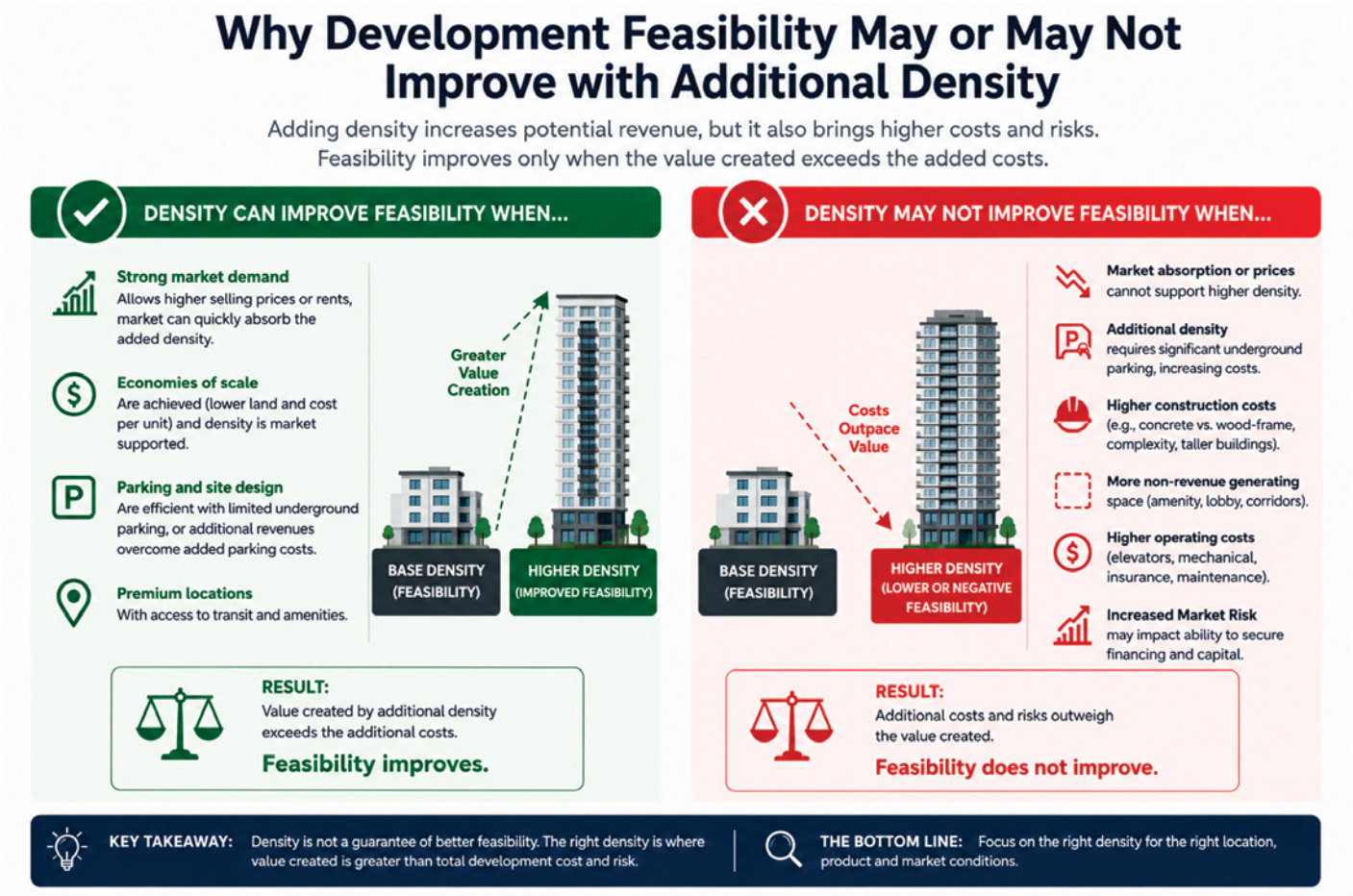
Further, we are currently seeing municipalities and senior levels of government reducing or eliminating certain fees and charges like development charges, HST, and others in an effort to overcome current market challenges and advance new housing supply.

Within this context, there is an important economic consideration that can be easily overlooked from the discussion of a CPPS framework: **additional density only creates opportunity for value capture when the density has economic value.**

Additional density generates value only when the revenue associated with the increase exceeds the costs necessary to produce it **(Figure 2).** In the current market environment, the increased cost of developing larger buildings is particularly impactful and is exacerbated by elevated construction costs, depressed achievable pricing, and a slower pace of sales/leasing, which creates significant market risk.

Density therefore is not the same as value. In fact, many development sites hoping to advance in the near-term are currently exploring reduced densities to better align with current market dynamics and feasibility conditions.

Figure 2



Figures are illustrative and conceptual only.

Placing significant financial or in-kind community obligations on additional density runs the risk of undermining the outcomes that a CPPS intends to facilitate. This reality fundamentally changes how municipalities should think about extracting value through a CPPS, with the calibration between where density begins and where community benefit extraction occurs being a very important consideration.

In the near term, the priority of the CPPS framework should therefore be facilitation rather than extraction. Where community benefits are incorporated, municipalities should consider market-responsive approaches rather than rigid extraction formulas that assume development economics remain constant over time. This could include phased implementation, modest initial requirements, periodic feasibility reviews, market-based triggers, and/or provisions that allow requirements to increase when evidence demonstrates that additional density is once again generating meaningful land value.

So Why Use a CPPS?

A successful CPPS creates a predictable, flexible, and durable planning framework that encourages investment today while positioning the municipality to secure greater community benefits when market conditions support them tomorrow.

In the current market, this means establishing realistic as-of-right permissions, reducing approval timelines, consolidating processes, providing meaningful flexibility, delegating appropriate decisions to staff, and giving landowners greater certainty about what can be developed.

Over the longer term, the equation can change. As market conditions strengthen and additional density once again generates meaningful economic value, municipalities can reasonably seek to capture a portion of that value for affordable housing and other community priorities.

The strength of the CPPS is that it can accommodate both objectives. The challenge is sequencing them correctly.

nblc

Nick Michael, MCIP, RPP, PLE
Partner, NBLC

Margot Hayward, PLE
Senior Analyst, NBLC

Nick and Margot have supported CPPS implementation in Waterloo, Burlington, Barrie, and Oakville, providing land economics analysis and strategic advice to municipal staff and planning teams led by Dillon Consulting and Hertel Planning.

AOLE News!

New AOLE Recruiting Brochure

The Marketing Committee recently commissioned a new recruitment brochure to attract new members which has now been printed and will be distributed to target companies and organizations. We are proud to show it to you below.



Unlocking Canada's Remote Regions:
Access Without Waiting for the Road

By Commander Norm Normand, MBA



Conceptual illustration of low-infrastructure transport in a northern environment, showing a cargo airship and hovercraft extending logistics access beyond conventional roads, ports and runways. AI-generated illustration.

In an earlier article for The Land Economist, I argued that improved access can create a substantial uplift in the value of remote resource properties. The precise number will always be project-specific, but the mechanism is straightforward: access changes risk, and risk changes value. A deposit that is geologically attractive but logistically inaccessible is not the same economic asset as one that can be reached, supplied and developed with confidence.

That raises a useful second question: must access always begin with a permanent road, railway, port or runway? My final months in the Canadian Armed Forces have increasingly pushed me toward a broader answer. As I prepare to retire in April 2027 and devote more time to my consulting practice, **FynnLink Group Inc.,** two concepts have become central to my thinking: Low-Infrastructure Demand Vehicles (LIDVs) and Infrastructure-Independent Warfare (IIW).

LIDV is an umbrella term for vehicles that can move people, equipment or commodities while demanding comparatively little fixed infrastructure. Cargo airships, hovercraft, ground-effect vehicles and dynamic air-cushion vehicles are examples. They do not eliminate the need for roads, ports or airports. Rather, they can create a mobile logistics layer that reaches beyond them, bridges gaps between them, or provides useful access before the economics justify a major permanent build.

For miners and land economists, that distinction matters. The traditional development sequence often assumes that a resource must first carry the burden of enabling infrastructure: a road hundreds of kilometres long, a new port, a runway, or some combination of the three. Those works may ultimately be necessary, but they also front-load capital, lengthen schedules and increase exposure to permitting, construction and demand risk. A low-infrastructure option can change the order of operations. Exploration camps, drill equipment, specialized machinery, fuel and even selected outbound products may be moved earlier, allowing a project to prove more of its value before every permanent connection is in place.

Not all LIDVs solve the access problem in the same way, and their relative advantages matter. Cargo airships offer perhaps the greatest potential for moving heavy or outsized loads over long distances without



R.N4 Hovercraft (Mountbatten Class). Photo taken on its last day of service (01 October 2000). Andrew Berridge - Own work, CC BY-SA 2.5

a runway or continuous surface route. Their trade-offs include comparatively low speed, sensitivity to wind during ground operations, the need for appropriate loading and mooring arrangements, and a commercial sector that is still maturing. Hovercraft are already proven in northern environments and can move across water, ice, shallow water and relatively soft terrain without a prepared road. Their disadvantages include comparatively high fuel consumption, noise, skirt maintenance and limitations imposed by rough terrain and sea state.

Ground-effect vehicles occupy a different niche. By travelling close to the surface and exploiting aerodynamic ground effect, they can potentially combine relatively high speed with greater efficiency than conventional aircraft, particularly across long water routes. Their usefulness is therefore strongest where geography provides relatively unobstructed marine or coastal corridors; waves, weather and the requirement to remain close to the surface can constrain operations.

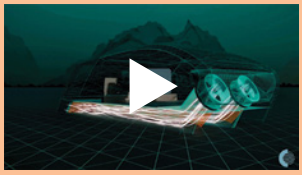
Then there are dynamic air-cushion vehicles (DACVs) and surface effect ships (SES). They potentially offer substantial speed and efficiency, with some designs also providing significant amphibious flexibility. The technology is maturing, although commercial readiness varies by design and market. Related air-cushion vessel technologies are already operating commercially in Europe, including in North Sea offshore-energy support, while newer DACV designs being developed in Canada



Personnel observe the UH-19XRW Hoverwing in ground-effect mode over the Potomac River Test Range. Unmanned military capabilities of the hybrid hovercraft and ground-effect vehicle are being investigated by a team of Dahlgren engineers and scientists in a ground effect research and development program known as Sly Fox Program Mission 9. U.S. Navy photo by Mr. John Joyce (RELEASED) Photo in the Public Domain

are progressing from prototype validation toward commercial fleet deployment. Their near-term limitations are therefore less about whether the underlying air-cushion principle works than about scaling individual designs, certification, production capacity and the development of an operating track record.

A Canadian based company has a video demonstrating the technology behind the design of a dynamic air-cushion vehicle being developed in Squamish B.C.



Watch Video

The important point for land economists is that there is no universally superior LIDV. The appropriate vehicle depends upon payload, distance, terrain, weather, frequency of service and the value of the commodity being moved. A bulk mine development, an exploration camp and a northern community may therefore arrive at very different transportation platforms: airship, hovercraft, ground-effect vehicle or surface effect ship. Each can address the access problem while reducing dependence on the large fixed infrastructure required by conventional transportation. The economic advantage lies not in replacing permanent infrastructure wholesale, but in selecting the lowest-infrastructure combination capable of changing the project's access equation.

The Ring of Fire provides a useful contemporary example of this logic. A recent Sudbury Star profile of Juno Corp. founder Robert Cudney describes not only Juno's growing mineral position in the region but also Cudney's acquisition of True North Airways to give the company greater control over its transportation and logistics requirements. That vertical integration is telling. In remote mineral development, access is not simply a supporting service; it can become part of the economic model itself. Low Infrastructure Demand Vehicles extend that same logic by expanding the range of transportation options available before, between, or beyond major permanent infrastructure investments.

Infrastructure-Independent Warfare (IIW) approaches the same problem from a defence perspective. At its core, IIW asks how a force can operate when it cannot assume continuous access to large, vulnerable or distant logistics nodes. The answer is not to abandon infrastructure, but to become less dependent on any single piece of it. Dispersed supply, mobile support, modular systems and vehicles able to operate away from conventional hubs create options and resilience.

The civilian parallel is obvious. A mine, northern community or remote industrial project also benefits when access is not binary. A road closure, damaged bridge, ice condition, port constraint or runway limitation need not sever the entire logistics chain if another layer can route around the problem. In that sense, LIDVs are best understood as infrastructure multipliers: they increase the reach and utility of the infrastructure already built. That same characteristic also makes them inherently attractive as **dual-use infrastructure.** A vehicle, operating base or logistics network developed to support mining, community resupply or northern industry can also provide mobility, surveillance, emergency-response or sustainment capacity for the Canadian Armed Forces and other government agencies when required. Conversely, defence investment in northern mobility can create infrastructure and capability that remains economically useful to civilian operators. In remote regions, where the cost of maintaining separate civilian and military logistics systems can be prohibitive, that shared utility can materially strengthen the business case for both.



SES100B during a high-speed run on St. Andrews Bay 1975
Neodoubledog - Own work, CC BY-SA 3.0

This does not mean every remote property suddenly becomes economic because an airship or hovercraft exists. As the differences among these technologies suggest, access must be matched to payload, geography, operating conditions and economics. But land economics is fundamentally concerned with the relationship between place, access, risk and value. If emerging transport technologies alter the access variable, they deserve to be considered alongside more familiar infrastructure assumptions.

After more than two decades working in military logistics, including roles connected to naval support and readiness, ammunition and explosives, contracting and procurement, on both foreign and domestic operations, I am increasingly convinced that the most interesting infrastructure question is not simply, "What should we build?" It is also, "What could we do before we build it and what becomes more valuable once we can?" For northern mining and land economics, that may prove to be a very consequential distinction.



Commander Norm Normand, MBA, PCSC, CD
Cdr. Normand is an active-duty Naval Logistician for the Royal Canadian Navy. He has written extensively on the use of airships and other Low Infrastructure Demand Vehicles (LIDVs) to logistically connect the northernmost regions of Canada to the rest of the country in order to exert sovereignty, increase living standards, and unlock Canada's stranded mineral wealth. He is currently working with Defence Research and Development Canada to produce an "IDEaS" (Innovation for Defence Excellence and Security) challenge to industry that seeks to achieve these aims.



Exploring European Ideas

Article and photos by Ian Ellingham, PhD, PLE, FRAIC

The Festival of the New European Bauhaus 2026: Life. Spaces. Buildings in Brussels Belgium

Given Prime Minister Carney's recent initiatives in Europe, it is timely to consider some EU principles and concepts relative to real estate. I have found one of the best ways of innovating is to build on ideas from other places and other disciplines – and Europe is a great place to look for them, because the wide range of climate types, cultures and histories has led to different approaches.

Relative to my ongoing pursuit of bright ideas and research funding, I attended the European Commission's three-day conference-cum-networking event in June, in Brussels, entitled T*he Festival of the New European Bauhaus 2026: Life. Spaces. Buildings.* The New European Bauhaus (NEB) is an innovation initiative with substantial funding through Horizon Europe, the EU's programme for research and innovation. Canadian organisations have been eligible to collaborate, lead, and receive funding through parts of Horizon EU since July 2024 – including NEB initiatives. This is based on various agreements, requirements and policies that relate to Canada's arrangements with Europe.



The NEB was created in 2020 and since then almost 700 research and innovation projects of various scales have supported the NEB principles. Some investigation, filtering and thought is necessary to achieve some level of understanding of those principles.

The NEB is very future looking, and has strong backing. The event opening address was by Ursula von der Leyen, president of the European Commission.

There are three overriding ideals that govern NEB's activities, but the simple words need some interpretation.

Sustainability:

This is sustainability on a wide scale. Not limited to energy or carbon, this embeds the notion that true sustainability has its basis in people. Today's decisions about design, infrastructure, public space and institutional capacity therefore shape not only the built environments for today, but the communities that future generations will inherit centuries from now. If you want more on this ideal – read Mark Carney's book 'Values'.

Inclusion/Together:

Recognition that a future better world has to be for everyone. No-one is to be left behind.

Beauty:

Having written a book on this, and having tried to use the 'beauty' word as little as possible, I am sensitive to how complex and loaded it is. It is not just visual beauty that is being referenced by NEB, but something more comprehensive – that an environment will be broadly esteemed by a wide range of people for a protracted period of time – thereby contributing to improving built environments and to sustainability.

The NEB encourages its participants to embrace interdisciplinarity, in particular that funded project teams include people and groups including the social sciences, arts, culture and citizen participation, not just architecture and design, engineering and technology.

To a Canadian trying to understand the NEB/Horizon environment, more clarification is required.

First, the name:

the initiative has very little to do with the Bauhaus-Dessau or international-style modernist architecture. NEB thinks seriously about the longer term, and approaches humanity very differently than did the original Bauhaus group.

Language:

One aspect of dealing with European organisations is easy – among business people, academics and professionals there is a common language – English. At the conference I don't recall overhearing any other language. As Canadians we sometimes might think that is weird, but there are over 250 languages in use in Europe, with the EU recognising 24 of them. Indeed, from working on our past European projects, the rule is 'do everything in English'. Nice for us, but practical for Europeans. As I was mainly representing a British firm at the conference, I wondered if my accent would betray me, but there was a wonderful variety of accents. I received only one comment – someone asked me if I was Dutch – I was flattered by the compliment - many younger Dutch speak English better than many native English speakers (think Bernard Shaw and Pygmalion).

Borders:

While there are 27 EU countries, some European programmes reach other countries too. Hence, Canada's involvement is not unusual. Participants in Horizon/NEB include such places as Turkey, Egypt, South Korea, Georgia, New Zealand and Japan. There are political overtones to the programme. In the current Canadian debate about relationships with Europe, it is important to realise that Europe is not one thing – it is like an à la carte menu. Canada, in its arrangements with Horizon, did not negotiate access to all of the programme – the 'association system' allows participating countries to negotiate their financial contributions, rights and obligations.

The three days in Brussels were a whirl of talks, workshops and discussions. One could pick and choose among many events. There was a large triple hall containing over sixty exhibits of projects funded through a variety of sources – various EU programmes, as well as local and national governments. I met people from across Europe and beyond, and all had the same objective: to work towards creating a better human-centric built environment and...

- Participated in a lengthy discussion session with the city architect for Malmo;
- Talked to people from a number of universities, including those in Stockholm, Copenhagen and Slovakia;
- Gave away five copies of my book *'Understanding Ugly',* and received two books in return. (Who knew people traded books at such events?);
- Had a lengthy talk with a Greek physicist who was involved in a programme to deal with energy efficiency and heat management in Greek schools;
- Heard about basement farming in Sweden;
- Was puzzled by some creative ways of dealing with alluvial mud in the Danube;
- Spoke to the people who refurbished some 19th–century social housing in Genoa – and respected both heritage and energy efficiency;
- Found out about the NEB local chapters initiative at a display from Gothenburg;
- Had a chat about a multi-national programme in architecture that emphasised practical studies;
- Heard about alternative transportation systems in various places, including Ireland and the Adriatic area;
- Listened to a group talking about the implementation of Climate Positive Circular Communities in Norway;
- Heard about issues and possible solutions to homelessness and the hard-to-house.

Attended talks on:

- Issues of affordable housing and how to implement it;
- Dealing with social media;
- Understanding public spaces and how they are perceived and used;
- Physical and social resilience;
- Heritage: how to keep it relevant;
- Innovation: breaking down silos, bringing people together as a way to harness different skills and interests;
- The circular economy (a major theme);
- The integration of art into architecture and urban design (Personally, I am a big fan of this as an inexpensive way of improving buildings, neighbourhoods and cities); and
- How to create climate-resilient buildings and urban environments, especially in a warming world.

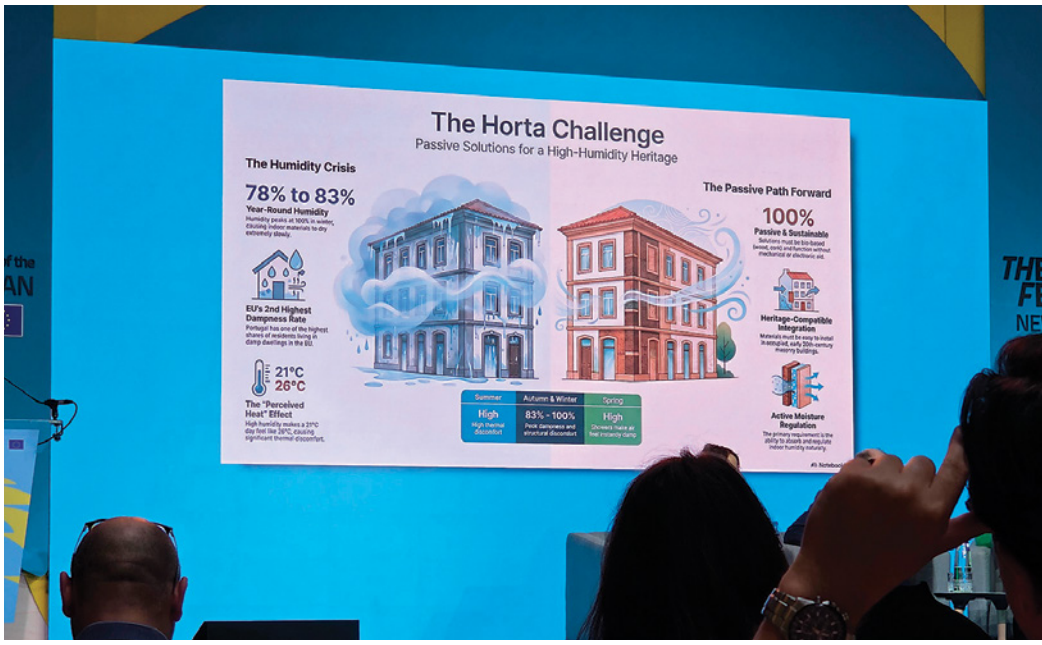


Photo of a workshop at The Festival of the New European Bauhaus 2026: Life. Spaces. Buildings

Perhaps the most significant realisation is that a wide range of countries is confronting many of the same issues as Ontario, including having enough suitable housing, issues of constraints in the supply system, affordability, costs of construction, and issues of low-income and special purpose housing. In return for one of my books, I received in return: *'Housing in Times of Crisis'* produced by an interdisciplinary team based in Slovakia. It covers many of the same issues we have in Ontario – even given their very different histories through the 20th century.

There was a change in tenor about the matter of energy efficiency. Given current oil and gas issues, there was a shift to an emphasis on energy security – 'saving the planet' didn't seem to be as immediate a goal, but it will probably be helped by the urgency of energy security.

Although largely unspoken, my sense was that there was a common goal: no matter what each talk or project initiative might be, each one was attempting to improve human well-being. However, what exactly human well-being might be requires ongoing thought and research – both empirical and philosophical, and we need to gain insights into how implementation might best occur.





Ian Ellingham

There was some 'Festival' too. In the evenings I heard some remarkable music in the pavilion set up in front of the Museum venue. I particularly enjoyed Maria Arnal, a Barcelona-based singer/composer who combines electronic pop with polyphonic traditional music. I participated in an impromptu discussion circle that stimulated thoughtful entertainment – we spent some time going around in circles (it was actually physically a round table with the moderator sitting in a hole in the middle) and ended up talking about sea-food and the current fad for sardines. And, yes, I did indulge in some delightful Belgian beer, and had a chocolate-covered waffle in the train station on my way out.

Reflections:

It was fun. I enjoyed the discussions with people who were working in many corners of the built environment, especially since many of the same issues appear in different contexts. The emphasis on creating long-term value was evident, as well as the need for initiatives to better understand the nature of humans individually and collectively, so as to increase individual and overall well-being. One of the most exciting parts of participating in European events is the recognition of how over the past three-quarters of a century a complex continent containing hundreds of languages and historic cultures has come together with one objective - to build a better world for everyone. I kept feeling I was having glimpses of how a better future might unfold for all of us.

More information can be found at: https://new-european-bauhaus.europa.eu/index_en



Dr. Ian Ellingham
Is an associate of Cambridge Architectural Research, https://carltd.com/ a British research-based consultancy at the forefront of new thinking in the design, construction and management of buildings and the built environment (sometimes called a 'think-tank'). He participated in the (€6 million) Horizon/Seventh Framework project 'Cileccta: A user-oriented, knowledge-based suite of Construction Industry LifE Cycle CosT Analysis software for pan-European determination and costing of sustainable project options'

Valuing Communities

By Ejona Balashi, B.A, CMP, SFC,
Executive Director, IMA

Editor's Note:
The Association of Ontario Land Economists comprises members from a variety of professional organizations associated with Land Economy. We will be providing a brief profile of each member association from time to time so that members can appreciate the extent of our Association. Profiled below is the Institute of Municipal Assessors (IMA):



Main street storefronts (Photo: Land O'Lakes, Inc. / Unsplash)

The Role of Municipal Property Assessment and Taxation

Across Canada, a wide range of professionals contribute to the economics, use, and management of real property. Planners, developers, surveyors, economists, and valuation specialists all play important roles in understanding how land is used, valued, and developed within our communities.

Municipal property assessment and taxation plays a distinct and important role within this landscape.

The professionals working in this field connect property markets, legislation, public policy, and municipal finance. By ensuring that property values are assessed consistently and fairly, they support one of the key pillars of municipal governance: a fair and transparent property taxation system.

While many property owners rarely think about the assessment process itself, **property taxes play a vital role in supporting the services and infrastructure that communities rely on every day—from roads and parks to libraries, emergency services, and other essential public services.** Assessment professionals help ensure that this system operates fairly and consistently by providing the valuation expertise that underpins property taxation.

For professionals working across real property and land-use disciplines—including members of the Association of Ontario Land Economists—the work associated with municipal property assessment and taxation offers an important perspective on how valuation, taxation, and public policy intersect in shaping communities.

Supporting this work across Canada, the Institute of Municipal Assessors (IMA) brings together nearly 1,300 professionals working in municipalities, assessment authorities, consulting practices, and advisory roles connected to property taxation.

Ethics and Professional Responsibility

Because municipal property assessments directly influence the distribution of property taxes, the profession carries significant ethical responsibility.

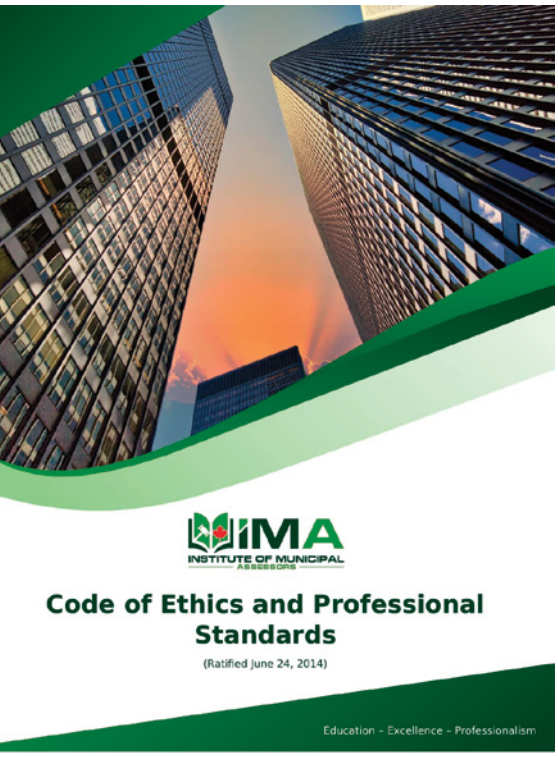
Assessment professionals must apply valuation principles consistently, interpret legislation fairly, and maintain transparency in systems that affect millions of property owners. Their work must withstand public scrutiny and often formal appeal processes.

Fair property taxation depends on professional judgment, ethical standards, and transparent valuation practices.

Members of the Institute of Municipal Assessors are guided by the IMA Code of Ethics and Professional Standards that emphasizes integrity, objectivity, professional competence, and accountability. These principles help ensure that property assessment systems remain fair, defensible, and trusted by the public.

As data analytics, automated valuation models, and emerging technologies become increasingly integrated into assessment

practice, maintaining transparency, accountability, and professional judgment remains central to the profession.



Beyond Homes and Offices

Not every property fits neatly into a sales comparison. Assessment professionals also value properties that rarely, if ever, change hands on the open market, such as pipelines, power generating stations, railway corridors, hydro transmission lines, and wind and solar facilities. Because there is little or no market evidence for these properties, legislation often sets out specialized methods for valuing them. In Ontario, for example, pipelines are assessed using regulated rates based on their length and diameter, adjusted for depreciation. Similarly, specific buildings and structures at the province's nuclear generating stations are prescribed by regulation. Jurisdictions across Canada take their own approaches to these properties. Valuing these assets requires technical knowledge, a solid grasp of the legislative framework, and careful professional judgment. These are the qualities the profession's designations are built to recognize.



Billy Bishop Toronto City Airport (Photo: Alexander Anderson / Unsplash)

The Ontario Reassessment Delay

In Ontario, MPAC normally conducts a province-wide assessment update every four years, so that assessed values reflect changes in the local real estate market. The last province-wide update used a valuation date of January 1, 2016. The update planned for 2020 was postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic, and in August 2023 the province extended the postponement through the end of the 2021–2024 assessment cycle. With the province's postponement still in place, property assessments for the 2026 property tax year continue to be based on January 1, 2016 values, a full decade after that valuation date. Each property is valued as of January 1, 2016, in its current state and condition, including any major changes since then.



Wind turbines over farmland (Photo: Sergej / Unsplash)

A Growing Professional Community

Originally incorporated in 1957, the Institute of Municipal Assessors has evolved from a primarily provincial organization into Canada's largest professional association connected to municipal property assessment and taxation.

Today, the Institute supports members working across multiple jurisdictions through a network of districts including Ontario, Newfoundland and Labrador, New Brunswick, and Nova Scotia. These districts create opportunities for professionals to connect locally while participating in broader conversations about valuation practices, taxation systems, and emerging issues within the profession.

The Institute promotes professional excellence through its designation programs, including the **Associate of the Institute of Municipal Assessors (A.I.M.A.)** and the **Member of the Institute of Municipal Assessors (M.I.M.A.)** designation. These designations recognize professional knowledge, experience, and a commitment to ethical practice.

Collaboration Across Canada

Collaboration across jurisdictions is an increasingly important aspect of the assessment profession.

While legislative frameworks differ between jurisdictions, many of the challenges facing

professionals involved in municipal property assessment and taxation are shared across the country.

The Institute works closely with partner organizations including the Alberta Assessors Association (AAA), the Saskatchewan Assessment Appraisers Association (SAAA), the New Brunswick Association of Assessing Officers (NBAAO), and the Association of Assessing Officers of Manitoba (AAOM), among others. These relationships support the exchange of knowledge, professional dialogue, and best practices.

These organizations and others represent a growing community working across Canada to strengthen the profession and support fair and transparent property taxation systems.

One example of this collaboration is the recognition of professional designations between organizations. The **M.I.M.A. designation** is recognized by the Alberta Assessors Association as a senior professional designation, reflecting the shared commitment across organizations to high professional standards and expertise in municipal property assessment.

Advancing Knowledge and Professional Dialogue

A key role of the Institute of Municipal Assessors is supporting the exchange of knowledge and best practices across the profession.

At the international level, the Institute collaborates with the International Property Tax Institute to host symposiums that bring global perspectives on property taxation and valuation to Canadian professionals.

Across Canada, the IMA convenes its **Annual Conference,** bringing together professionals from different jurisdictions to share research, discuss emerging challenges, and strengthen professional networks.

The Institute also collaborates with partner associations to host **national online symposiums,** while its district network supports local professional engagement through meetings and educational sessions addressing **regional issues.**

Together, these **initiatives connect international insight, national collaboration, and local professional dialogue** within the assessment profession.

Investing in the Future of the Profession

Like many professions connected to real property and land use, municipal property assessment and taxation is experiencing generational change.

To support emerging leaders, the Institute has launched the Canadian Assessment Mentorship Network, connecting early-career professionals with experienced practitioners across the country.

The Institute is also establishing an **Emerging Professionals Committee,** providing newer professionals with opportunities to engage in conversations about innovation, technology, and the evolving future of the profession.

Supporting Strong Communities

Municipal property assessment may operate largely behind the scenes, but its impact is felt in every community.

By ensuring that property taxation is applied fairly and consistently, assessment professionals help sustain the municipal services and infrastructure that communities rely on every day.

Through collaboration, professional education, and a strong commitment to ethics and professional standards, the Institute of Municipal Assessors continues to strengthen the profession and support fair, transparent property taxation systems that help communities across Canada grow and thrive.

Those interested in learning more about the Institute of Municipal Assessors, its professional designations, and its work supporting **municipal property assessment and taxation across Canada** are encouraged to visit https://theima.ca.

Sources

- **Pipelines:** Ontario Regulation 282/98 (General) under the *Assessment Act,* as amended by O. Reg. 397/16, which updates pipeline rates and depreciation for the 2017–2026 taxation years.
- **Nuclear generating stations:** Ontario Regulation 574/06 (Generation Facilities) under the *Assessment Act,* which prescribes buildings and structures at the Bruce, Darlington and Pickering generating stations.
- **Assessment cycle and postponement:** MPAC, "The Assessment Cycle", "Property Assessment Notice" and "Property Assessment Notices Coming for Ontario Business Owners" (October 25, 2016); and "2025 Roll Return Fact Sheet" (December 9, 2025).
- **Designations:** Institute of Municipal Assessors, "A.I.M.A. Designation" and "M.I.M.A. Accreditation."
- **Ethics:** Institute of Municipal Assessors, "IMA Code of Ethics and Professional Standards."

Canadian Businesswomen's Trade Delegation to Guyana

By Nazreen Ali, MBA, PLE

A Canadian Women in Global Commerce initiative, in collaboration with the Canada Guyana Chamber of Commerce

Guyana's economy is growing faster than almost any in the world, and the decisions being made now about land, housing, and infrastructure will shape the country for a generation. This January, a delegation of Canadian businesswomen and their supporters will travel to Guyana to join those conversations early, build partnerships, and share Canadian expertise in land economics, planning, development, and infrastructure.

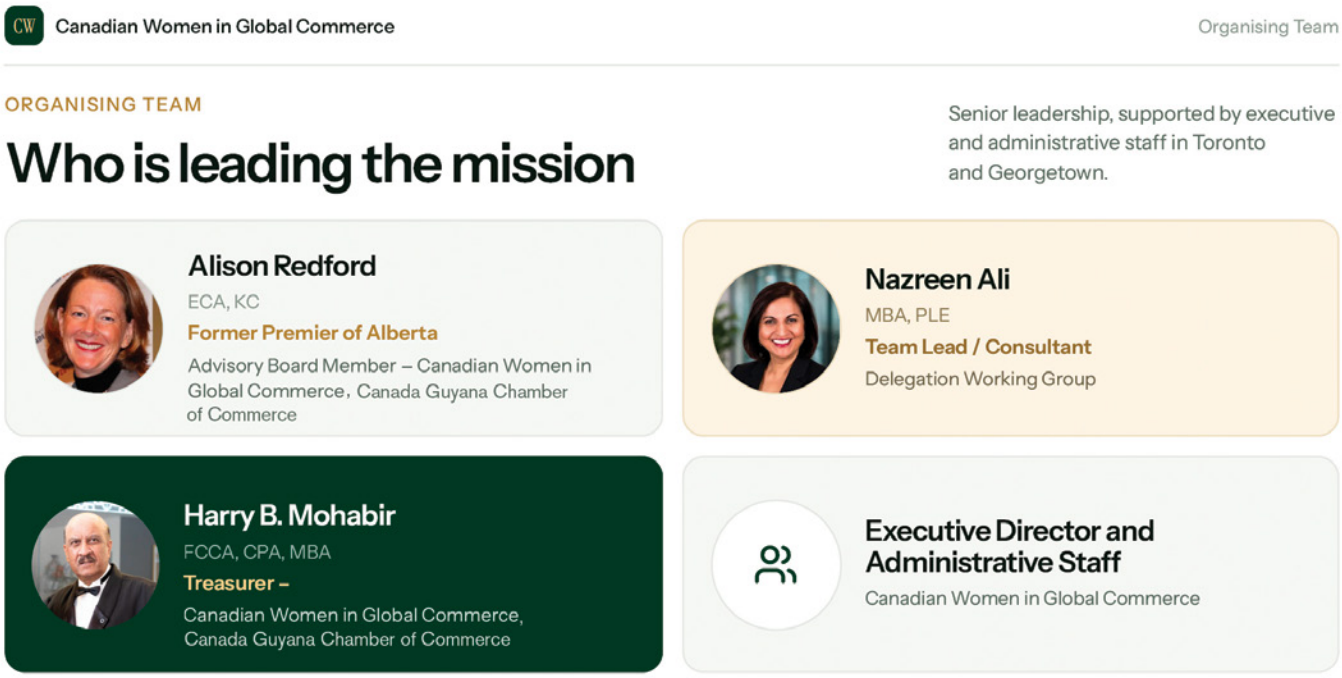
This is a women-led initiative. By bringing Canadian businesswomen and their supporters directly to Guyana's decision-makers and business community, the delegation aims to open doors for women-led businesses and professionals in both countries, and to build partnerships that reflect the full range of talent driving Guyana's growth.

At a glance

- **What:** Canadian Businesswomen and Supporters Trade Delegation to Guyana
- **When:** January 23–30, 2027
- **Organizers:** Canadian Women in Global Commerce, in collaboration with the Canada Guyana Chamber of Commerce
- **Who:** Women entrepreneurs, investors, land development professionals, and supporters of women-led businesses
- **Advisory team:** includes The Honourable Alison Redford, ECA, KC, former Premier of Alberta, who will travel with the delegation
- **Register:** Register Online at cwgconline.com or by phoning or emailing one of the contacts listed at the end of the article.

The Association of Ontario Land Economists (AOLE) has long connected its members with emerging markets where Canadian expertise can support sustainable growth. As an AOLE member and former Board member, I am leading this initiative, which gives Canadian professionals and business leaders direct access to that market.

"Trade is ultimately about people, relationships and creating opportunities that benefit everyone involved. This delegation to Guyana is about forging connections with local leaders, businesses, entrepreneurs and organizations to explore areas where expertise, innovation and shared values can drive mutual growth. This delegation is an important step towards building stronger commercial and cultural ties between Canada and Guyana" Alison Redford, ECA, KC, Former Premier Alberta

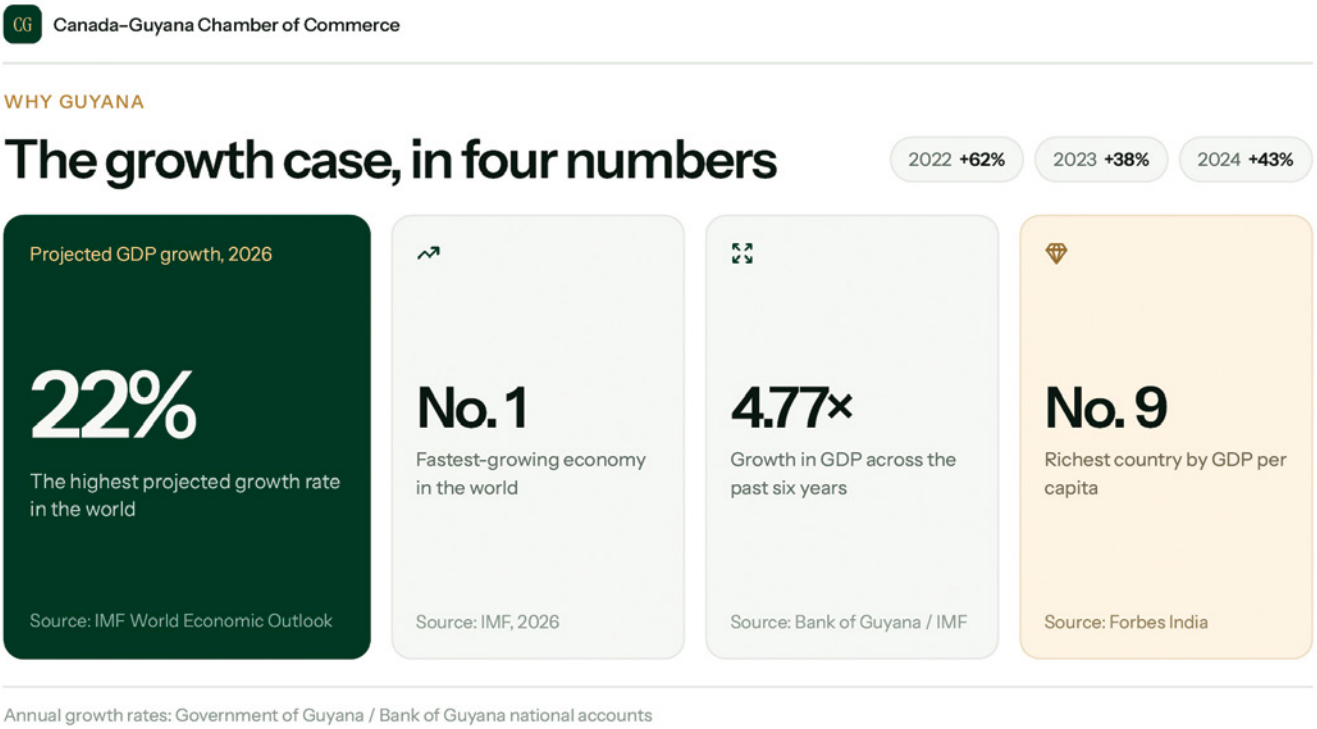


Why Guyana, and why now

Offshore oil production and heavy public and private investment have transformed Guyana's economy. According to the International Monetary Fund (World Economic Outlook, April 2026), the economy grew 43.8% in 2024 and 19.3% in 2025, with 22.3% growth projected for 2026. Rising incomes and consumer spending are fueling demand for housing, commercial and industrial development, and infrastructure, and with it demand for land use planning, valuation, and sustainable community design.

Guyana is strengthening its planning and regulatory systems to keep pace. Ontario's experience in growth management, housing delivery, municipal finance, and environmental stewardship offers a useful point of reference, in a partnership where both sides learn from each other.

Growth also brings real challenges, including reliance on oil revenues, land tenure and regulation, and flood exposure along a low-lying coast. These are the reasons local partnerships and on-the-ground knowledge matter.



Where Canadian expertise fits

- Land economists: highest and best use analysis, development feasibility, valuation and appraisal, municipal finance and development charges, market analysis, and public-sector land management
- Developers: serviced land and subdivisions, workforce and affordable housing, mixed-use projects, industrial and logistics parks, waterfront, tourism and hospitality, and public-private partnerships
- Planners and urban designers: official plans and growth management, community design, zoning modernization, transportation planning, and climate-resilient policy
- Architects and engineers: residential, commercial, healthcare, education, and civic buildings; transportation, water and wastewater, stormwater, renewable energy, utilities, and construction management

Cutting across all of these is climate resilience. Guyana's coastal geography makes flood risk management, coastal resilience, watershed management, green infrastructure, and environmental assessment priorities, and Canadian professionals have extensive experience adapting urban growth to a changing climate.

Shared history and a common business language make lasting, two-way partnerships easier to build. Early engagement offers the chance to establish trusted relationships with government agencies, investors, developers, and local communities.

WHY GUYANA

Growth with the architecture to hold it

The conditions that let foreign capital operate with confidence.

- ✓ **Only English-speaking country in South America**
  Business, law and contracts in English.
- ✓ **Democratic government**
  A stable, elected national government.
- ✓ **British common law**
  A free-enterprise economy under common law.
- ✓ **Open for investment**
  Vast natural resources newly open to international capital.
- ✓ **Investment protection under the law**
  Statutory protection for invested capital.
- ✓ **Young, educated, English-speaking population**
  A workforce entering its most productive decades.
- ✓ **Stable and open financial markets**
  Banking and capital markets open to foreign participants.
- ✓ **Unrestricted repatriation of profits**
  Earnings may be returned to Canada without restriction.
- ✓ **Duty-free access**
  Preferential access to CARICOM and partner markets.
- ✓ **Equal treatment for local and foreign investors**
  No distinction in law between domestic and foreign capital.



What delegates will do

- Meet government officials, developers, business leaders, and other stakeholders
- Explore land development and real estate opportunities
- See major housing, infrastructure, tourism, and industrial projects underway
- Build partnerships with local and international stakeholders

Canadian Women in Global Commerce

OPPORTUNITIES

National projects

Six national programmes shaping procurement. Energy, ICT, services, agriculture and manufacturing follow overleaf.

Deep Water Harbour, Berbice	Gateway capacity for an economy outgrowing its ports
New Demerara River Bridge	The central crossing, rebuilt for modern freight
Corentyne Bridge to Suriname	A second national market within road distance
Guyana–Brazil Road Link	2,000 miles of new road opening the interior
National Referral Hospital	Clinical, technical and supply partnerships
50,000 Homes & Land Ownership	Housing at national scale, with financing to match



Also in the pipeline

Energy · ICT · Services · Agriculture · Manufacturing

OPPORTUNITIES

The sector pipeline

Every project below is in build, tender or active planning.

Energy

Gas-to-Shore	300 MW
Amaila Falls Hydro	165 MW
Solar farms	33 MW
Hope Wind Project	20 MW

Solar sites at Berbice, Essequibo and Linden. Oil refinery and biodegradable packaging in early tender.

ICT

- Expanded call centres
- Data centres
- Business process outsourcing
- Technology parks
- Medical records transcription
- Telecom expansion by region

Services

- Network management & security
- Software development
- Data processing centres

Agriculture

- Agro-industrial parks
- Agro processing
- Soya bean for feed
- Milk plants & value-added dairy
- Cattle ranching
- Aquaculture & seafood processing
- Rose production
- Hemp production

Manufacturing

- Fabrication for oil & gas
- Oil refinery
- Alumina plant
- Garment & textile
- Furniture & value-added timber
- Glass factory & clay bricks
- Pre-cast factory
- Biodegradable containers

Who should join

AOLE members, land economists, planners, developers, architects, engineers, investors, business leaders, and supporters of women-led businesses. Spaces are limited, and interested participants are encouraged to express their interest early.

WHERE WOMEN CAN LEAD

Sectors in focus

Delegates are matched to counterparts in their sector — each a direct opening for suppliers, operators, investors and innovators.

Resources	Mining · Energy & natural resources · Renewable & alternative energy · Solar and wind · Clean tech · Decarbonisation
Built form	Infrastructure · Construction · Real estate development · Logistics · Defence
Digital	Artificial intelligence · Digital transformation · Information technologies · Software & network management · Call and data centres · BPO
Human economy	Agri-food & food manufacturing · Food security · Healthcare & medical · Professional & financial services · Retail · Tourism · Education



Support the delegation

Sponsors play a vital role in making this delegation possible. Sponsorship offers visibility with delegates, officials, and business leaders in both countries, and supports a women-led initiative to build lasting trade partnerships. To discuss sponsorship, please contact Idriss Lomba using the details on the right.

Register

To register please contact me at my contact details below.

The delegate fee is $2,500 + HST and includes (B2B business matching meetings between Guyanese and Canadian counterparts, ground transportation, business meetings, and receptions). Spaces are limited to 20 delegates so early registration is encouraged.

To register or learn more about the delegation, sponsorship, or partnership opportunities, please contact:

DELEGATES AND GENERAL INFORMATION Nazreen Ali, MBA, PLE
canadianwomeninglobalcommerce@gmail.com| 416-371-5867

SPONSORSHIP AND PARTNERSHIPS Idriss Lomba
canadianwomeninglobalcommerce@gmail.com | 365-777-4070

WEBSITE:
cwgconline.com
Canadian Women in Global Commerce

The Guyana Pre-Reception

Hosted and Sponsored by the Business Development Bank of Canada (BDC)

DATE: Wednesday, December 2, 2026 | Admission: Complimentary with RSVP

DRESS CODE: Business casual

VENUE: BDC EVENT SQUARE – 81 BAY STREET, TORONTO, ONTARIO

Join us for an informative evening to learn about the January 2027 Guyana Trade Mission, meet the delegation team, stakeholders and explore opportunities to participate as a delegate, sponsor, partner, or supporter.

RSVP



Nazreen Ali, MBA, PLE
Delegation Lead and Strategic Architect

An accomplished executive leader with over 20 years of management, governance, and operational experience, including leadership of organizations responsible for more than CAD $800 million in assets under management. Her work spans strategy execution, governance, risk management, compliance, remediation, and organizational transformation, with extensive experience alongside boards, regulators, investors, government stakeholders, and community leaders. She has led complex change initiatives, regulatory remediation programs, and business modernization efforts across financial services, seniors' real estate development, and technology innovation. A former chair of the Ontario Motor Vehicle Industry Council (OMVIC) and former chair of the Motor Vehicle Dealers Compensation Fund (MVDCF) and a former board member, she is a current member of the Association of Ontario Land Economists (AOLE).

Annual General Meeting Highlights

Photos by Benito Del Monte

The Association's Annual General Meeting was held on September 14th, 2026 at the Royal Canadian Yacht Club, and was presided by Executive Vice President (and Incoming President) Philip Smith.

Philip opened the meeting by saying "I'd also like to take a moment to recognize our Board of Directors. Your Board is all volunteers, and I am privileged to serve with such a collegial and dedicated team of people." He then introduced each Board member and asked the audience to "please join me in thanking your Board."

Treasurer's Report

Philip reported that "the organization continues to be in very good financial health. The 2025-26 fiscal year reports that AOLE ran a $10,166 surplus, which is the result of a steady increase in membership. Members can be assured that AOLE continues to strive to operate on a balanced budget and is committed to charging affordable membership dues, delivering high-quality speaker- events and the thrice-yearly magazine on a regular basis."

Membership Report

Philip gave an update on membership stating that "as of March 31, 2026 (which represents our last fiscal year end) we had 258 active members. 28 new members joined our Association during the last fiscal year. Additionally, since April 1, 2026, 13 new members have joined so far. This is a notable increase to our membership ranks. Also notable is the professions from which we are drawing our full members. Over the past year, we have seen new members come from professions involved with the financial analysis and real estate management of land."

He mentioned the diversity of professions represented in the membership which include land use planners, land developers, appraisers, real estate professionals, engineers, architects and economists from both the private and public sectors.

Philip concluded the report by thanking Jameson Chee-Hing, our Membership Chair and Registrar for overseeing the review of all new membership applications.



Philip Smith

Program Report

Philip gave a summary of the many events that were offered during the last year which included:

- The prior year's Annual General Meeting, Infrastructure and Development in the GTHA, was held on June 12, 2025, under the theme How Government Investment Can Help Build the Future of the Region.
- The joint AOLE and RICS Golf Tournament was held on September 12, 2025.
- This past fiscal year, we also hosted our Annual General Meeting on September 24, 2025, featuring the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, as our keynote speaker. Under the theme Protecting Ontario in Challenging Times.
- On December 4, 2025 Metrolinx President and CEO Michael Lindsay joined AOLE virtually for a fireside conversation about major transit investments, including the Ontario Line, GO Expansion and Line 5, and their implications for mobility, land use and city-building across the Greater Toronto Area.
- On December 10, 2025 AOLE and RICS members gathered at the RCYC City Clubhouse for an informal evening of networking and holiday cheer, providing an opportunity to reconnect with colleagues and welcome new members.
- To wrap up the fiscal year, we held a full-day housing seminar on February 26, 2026 where AOLE brought together government, industry, academic and economic leaders for a full-day examination of Ontario's housing challenges. The seminar explored affordability, supply, demographics, regulation, finance and practical long-term solutions for housing in the 21st-century city.

Philip mentioned that 'the work arising from the Housing Seminar is continuing, with a white paper currently in development. A detailed summary of the seminar and its recommendations was also published in the Summer 2026 issue of The Land Economist" which was distributed at the AGM.

Philip noted "our upcoming events which include our annual Golf Tournament on September 17, 2026 co-hosted with RICS and AOLS's South Central Regional Group; our joint webinar with AIC Ontario on October 21, featuring Maryam Dorafshar, Vice President, Real Property at Alto, who will discuss Ontario's high-speed rail project; and our Annual AOLE & RICS Holiday Mixer on December 10, once again at the RCYC City Clubhouse."

Philip offered a special thank you to Program Chair Bonnie Bowerman and Program Co-Chair Matthew Cory for organizing these events.

Journal Report

Philip remarked about the two editions of the Land Economist that were released during the year. He stated that "the Summer

edition featured an interview with Premier Ford and in the Spring edition there was a preview of the February Housing seminar. The abundance of articles, news items and pictures offer readers a comprehensive view of what's happening in the land economy sector and examine in detail current issues and insights. A must read for all interested in this dynamic field!

Interviews for the Company We Keep continue to be popular. Profiles are included in the Journal and posted on the webpage." He then thanked John Blackburn, Vice President & Journal Chair for all his hard work.

Marketing Report

Philip reported that the Marketing Committee arranged for attendance at all of the events and conventions mentioned in the Programing Report as well as providing a booth and marketing material. In addition, they did affiliate outreach by attending the Annual conference of the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors in Markham on March 3-5, 2026.

They also followed up with all non-member attendees of all conferences and meetings to market membership benefits and participation in our association and distributed marketing and sponsorship materials. He then thanked Marketing Committee Chair, Michael Cane, for all his good work.

Legislative Report

Philip stated that "Housing continues to be a top priority of the provincial government but the ability to deliver more housing in Ontario remains a challenge. AOLE jumped into the conversation in a major way by hosting a housing solutions conference in early 2026. In The Legislative Beat, Andy Manahan continues to cover many of the legislative and policy changes put forward over the past year by Queen's Park. "He then thanked Andy for his excellent reporting.

Board Changes

Philip Smith was elected as President, Matthew Cory as Executive Vice-President. Prakash Venkat becomes Social Media Chair and Julian De Gasperis joins the Board as a Member at Large.

Our sincere thanks to

TERANET

for their generous Silver Sponsorship of the event

Introduction of Keynote Speaker

By Peter McCallion

Peter McCallion introduced the Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation with the following remarks:

Good evening, everyone.

It is my pleasure to introduce the Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria, Ontario's Minister of Transportation and Member of Provincial Parliament for Brampton South.

First elected to the Ontario Legislature in 2018, Minister Sarkaria has served in several senior government roles, including President of the Treasury Board and Associate Minister of Small Business and Red Tape Reduction.

Before entering public life, he practised corporate and commercial law. He holds a Bachelor of Business Administration in Finance from Wilfrid Laurier University and a law degree from the University of Windsor.

As Minister of Transportation, he is responsible for advancing the roads, highways and transit systems that connect Ontario's communities and support housing, investment and economic growth.



Peter McCallion

His responsibilities therefore speak directly to our theme this evening: Transportation Infrastructure that Supports Community Growth.

Minister Sarkaria, we are delighted to welcome you to the Association of Ontario Land Economists.

Ladies and gentlemen, please join me in welcoming the Honourable Prabmeet Sarkaria.

Minister Prabmeet Sarkaria's Remarks

Minister Sarkaria spoke to Ontario's $70 billion transportation investments and the critical role it will play in supporting the province's growing population today, and for generations to come. As a transcript or copy of his speaking notes was not available to us, this article draws on the topics discussed, supplemented by information from official published



Hon. Prabmeet Sarkaria, Minister of Transportation

announcements, reports and information provided by the Ministry of Transportation. The dated information and direct quotations below come from those published sources and provide background to the themes we recall from his address.

Making regional transit more affordable through One Fare

Launched in February 2024, the One Fare program, the Minister said "continues to be a game changer for commuters across the GTHA, letting riders pay only once when transferring between the TTC, GO and other participating municipal transit systems. By March 2026, the province reported nearly $233 million in savings and 72 million free transfers, putting money back in your pockets by saving the daily transit user up to $1,600 annually." The Ontario government has chosen to extend the program for an additional two years and announced that they are "taking further action to make public transit easier and more affordable across municipalities in the GTHA. It is moving forward with legislation, followed by engagement with partners, to explore expanding free transfers, simplifying fares, improving cross-boundary travel and enhancing specialized transit." See more details

Delivering a substantial increase in GO train service

According to an April 17, 2024 Metrolinx press release, GO added more than 300 weekly train trips, marking the largest service increase in over one decade. Improvements included two-way, all-day service across select GO network sections, 30-minute weekday midday and evening service between Bramalea and Union, restored evening Stouffville service, and additional Milton rush-hour trips.

Bringing two major Toronto transit lines into passenger service

The 18-stop, 11-kilometre Finch West LRT opened December 7, 2025, connecting Line 1 to Humber Polytechnic, "bringing commuters just mere walking distance to jobs, opportunities and housing", said the Minister. On the newly built and innovative Finch West LRT, Minister Sarkaria emphasized the significant benefits this transit line will bring to commuters across the region. "Our government is proud to deliver the Finch West LRT, which will bring hundreds of thousands of people within walking distance of fast and affordable transit. In the face of economic uncertainty, we're protecting Ontario with historic investments in transit infrastructure to relieve gridlock, connect more people to good-paying jobs, and keep our economy moving," said Minister Sarkaria. See more details here.

Beyond the Finch West LRT, the Eglinton Crosstown began passenger service on February 8, 2026, marking another major milestone in Ontario's transit expansion.

Completing additional capacity on Highways 400 and 404

In January 2025, the province announced completion of nine kilometres of Highway 400 widening, from Major Mackenzie Drive to King Road, adding a general-purpose lane each way. It also completed 11 kilometres of Highway 404 widening, between Highway 407 and Stouffville Road, adding HOV lanes in both directions.

An Ontario Government News release dated January 28, 2025 mentioned that it is "part of its plan to tackle gridlock and support the safe movement of people and goods in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). The new lanes will allow cars and trucks travelling north and south to benefit from faster, more efficient commutes, supporting the GTA's growing population, and connecting people to more housing and jobs." Said Minister Sarkaria. "Not only is gridlock costing our economy billions of dollars every year, it's robbing Ontario drivers of valuable time and quality of life. Expanding Highways 400 and 404 will provide much needed relief for drivers, helping them spend less time in traffic and more time with their families and friends." See News Release

Supporting existing municipal transit, roads and bridges

The Ontario government also committed more than $380 million to 106 municipalities for local transit, through the Gas Tax program, helping communities maintain and improve transit services for riders across the province, said a Ministry spokesperson.

Separately, the Government of Ontario announced in its 2025 Budget that annual Connecting Links funding increased from $30 million in previous years to $45 million, helping municipalities repair roads and bridges that form part of provincial transportation routes. The 2026–27 allocation continued at $45 million according to another Ontario Newsroom report dated March 13, 2026.

Helping fund replacement trains for Toronto's aging Line 2 fleet

As part of the province's $70 billion investment to build transit infrastructure, Ontario increased its commitment from $758 million to more than $950 million toward 55 replacement subway trains, matching increased federal funding. The procurement includes 55% Canadian content, supporting domestic manufacturing while addressing the need to replace aging equipment. This is a funded investment; the replacement trains are still to be delivered. See More Details

Niagara District Airport Expansion

On July 20, 2026, the City of Niagara Falls announced in a media release the following:

"Today, Niagara District Airport received an investment of $9.7 million from the Government of Ontario to advance its airport redevelopment project, as outlined in its 2025-2045 Master Plan."

'The province's support marks a critical step in advancing our Master Plan and realizing our vision of becoming a modern regional gateway,' says Daniel Pilon, chief executive officer. 'This funding brings us one step closer to introducing scheduled commercial service to Niagara, serving more than half a million residents and 13 million annual visitors. We thank Premier Ford, Minister Sarkaria, and the provincial government for their continued partnership and shared vision of enhancing air access to Niagara.'

"The Airport's redevelopment is aligned with the province's Destination Niagara Strategy, supporting the growth of tourism, improving travel access for residents, and creating good-paying jobs. The redevelopment project will unlock new economic opportunities across the Niagara region, benefiting Niagara's hotels, restaurants, wineries, entertainment venues, historic sites, and visitor attractions.

The Airport's Master Plan projects more than $1 billion in economic output, the creation of 1,100 construction jobs, and 500 permanent jobs once the modernized airport is fully operational."

AOLE

September 14, 2026 Annual General Meeting Photos

Photos by Benito Del Monte



Lee Parsons, David Atlin, Jameson Chee-Hing



Dr. Diana Ellingham, Ian Ellingham, Larissa Klepatch



Stephen Job, Julia Cziraky, John McDermott



Ed Sajecki, Michael Cane, John Blackburn, Stefan Krzeczunowicz



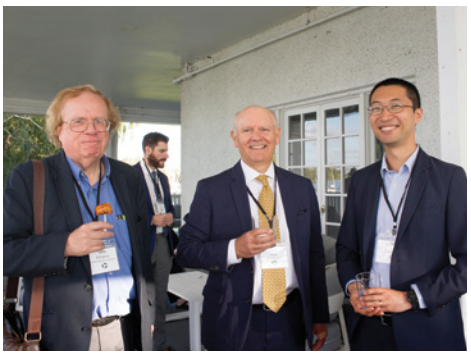
Nataliya Kelbas, Ellen Maertens, Callum Saravanamutto, Sara Abdella



Andy Manahan, Bonnie Bowerman



Jameson Chee-Hing, Peter Norman, James Tate



Ian Ellingham, Philip Smith, Bohan Li



Matthew Bruchkowsky, Samuel Linds



Benjamin Valenzuela, Tharmarajah Shanmugarajah



Behzad Emtenani, Steven Mastoras, Ojan Yanima



Andréa Callà, Michael Cane, Andy Manahan, Stefan Krzeczunowicz, Ed Sajecki, Christina Kalt, Philip Smith, Ian Ellinghjam, Jameson Chee-Hing, Matthew Cory, John Blackburn



Bonnie Bowerman, Philip Smith, Jameson Chee-Hing, Matthew Cory



Stefan Krzeczunowicz, Nick McDonald, Andy Manahan, John McDermott



John Blackburn, Hon. Prabmeet Sarkaria



Athiththan Kanaganayagam, Nader Chehade, JamesTate



Hon. Prabmeet Sarkaria, Vinkie Lau, Peter McCallion



Andréa Callà, Cosomo Casale, Nicholas Glancristiano, Rosanna Casale



Peter McCallion, Stefan Krzeczunowicz



Prakash Venkat, Philip Smith



Margie Carlson, Rodger Lodenquai, Lee Parsons, David Atlin, James Tate, Nick McDonald, Peter Norman, David Amborski



Ian Ellinghjam, Dr. Diana Ellingham, Jameson Chee-Hing, Larissa Klepath, Andy Manahan, John McDermott, Andréa Callà, Matthew Cory



Callum Saravanamutto, Ellen Maertens Sara Abdella, Cosomo Casale, Nicholas Glancristiano, Rosanna Casale, Ed Sajecki



Athiththan Kanaganayagam, Ojan Yanima, Benjamin Valenzuela, Matthew Bruchkowsky, Samuel Linds, Stefan Krzeczunowicz, Julia Cziraky, Nataliya Kelbas, Behzad Emtenani



Vinkie Lau, Jasmine Young, Samuel Lau, Daniel Bailey, Bohan Li, Arif Rafiq, Kevin Bialczak



Tharmarajah Shanmugarajah, Tarek El Sewafy, Mac Amjad, Stephen Job, John Blackburn, Steven Mastoras, Michael Cane, Leslie Savlov



Philip Smith, Prakash Venkat, Hon. Prabmeet Sarkaria, Matthew Cory, Andréa Callà



Mac Amjad, Hon. Prabmeet Sarkaria, Peter McCallion

Leadership Team Profiles



Philip Smith, President, FRICS, AACI, P. App, PLE

Philip re-joined Colliers International in January 2024 as Managing Director, Ontario in the Valuation and Advisory Services division based in the downtown Toronto office. Philip is a Fellow of the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, an Accredited Appraiser and a Professional Land Economist. Philip has over 40 years experience in the commercial real estate market and has been involved in the leasing, management, sale, acquisition, financial analysis, strategic planning and valuation of a variety of assets in real estate markets across Canada, the U.S. and the Caribbean. He has completed numerous valuations and market studies for clients across Canada. In addition, he has also developed and coordinated real estate strategies for a wide variety of corporate, government and non-profit clients.

In his previous role at Altus Group, Philip was an Executive Vice President in the Research, Valuation and Advisory division where he was responsible for national operations and the public sector services team based in Toronto. Prior to this he had held senior positions at Cushman & Wakefield, Colliers International and Richard Ellis (Canada) Inc.

Philip has previously served in several different volunteer capacities over many years at the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors including Chapter Chair for Ontario Region, Ontario Region board member, Development Series Committee Chair, National Board Member and Continuing Professional Development Coordinator. Philip also serves on the national Work Product Review committee for the Appraisal Institute of Canada. Philip is also a member of the International Right of Way Association, the Ontario Expropriation Association and the National Association of Industrial and Office Parks. He also holds an Ontario real estate broker's license and is a member of the Toronto Real Estate Board. He also previously volunteered part time at the Oakville Trafalgar Memorial Hospital. Philip is looking forward to making a meaningful contribution to the AOLE and its members in his role on the AOLE board and was already involved in coordinating the recent by-law review and update for ONCA compliance.



Matthew Cory, Executive Vice President, MCIP, RPP, PMP, PLE

Matthew Cory is a Principal member, Planner, Land Economist and Project Manager at Malone Given Parsons Ltd.

Matthew is responsible for guiding planning initiatives through municipal and regional approval processes. His work includes master planning and project management for landowner groups, growth management and policy creation for municipal clients, and the preparation and management of development applications for individual landowners. Matthew is familiar with best practices of sustainability in the planning process, smart growth and growth management techniques.

New Board Member



Julian M. De Gasperis, Member at Large, PLE

Julian is the Vice-President, Land Development at TACC Developments.

He is a strategic leader in land development, combining expertise in finance, economics and land use planning with a strong understanding of the development process. His experience spans land acquisition, entitlements, infrastructure delivery, project finance, partnerships and portfolio strategy. He has extensive experience navigating complex municipal and regulatory environments, leading multidisciplinary teams, managing risk and advancing projects from acquisition through approvals and development. His approach combines financial discipline with a long-term perspective on community building and land use. He is also actively engaged with industry, academic and charitable organizations, including BILD, the Ivey Business School and the McMichael Canadian Art Collection.

AOLE Board

2026-27

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Vice President & Journal Chair
John Blackburn
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Program Chair & Nominations Chair
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Registrar & Membership Chair
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Social Media Chair
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Event Details

The holidays are a time for good cheer, especially when there is wine and beer! Join AOLE and RICS members at the RCYC City Clubhouse, relax with friends and colleagues and meet new members in a casual atmosphere. Limited open bar (wine and beer) and complimentary appetizers. Register early to avoid disappointment.

LOCATION: **RCYC City Clubhouse**
141 St. George Street, Toronto
(near the St. George Subway Station)

REGISTER

THE ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO LAND ECONOMISTS

RICS

AOLE-RICS-SCRG GOLF TOURNAMENT
What A Great Day It Was!

By Michael Cane


Greg McDonald, Catronia Hazen, Jason Hazen, Shawn Hodgson

After the success of last year's tournament, we repeated the event with a larger and more inclusive format. This year we invited the Association of Ontario Land Surveyors to join the Association of Ontario Land Economists and the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors.

There were 60 participants that took part in the tournament with the Ontario Land Surveyors' local branch; the South Central Regional Group (SCRG), providing approximately half the players.

The event was held on Sept 17th again at the Humber Valley Golf Club and we were blessed with a perfect day. The tournament kicked off with a shot gun start at 8.30 AM and was followed by a well-earned lunch of burgers and fries.

After lunch participants enjoyed a presentation on The Essential Role of Land Surveyors in the Gordie Howe International Bridge Project presented by Chris Oyler (BSc. Eng., O.L.S), President of Surveyors on Site (SOS).



Chris Oyler



Prizes were then awarded for the following achievements:

Closest to the pin on the four par 3s
Longest Drive
Overall winner group

We then had a raffle with 40 raffle prizes that included a very nice refrigerator back pack, golf balls and golf shirts.

Donation - Cheque Presentation
We donated $5,000 to the UHN Foundation, Kidney Transplant Care with the foundation's Julie Tran, Events Officer being there to accept the cheque.



Satesh Lakhan, Haydn Evans, Julie Tran, Philip Smith, Michael Cane

Our event organizers reported that players remarked about how much they enjoyed the day. It was especially great to hear so many people already talking about coming back next year. The joint organizing group is incredibly proud of what was achieved together, particularly raising $5,000 for the UHN Foundation, Kidney Transplant Care. A special thank you to attendees, sponsors and volunteers for supporting the joint fundraising initiative and helping make it happen.

Our Tournament Sponsors:

We are grateful for your support and thank you again from the bottom of our hearts:

SPONSORS:

Silver $1,000

Colliers
Deloitte
Malone Given Parsons Ltd.

Bronze $500

Sierra Planning and Management (SPM)
Hemson Consulting Ltd.

Lunch Sponsor $1,000

Logan Wealth Management







Matthew Bruchkowsky, Kevin Bros, Samuel Linds, James Ballarano



Philip Smith, Conrad Kim



Haydn Evans, Ian Heerdegen, Ian Taylor, Michael Cane



Wan Jean Claude, Phil Hoffman, Pier De Rosa, Michael Fisher

THE COMPANY WE KEEP

ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO LAND ECONOMISTS

We're excited to offer profiles as a member benefit to help spotlight your company's latest news and activities! Interested in being featured?
Reach out to us at **admin@aole.org.**

INTRODUCING



Adam Jacobs

by Ian Ellingham

One of the delights in writing 'The Company We Keep' is the fascinating diversity of AOLE members one gets to chat with. What we want to know is what makes each person interesting, and often we hear about their passions. So it was with Adam Jacobs and his passion for data and how to deal with it.

Adam's undergraduate studies were in mathematics and economics in Minnesota, and he subsequently obtained a PhD in Sociology from the University of Wisconsin, and is now the national head of research at Colliers in Toronto.

I was intrigued by how someone with a doctorate in sociology found himself in the property world. Adam said he first entered the real estate world at 41 when he took a job with Oxford Properties, and that sociology and real estate had many of the same characteristics – mountains of data but not always what you need, and the challenge of extracting meaning from it. Moreover, both require the same core activities including, data collection, analysis, model building, and making predictions that can be acted upon.

Real estate has its complexities, and one emerging complexity is AI. We had a great chat about the challenges, opportunities and possible dangers of AI. He comments that no-one has the full picture yet, that things are still in early stages, and the real estate industry has quite a bit of catching up to do, but, unfortunately, we are burdened with traditions that may not entirely mesh with what is currently unfolding.

On a personal basis, Adam is married and has two children, aged 10 and 13. They live in The Beaches and take advantage of local opportunities, such as the Jazz Festival. He is an enthusiast of the performing arts, so likes theatre and a wide range of musical types.

He is a voracious reader as he searches for ideas about politics, labour markets, real estate, and not surprisingly - data.

Other than data, Adam's passion is amateur photography, something he engaged with during the covid lockdowns. Adam agreed to send a couple of his favourite photographs which we have included in the article.







NEWS BLASTS

Researched by **John Blackburn,** AIHM, PLE

Alex Nordstrom/Wikimedia Commons. License: CC-by-sa.

MUST READ **Alto High Speed Train Summary of the Oct 21, 2026 live presentation**

On Oct 21st AOLE members had the opportunity to attend a live webinar presentation featuring Jean-François Rousseau, É.A. (Évaluateur Agréé/Chartered Appraiser), Director, Real Property Relations at Alto where there was a discussion on the real property dimensions of one of Canada's most significant transportation infrastructure projects.

Alto is leading the development of Canada's first true high-speed rail network—a proposed nearly 1,000-kilometre, primarily dedicated and electrified passenger rail system connecting Toronto and Québec City. Trains are expected to operate at speeds of 300 km/h or more.

Alto has made available in pdf format a summary of the presentation that you can view using the link below:

Read pdf which includes details and images

MUST WATCH **PMA | CIBC SUMMIT SERIES TARIFFS, TRADE, AND TRUST—NAVIGATING CANADA'S CHANGING ECONOMY**

Webinar Recorded on Oct 2,2026

Watch Benjamin Tal, Deputy Chief Economist of CIBC World Markets Inc. and Andrew Brethour, Broker of Record & Executive Chairman, PMA Brethour in conversation for a spirited report on the shifting loyalties of Canadian alliances, what it means for the economy at large, and how the waves of trade ripple back to the housing industry across the GTA.

Watch Video

Explore Alto's Real Estate Valuation Opportunities

The Alto High-Speed Rail Project has published Requests for Proposals (RFPs) on MERX for qualified service providers offering real estate valuation services in support of land acquisition activities along the proposed high-speed rail corridor between Toronto and Québec City.

These opportunities may be of interest to appraisers and other qualified real estate valuation professionals.

Visit the respective MERX postings below for full details, eligibility requirements, submission instructions, and deadlines.

Ontario RFP

Professional Real Estate Valuation Services – Ontario (RFP 10000308)

Quebec RFP

Professional Real Estate Valuation Services – Quebec

Alto's High-speed Rail Project: A Plan B Is Needed

In an opinion piece for The Globe and Mail, academic experts in logistics, political science, and urban planning argue that Crown corporation Alto's proposed $60-billion-plus Quebec City–Toronto high-speed rail project relies on overly optimistic cost estimates and questionable benefit forecasts. The authors suggest that high-speed rail risks massive cost overruns similar to major international projects, urging officials to re-examine Via Rail's significantly cheaper high-frequency rail proposal as a practical alternative.

Read Article

Gordie Howe International Bridge Presentation

Christopher Oyler of *Surveyors On Site* gave a wonderful presentation on the Essential Role of Surveyors at the AOLE, RICS & SCRG Golf Tournament on September 17,2026

The presentation included slides with great photos of the various construction phases of the bridge project and summary information. We have a pdf version of the presentation which is available for viewing.

View PDF Presentation

The Future of Real Estate In Canada Webinar- Hosted by Deloitte on November 30th 12 pm -1pm

Deloitte is hosting a free webinar on the Future of Real Estate in Canada

Register

Atlas Salt Advances North America's First New Salt Mine in Decades with Great Atlantic Project

Atlas Salt is building Canada's first new underground salt mine in nearly 30 years to replace imported road salt and fix supply shortages across North America. Located in western Newfoundland and Labrador, the site offers quick access to major markets.

The mine holds 95 Mt of proven salt reserves. It projects $188 million in yearly cash flow, a 4.2-year after-tax payback period and an after-tax NPV (calculated at a 8% discount rate) of $920 million.

868 Mt of inferred salt resource (95.2% NaCl), excluded from current production plan, could increase annual production and mine life.

Read Atlas Salt Presentation

Atlas Salt Enters MOU with CN to Evaluate Logistics Opportunities to Optimize Great Atlantic Salt Project Economics

Read MOU Announcement



John Blackburn, AIHM, PLE
President,
CRU Communications and Broadcast Productions Inc.
John has over 50 years' experience in marketing, sales and public relations, both in the E.U. and North America. Winner of numerous marketing and public relations awards, including BILD's Top Awards, two Grand SAMs, the very prestigious Riley Brethour Award, The Sales and Marketing Manager of the Year Award, the Canadian Home Builders' Association Award of Honour and the Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee medal, in recognition of contributions to Canada.



The Legislative Beat *Fall Update*

By Andy Manahan, PLE

Red Tape Reduction:

As part of Ontario's effort to have a more resilient and self-reliant economy in the face of global economic uncertainty, Minister Andrea Khanjin is using AI-powered tools to achieve this goal. Launched in 2025, REGi, or Regulatory Intelligence, scans provincial statutes and regulations to identify government requirements that may be outdated or overly complex. Policy teams, along with legal staff, then review the proposed changes to ensure that public protections remain in place while at the same time reducing duplicative and burdensome requirements.

Passed in June 2026, *The Building Homes and Improving Transportation Infrastructure Act (Bill 98)* aims to reduce red tape in homebuilding by streamlining municipal official plan approvals. Among other changes, the province will require standardized tables of contents and limit the number of land-use designations in official plans. It is also reviewing Ontario's Building Code and site plan requirements to support community development.

Here are two examples of the changes included in the 2026 legislation which resulted in amendments to the Planning Act: (1) remove redundant requirements for municipalities to include climate change policies in their official plans, and (2) exempt lower-tier municipalities from the requirement to conform with the upper-tier official plan to facilitate implementation of testing for the proposed official plan framework.

Ontario's site plan requirements are also being amended to enhance community building. For example, enhanced building and construction standards cannot be imposed by municipalities but can be done on a voluntary basis. Further, municipal governments will no longer have the authority to require certain mandatory Enhanced Development Standards (EDS) at the lot level, outside of buildings, that are not specifically required for health, safety, accessibility or the protection of adjoining lands (e.g., stormwater management).

A driving force for reform to Ontario's site plan control process, the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA) welcomed most of the time-reduction changes but expressed reservations regarding environmental or green standards. In a letter to Municipal Affairs and Housing Minister Rob Flack, the Association of Ontario Landscape Architects pointed out prior to the passing of Bill 98 that "when lot-level EDS are removed at the time of development, costs are deferred – not eliminated", noting that every $1 invested in nature-based adaptation yields approximately $4 in avoided losses.

Similarly, the Toronto Society of Architects (TSA) expressed concern that "removing the authority of municipalities to require Green Development Standards (GDS) without introducing an equivalent provincial replacement program, risks losing many of the gains made by these standards in areas like energy efficiency, sustainability and resiliency – all critical to the long-term durability and usability of our building stock." The TSA added that no meaningful energy efficiency updates have been made to the Ontario Building Code since 2017.

In addition to doing away with green standards, the legislation also removes any municipal requirement to rough-in or install EV charging infrastructure during initial residential or commercial construction. NDP environment and conservation critic Peter Tabuns had this to say: "the Ford government's developer-friendly policies run counter to worrisome climate-related weather patterns, such as extreme heat, urban wildfires and flooding, as well as rising fossil fuel costs. As for the new EV charger policy, Tabuns points out that "If you want to have an automotive industry, you need to go electric. Destroying the [charging] infrastructure is undermining the industry."

Building Code review:

The Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing announced in the summer that an independent Building Code Advisory Body (BCAB) will provide a section-by-section review of the OBC with a focus on reducing the regulatory burden.

While it is unknown whether energy efficiency updates will be made (as per above), the Building Science Association of Ontario has made a submission on this aspect of the consultation. BSAO supports a tiered energy framework as put forward in the 2025 National Building Code, with harmonized metrics, modelling requirements and documentation across provincial, municipal and incentive programs.
The concern here is that currently the compliance burden on energy performance can be stacked: a provincial requirement, a municipal green standard, and a utility or incentive program requirement, each with its own metric, modelling convention and documentation (taken from p. 6 of the BSAO's submission to the advisory body).

In its October 2026 publication (p. 39), Rescon has called for single staircase designs for mid-rise residential buildings of up to six storeys as this would maximize usable space and improve the financial viability of delivering this form of missing middle housing.

In addition, Rescon recommends that arbitrary restrictions on floor-plate sizes and angular planes should be reconsidered where these do not serve a clear safety or planning purpose.

The BCAB has already provided a 27-page interim report to the Minister for consideration. Many of these recommendations are intended to reduce permit processing times and thus speed up construction. Examples include: (1) provide greater provincial support to better interpret the OBC, (2) remove minimum floor area requirements to facilitate greater flexibility

to design compact housing layouts and (3) allow a building permit to proceed before all site plan matters are finalized.

Regarding the first example, a concern is that a building design accepted in one municipality can experience a separate technical review in another jurisdiction. If there was standard acceptance, with support from the Province then builders could achieve economies of scale through a more streamlined process.

BCAB's final report is expected to be delivered in March 2027.

Skills Development Fund:

In early 2025, Premier Ford used the pretext of an early provincial election – 16 months before the fixed election date of June 2026 – to protect Ontario from Trump's tariff threats (see Vol. 55, No. 1). As first reported by The Trillium, Ford's then chief of staff sought free media space in Postmedia publications, including the National Post, revolving around the early election call. At the time, Paul Godfrey's son, Rob Godfrey, was in the process of applying for an extension to a contract under the Skills Development Fund for his company, Get A-Head, that provides online mental health counselling services.

According to Godfrey the elder, Ford's top staffer asked the son for a favour by promising to provide multi-year funding to the company, knowing that the son's father was the former chairman of Postmedia and still had influence. The favour was to publish a pre-election letter from the Premier to justify the government's early call. Last spring, Paul Godfrey signed a sworn affidavit that was sent to the Ontario Provincial Police, but Ford's people deny that any of this occurred, with Postmedia saying that Ford's office requested that it run the letter.

In October, likely as retribution for the airing of this dirty laundry, the Toronto Star reports that Premier Ford "fired Progressive Conservative titan Paul Godfrey from the prestigious advisory council that oversees the Order of Ontario awards."

FOI and ongoing Greenbelt investigation:

Changes to FOI rules mean that Premier Ford's daily calendar will be secret. According to the CBC; "Unlike his predecessors, Ford hasn't provided the media with a daily itinerary of his public events since he took office in 2018. As a result, CBC News (among other media outlets) has routinely filed freedom of information requests for his calendar and has regularly received those records with some redactions." Retroactive changes to the FOI legislation means that records held by ministers, parliamentary assistants and their offices since April 2026 will also be off limits to the media.

Opposition parties have been critical of the changes, with NDP leader Marit Stiles offering a reminder: "Let's also not forget that FOI's helped expose the Greenbelt scandal in the first place, which then triggered the ongoing RCMP investigation. Now, right as the truth is within reach, it would appear that Ford is scrambling to keep it buried."

Despite these restrictions on access to government records, the RCMP has spent three years conducting an investigation and this criminal investigation is ongoing, as reported by the Toronto Star. According to the Star story, while the RCMP has spoken with several dozen current and former Ford aides, the Premier has not yet been interviewed by the RCMP's "O" Division's Sensitive and International Investigations Unit.

It is widely known that Premier Ford has used his personal cell phone for government business. In late 2025, a Divisional Court ruling ordered Ford to comply with an order of the Information and Privacy Commissioner to produce cell phone logs, with the Court saying that freedom of information laws are "vital tools of democratic practice, contributing to transparency, accountability and meaningful participation in public debate and political decision-making." Ontario's attorney general and Ford appealed this decision but then retroactively changed the FOI rules. While this action undermines transparency, the RCMP will not be bound by these restrictions.

FOI and bike lanes:

This October 20th LinkedIn post by Toronto Star senior political reporter David Rider is illuminating and is worth repeating here: "I wrote here previously about the frustration of trying to get information from the Ontario government through the freedom-of-information process. In November 2024, after the Ford government tabled legislation forcing the removal of sections of three bike lanes in Toronto, and forbidding any municipality from removing a vehicle lane to build a bike lane, I FOI'd internal transportation ministry records. Time after time, the ministry told me they were working on it, or didn't respond at all. That continued even after I sought and got an Information and Privacy Commissioner order for them to respond to my request. Then, last August, the Ford government exempted ministerial communications from transparency laws, making part of my request moot. I had given up when, last week, a transportation ministry email appeared with 43 records from non-political staff not exempted from FOI. I was able to write that, as Premier Ford prepared and launched his war on bike lanes, provincial bureaucrats raised facts refuting his core arguments, noted that Ford contradicted his own minister on the urgency of removal, and had to call in emergency staff to deal with public feedback. Journalism can be heartbreaking, so I'll take a little win where I can get it."

Here is the Toronto Star article by Rider. From a cost perspective, the City of Toronto has estimated that $48 million will be spent to remove the bike lanes on Bloor St., University Ave. and Yonge St. The province has promised to cover the removal costs meaning that all taxpayers across Ontario will end up paying for reconfiguring 19 kilometres of Toronto roads.

It is the role of bureaucrats to provide policy advice in a non-partisan way to elected officials. Obviously, politicians have the final decision-making authority but it is unfortunate that our current provincial government has chosen to diminish transparency in this way.

Finally, it is clear that prior to becoming premier, Doug Ford knew about the risks to cyclists in general traffic. In a 2017 TVO segment, Political Blind Date, Ford cycled around Toronto with former NDP politician Jagmeet Singh. Ford said that he felt safer in a bike lane: "you're nervous when there's not bike lanes." This TVO episode has been pulled down even though other segments can be found on the provincially-funded media outlet.

Andy Manahan, Manahan Consulting Services
October 22, 2026



Andy Manahan is President of Manahan Consulting Services and a member of AOLE's Board of Directors

Association of
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