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PLAN CANADA is the official publication of the Canadian Institute of Planners.

PLAN CANADA est la revue officielle de L'Institut canadien des urbanistes.

401-141 Laurier Avenue West
Ottawa, ON K1P 5J3
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cip-icu.ca

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Bibliothèque nationale du Canada Bibliothèque nationale du Québec
ISSN 0032-0544
Publications Mail/Registration #/no de publication/distribution postale : 40065075
Published December 2016/CIP-Q0416/2562

On the cover: Nightlife at Bishop's Landing in Halifax, NS.
Photo by Lilit Houlder.

Published by/Publié par:



3rd Floor - 2020 Portage Avenue, Winnipeg, MB R3J 0K4
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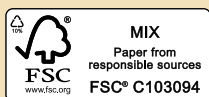
Managing Editor: Julia Waterer

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Glenn Miller
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EDITORS' NOTE THE WORLD OF RETAIL CONTINUES TO SURPRISE US

LE MONDE DU COMMERCE DE DÉTAIL CONTINUE DE NOUS SURPRENDRE MOT DE LA RÉDACTION

Few land use categories have undergone as much disruptive change in recent decades as 'retail.' Land use and market trends suggest that retail activity will continue to evolve rapidly in the years ahead, but as Professor **Tony Hernandez** notes in this issue of *Plan Canada*, "re-configuration and re-development ... is part of retail evolution." Plus ça change.

The need for access to retail services is a common land use thread that runs through all cities and communities in Canada. Retail services range from the essential, such as food and drink, to practical goods, such as tractor parts and clothing. More than most areas of the economy, access to retail goods and services is market-driven. Several

Au cours des dernières décennies, peu de catégories d'utilisation du sol ont subi autant de changements perturbateurs que le commerce de détail. L'utilisation du sol et les tendances du marché suggèrent que l'activité de vente au détail continuera à évoluer rapidement dans les années à venir, mais comme le professeur **Tony Hernandez** le fait remarquer dans ce numéro de *Plan Canada*, « la reconfiguration et le réaménagement ... font partie de l'évolution de la vente au détail ». Plus ça change.

Le besoin d'accès à des services de vente au détail est un fil conducteur de l'aménagement du territoire qui traverse toutes les villes et toutes les communautés du Canada. Les services de détail vont de l'essentiel, comme la nourriture et les boissons, aux biens pratiques, comme les pièces de tracteur et les vêtements. Plus que dans la plupart des secteurs

authors in this issue highlight how planning policy has been playing catch-up since the creation of the first shopping mall, as landlords continually invest in new retail concepts to stay competitive.

Today, it is taken for granted that there is a strong public interest in establishing municipal plans that address the location and scale of retail stores to ensure equitable access to all forms of retail. But Canada's experience in planning for retail is surprisingly short.

"Prior to the turn of the (last) century, municipal regulation of urban development was limited to a number of fairly specific nuisance, public health, and building bylaws."¹ Official Community Plan policies to designate areas within

a community for specific land uses only began to take effect in the 1950s² as the pace of rapid post-war growth demanded that planners match innovations in land use with investments in transportation infrastructure. Thus emerged the notion of the 'retail hierarchy,' an attempt by planners to organize multiple places locally for access to goods and services for things needed every day (low order goods) to fewer, larger places for goods needed less frequently (high order goods, once known as Department Store Type Merchandise). This commitment to rely on retail planning to organize a community's urban structure coincided with the rapid expansion of planning departments across the country.³

In the space of a few decades, market-driven challenges to the retail hierarchy saw a generation of planners and lawyers engaged in 'store wars,' where municipalities fought rearguard actions against proposals to construct massive regional-scale malls in often futile efforts to protect community-scale malls and other more modest shopping nodes. Planners in smaller urban centres and rural Canada tackled different battles – often striving to protect main street retail against retail giants that had chosen to locate just outside municipal boundaries.

That was then.

For more than two decades e-commerce has spurred the world of retailing in

de l'économie, l'accès aux biens et aux services de détail est déterminé par le marché. Plusieurs auteurs de ce numéro soulignent que la politique d'aménagement du territoire n'a cessé de tenter de rattraper son retard depuis la création du premier centre commercial, les propriétaires investissant continuellement dans de nouveaux concepts de vente au détail pour rester compétitifs.

Aujourd'hui, on tient pour acquis qu'il existe un fort intérêt public à établir des plans municipaux qui traitent de l'emplacement et de la taille des magasins de détail afin de garantir un accès équitable à toutes les formes de commerce de détail. Mais l'expérience du Canada en matière de planification du commerce de détail est étonnamment courte.

« Avant le début du siècle dernier, la réglementation municipale en matière de développement urbain se limitait à un certain nombre d'arrêtés assez spécifiques

relatifs aux nuisances, à la santé publique et à la construction. »¹ Les politiques officielles des plans communautaires visant à désigner des zones au sein d'une communauté pour des utilisations spécifiques des sols n'ont commencé à prendre effet que dans les années 1950² alors que le rythme de la croissance rapide de l'après-guerre exigeait que les urbanistes fassent correspondre les innovations en matière d'utilisation des sols avec les investissements dans l'infrastructure de transport. C'est ainsi qu'est apparue la notion de « hiérarchie du commerce de détail », une tentative des urbanistes d'organiser localement de multiples lieux d'accès aux biens et aux services pour les besoins quotidiens (biens de faible valeur) et des lieux moins nombreux et plus vastes pour les besoins moins fréquents (biens de grande valeur, autrefois connus sous le nom de marchandises de type grand magasin). Cette volonté de s'appuyer sur

l'aménagement du commerce de détail pour organiser la structure urbaine d'une communauté a coïncidé avec l'expansion rapide des services d'urbanisme dans tout le pays.³

En l'espace de quelques décennies, les remises en cause de la hiérarchie de la distribution par le marché ont amené une génération d'urbanistes et de juristes à s'engager dans des « guerres de magasins », où les municipalités ont mené des combats d'arrière-garde contre les propositions de construction de centres commerciaux massifs à l'échelle régionale, dans des efforts souvent vains pour protéger les centres commerciaux à l'échelle de la communauté et d'autres centres d'achat plus modestes. Les urbanistes des petits centres urbains et du Canada rural ont mené des batailles différentes, s'efforçant souvent de protéger le commerce de détail des rues principales contre les géants de la distribution qui

MOT DE LA RÉDACTION

evolving at a constantly increasing pace. Where once a definition of retail might have assumed the existence of a 'physical store as a place to facilitate the sale of goods and services to customers,' current retail options now encompass not only bricks and mortar stores but online stores, mobile stores, and every possible combination in between. These trends are having their most significant impact on main street retailing across Canada, as independent retailers and smaller chains lose the battle for sales against e-commerce giants like Amazon. Vancouver-based **James Stiver** explores the impact of logistics challenges for neighbourhoods brought about by the rise in online commerce.

Retail sales levels have traditionally been interpreted as a barometer to reflect the state of the economy, but as the pace of change accelerates – driven by the disappearance of historic brand names such as Eaton's, Sears, Zellers, Target and more, economic signals are increasingly blurred in a world where luxury retailers thrive alongside the Dollar Store. As described in this issue, it is difficult if not impossible to forecast how land use policies should shift to accommodate future trends. **Greg Landry**, writing from the perspective of a strategic planner and economist in Nova Scotia, describes a variety of future scenarios, generating more questions than answers.

One constant, as traditional anchors fall by the wayside, and landlords struggle to fill the spaces left behind, is an active push to redevelop shopping centres to become 'community hubs,' with housing, office, social and recreational uses. While it is the job of the landlord to ensure that the needs of different sets of users are met (convenience vs destination shoppers, office workers, on-site residents etc.), it falls to planners to quickly adjust municipal policies and infrastructure investments to ensure that these hubs are broadly accessible, ideally with better transit. As discussed by **Melanie Hare** in this issue, such plans remain a work in progress in cities from coast to coast.

There are also unanswered questions related to whether the needs of *all*

avaient choisi de s'implanter juste à l'extérieur des frontières municipales.

C'était une autre époque.

Depuis plus de vingt ans, le commerce électronique fait évoluer le monde de la vente au détail à un rythme de plus en plus rapide. Alors qu'autrefois, la définition du commerce de détail supposait l'existence d'un « magasin physique en tant que lieu facilitant la vente de biens et de services aux clients », les options actuelles de commerce de détail englobent non seulement les magasins briques et mortier, mais aussi les magasins en ligne, les magasins mobiles et toutes les combinaisons possibles entre les deux. Ces tendances ont leur impact le plus important sur le commerce de détail de la rue principale à travers le Canada, car les détaillants indépendants et les petites chaînes perdent la bataille pour les ventes face aux géants du commerce électronique comme Amazon. **James Stiver**,

basé à Vancouver, explore l'impact des défis logistiques sur les quartiers engendrés par l'essor du commerce en ligne.

Les niveaux des ventes au détail ont traditionnellement été interprétés comme un baromètre reflétant l'état de l'économie, mais à mesure que le rythme du changement s'accélère - sous l'effet de la disparition de marques historiques telles que Eaton, Sears, Zellers, Target et d'autres - les signaux économiques sont de plus en plus flous, dans un monde où les détaillants de luxe prospèrent aux côtés des magasins à un dollar. Comme nous le décrivons dans ce numéro, il est difficile, voire impossible, de prévoir comment les politiques d'aménagement du territoire devraient évoluer pour s'adapter aux tendances futures. **Greg Landry**, qui écrit du point de vue d'un urbaniste stratégique et d'un économiste de la Nouvelle-Écosse, décrit une variété de scénarios futurs, générant plus de questions que de réponses.

Alors que les magasins piliers traditionnels disparaissent et que les propriétaires s'efforcent de remplir les espaces laissés vacants, une constante s'impose : la volonté de réaménager les centres commerciaux pour en faire des « centres communautaires », avec des logements, des bureaux, des activités sociales et récréatives. S'il incombe au propriétaire de veiller à ce que les besoins des différents groupes d'utilisateurs soient satisfaits (achats de proximité ou de destination, employés de bureau, résidents sur place, etc.), il revient aux urbanistes d'ajuster rapidement les politiques municipales et les investissements dans les infrastructures afin de garantir que ces pôles soient largement accessibles, idéalement grâce à de meilleurs transports en commun. Comme l'explique **Melanie Hare** dans ce numéro, de tels plans sont encore en cours d'élaboration dans les villes d'un bout à l'autre du pays.

Canadians are being met. **Kate Clark** and **Katherine Deturbide** from Dalhousie University's *Planning for Equity, Accessibility, and Community Health* (PEACH) unit in Nova Scotia are conducting research to explore the retail needs of people with disabilities. Their research, in part, identifies challenges shared with main streets across the country, where the goals of retail tenants to upgrade their stores can be frustrated by a lack of support from their landlords.

In addition to our theme of Retail, we present two additional articles highlighting the changing perspectives and contexts that planners may be facing in their practice. **Alex Hallbom** and **Wes Regan** discuss the 1986 essay from philosopher

Harry Frankfurt, 'On Bullshit,' and how it can frame critical thought on public discourse planners may lead, engage in, and be influenced by. In the article 'Transforming Planning Processes at the Intersections of Climate, Equity and Decolonization,' **Lindsay Cole** and **Maggie Low** share the urgency and importance of exploring a transformative planning process inspired by social innovation, systemic design, and decolonizing approaches.

While the pace of change may have accelerated in recent years, change is a constant in our profession, our practice, and in our communities. We hope you enjoy this issue of *Plan Canada* in exploring what changes are being experienced for Retail and more by planners and others.

ENDNOTES

- ¹ 'The Evolution of Ontario's Early Urban Land Use Planning Regulations, 1900-1920,' David Hulchanski, University of Toronto, 1982.
- ² When the late John Bousfield, FCIP was the Planning Director of the Township of Scarborough (now Toronto) in 1959, he established planning policies for a hierarchy of commercial services. These ideas later influenced development of major suburban developments such as Erin Mills and similar projects across Canada.
- ³ Bruce Krushelnicki, RPP, MCIP, was Director of the Planning and Building Department, City of Burlington and served on the Ontario Municipal Board for 13 years. ■

Des questions restent également sans réponse quant à savoir si les besoins de tous les Canadiens sont satisfaits.

Kate Clark et **Katherine Deturbide**, de l'unité *Planning for Equity, Accessibility, and Community Health* (PEACH) de l'Université Dalhousie en Nouvelle-Écosse, mènent des recherches sur les besoins des personnes handicapées en matière de commerce de détail. Leur recherche identifie en partie les défis communs aux rues principales à travers le pays, où les objectifs des locataires de commerces de détail pour améliorer leurs magasins peuvent être frustrés par un manque de soutien de la part de leurs propriétaires.

Outre le thème de la vente au détail, nous présentons deux autres articles mettant en lumière les perspectives et les contextes changeants auxquels les urbanistes peuvent être confrontés dans leur pratique. **Alex Hallbom** et **Wes Regan**

discutent de l'essai de 1986 du philosophe Harry Frankfurt, « On Bullshit » (De l'art de dire des conneries), et de la manière dont il peut encadrer la pensée critique sur le discours public que les urbanistes peuvent mener, dans lequel ils peuvent s'engager et par lequel ils peuvent être influencés. Dans l'article intitulé « Transformer les processus d'aménagement à l'intersection du climat, de l'équité et de la décolonisation », **Lindsay Cole** et **Maggie Low** soulignent l'urgence et l'importance d'explorer un processus d'aménagement transformateur inspiré par l'innovation sociale, la conception systémique et les approches décolonisatrices.

Bien que le rythme du changement se soit accéléré ces dernières années, le changement est une constante dans notre profession, notre pratique et nos communautés. Nous espérons que vous apprécierez ce numéro de *Plan Canada*, qui explore les changements vécus par les

urbanistes et d'autres personnes dans le domaine de la vente au détail et ailleurs.

NOTES DE BAS DE PAGE :

- ¹ « The Evolution of Ontario's Early Urban Land Use Planning Regulations, 1900-1920 », David Hulchanski, Université de Toronto, 1982.
- ² Lorsque feu John Bousfield, FICU, était directeur de l'urbanisme de la municipalité de Scarborough (aujourd'hui Toronto) en 1959, il a établi des politiques d'urbanisme pour une hiérarchie de services commerciaux. Ces idées ont ensuite influencé le développement de grandes banlieues telles qu'Erin Mills et d'autres projets similaires à travers le Canada.
- ³ Bruce Krushelnicki, UPC, MICU, a été directeur du service d'aménagement et de construction de la ville de Burlington et a siégé à la Commission des affaires municipales de l'Ontario pendant 13 ans. ■

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CHALLENGING NOTIONS OF ACCESSIBILITY



SUMMARY

Provincial-level accessibility legislation is gaining momentum across Canada. British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Saskatchewan have recently introduced their first accessibility acts, joining Ontario (2005), Manitoba (2013), and Nova Scotia (2017). In combination with the federal Accessible Canada Act (2019), legislation is finally moving to help to bring accessibility considerations to building codes and other regulations at a community-level. The Planning for Equity, Accessibility, and Community Health (PEACH) Research Unit at Dalhousie University is furthering planning and urban design knowledge and tools for practice to support communities for people of all ages and abilities.

With storefront retailing increasingly under threat as a result of retail trends affecting the viability of bricks and mortar stores – particularly in rural Nova Scotia – Kate Clark, a founding associate at PEACH, describes current research that builds on interviews with retailers to determine their willingness and capacity to undertake renovations to enhance accessibility. The research finds that the quality of public spaces surrounding retail stores can be a major influence affecting support for private investments in accessibility improvements. Kate's colleague at PEACH, Katherine Deturbide, reports on initial research findings that look at accessibility to retail and recreation at the community scale. The goal is to develop benchmarks for feasible walkable/rollable travel distances to such services that go beyond simple distance calculations utilized in active transportation strategies and other tools employed by planners.

SOMMAIRE

La législation provinciale sur l'accessibilité gagne du terrain au Canada. La Colombie-Britannique, Terre-Neuve-et-Labrador et la Saskatchewan ont récemment adopté leur première loi sur l'accessibilité, rejoignant ainsi l'Ontario (2005), le Manitoba (2013) et la Nouvelle-Écosse (2017). En combinaison avec la Loi fédérale sur le Canada accessible (2019), la législation évolue enfin pour aider à intégrer les considérations d'accessibilité dans les codes du bâtiment et d'autres réglementations au niveau communautaire. L'unité de recherche Planning for Equity, Accessibility, and Community Health (PEACH) de l'Université Dalhousie fait progresser les connaissances en matière d'urbanisme et d'aménagement urbain et les outils nécessaires à la pratique afin de soutenir les communautés pour les personnes de tous âges et de toutes capacités.

Alors que le commerce de détail ayant pignon sur rue est de plus en plus menacé en raison des tendances qui affectent la viabilité des magasins briques et mortier, en particulier dans les zones rurales de la Nouvelle-Écosse, Kate Clark, associée fondatrice de PEACH, décrit une recherche en cours qui s'appuie sur des entretiens avec des détaillants pour déterminer leur volonté et leur capacité à entreprendre des rénovations afin d'améliorer l'accessibilité. Cette recherche révèle que la qualité des espaces publics entourant les magasins de détail peut avoir une influence majeure sur le soutien aux investissements privés dans l'amélioration de l'accessibilité. Katherine Deturbide, collègue de Kate à PEACH, présente les premiers résultats d'une recherche portant sur l'accessibilité aux commerces et aux loisirs à l'échelle de la communauté. L'objectif est de développer des repères pour les distances de déplacement praticables à pied ou à vélo vers ces services, qui vont au-delà des simples calculs de distance utilisés dans les stratégies de transport actif et d'autres outils employés par les urbanistes.

HOW FAR IS TOO FAR TO WALK OR ROLL TO THE STORE?

Lessons Learned from Public Consultation with People with Disabilities

By Katherine Deturbide

INTRODUCTION

Spatial accessibility is the measure of how services and amenities are distributed in a community, and is the basis of some of the most widely used measures and models of walkability. Popular tools and concepts such as the '15-minute cities' framework, 'complete communities', and 'Walk Score®' focus on travel distances and times to services and amenities to gauge the quality of a community.^{1, 2, 3} Using these tools, planners often create policies which encourage mixed-use developments (e.g., HRM, 2021, Policy ED-4)⁴ that incorporate retail uses with residential in pursuit of the ideal walkable/rollable community, where most services may be accessed without depending on a car.

Provincial and municipal policy as well as municipal zoning are needed to enable mixed-use development that can thrive regardless of economic viability and market forces. We are now starting to see the results of many cities' efforts to encourage the development of more walkable/rollable mixed-use neighbourhoods through Smart Growth principles. For instance, Ottawa has been using the 15-minute neighbourhood approach to better understand which areas include essential amenities and services within a 1,200-metre radius from people's homes.⁵ Additionally, many US cities have implemented policies to better support equitable transit-oriented development while preserving nearby affordable housing stock.⁶

Concurrently, provincial-level legislation has prompted many municipalities to draft accessibility plans, which include action items that formalize goals set out by the province. These plans utilize built environment standards which typically lay out accessibility requirements at a building or street scale (e.g., B651).^{7, 8} Building Code regulations are also limited to addressing accessibility requirements for the interiors and exteriors

of new individual constructions. Currently, housing is also exempt from provincial regulatory tools (such as the Building Code) and therefore is not addressed by these plans (see note). As a result, built environment interventions for accessibility have not included considerations for spatial accessibility to goods and services, the location and servicing of residential areas, and the relationship between the two. Spatial accessibility is a particularly important consideration for people with experience of disability because they often depend on public transit and good-quality pedestrian infrastructure to travel within and between communities.

There is currently very little in the way of empirical evidence to suggest what specific services should be included in walkability/rollability measures, and many assumptions are made about the acceptable travel distances to access services. Even navigation technology such as Google Maps assumes a walking speed of 1.2 metres per second when it calculates estimated travel times, which is faster than what may be considered normal for a person with a mobility disability, an older adult, or a young child.^{9, 10} A 15-minute walk to a pharmacy at this speed may be realistic for an able-bodied adult, but anyone whose abilities are outside of this narrow spectrum might traverse a much shorter distance in the same amount of time, or may decide that the distance is simply too great. An acceptable walkable/rollable distance may also change depending on the destination. For example, a visit to the grocery store, which involves carrying groceries home, may be impractical for some people without access to a car, whereas a trip to a local pharmacy or bank that can be carried out on foot or using a wheelchair may be feasible if that person is not encumbered with heavy bags. The

quality of street and sidewalk design is critical to consider as well. If a sidewalk is not wide enough to accommodate two friends walking/rolling side-by-side, or if a curb cut is too narrow or steep for a wheelchair or stroller to safely roll into a crosswalk, even a short walking/rolling journey can become arduous (and even potentially dangerous).

BENCHMARKING SPATIAL ACCESS

Our research team at the PEACH Research Unit at Dalhousie University is currently working on a project with the goal of establishing benchmarks for spatial accessibility aimed at serving the needs of persons of a greater diversity of ages and abilities as well as developing a tool for communities to use to monitor built environment accessibility. In the summer of 2023, we began the first phase of the project by conducting several consultation sessions with people with a range of disability experiences to find out which services are important to have within a walking/rolling distance. Additionally, initial consultations asked about how people's travel behaviour is impacted by the environment and found out how long they are willing to walk/roll before considering other transportation options.

The following is a summary of some of our initial findings which will eventually contribute to the development of a built environment assessment tool. It was not our intent at this early stage to collect quantitative data about travel behaviour; rather, we were interested in identifying some key trends that we could investigate further and in more detail at a later phase of the research project.

Participants were asked to identify their most frequent travel destinations and where these journeys typically begin. While many said they begin walking/rolling from their home or place of work, many others

“PEOPLE [USING] WHEELCHAIRS WILL NOT BE ABLE TO ACCESS THE SIDEWALK, LET ALONE THE STORE”:

Speaking About Accessibility with Rural Nova Scotian Businesses

By Kate Clark

INTRODUCTION

Storefront retail faces a wide range of challenges to remaining in communities. Declining consumer demand, labour shortages, and disrupted supply chains¹ are some well-known examples of circumstances currently threatening the future of commercial streets.

ACCESSIBILITY IN CANADA

For decades, retail buildings across the country were constructed without regard for barriers to accessibility for people who live with disabilities. Something as commonplace as a single step up from street level can make a restaurant, a shop, or an office complex's entrance inaccessible to many – especially people who use wheelchairs, walkers, or other wheeled mobility aids.² In Canada, as many as 1 in 5 people who experience disabilities nation-wide may be excluded from accessing storefronts that have yet to be updated to modern accessibility standards³ As the population of Canadians with disabilities continues to grow with age,⁴ provincial-level accessibility legislation is gaining momentum.

British Columbia, Newfoundland and Labrador, and Saskatchewan, for instance, have introduced their first accessibility acts as recently as this past year. This legislation, as well as the federal Accessible Canada Act, help to bring accessibility considerations to building codes and other regulations at a community-level. In Nova Scotia, requirements for barrier-free entrances, paths of travel, parking, etc., apply to new constructions or buildings where there is a change in use or 'change in occupancy.' Thus, managers of retail spaces must expect to keep up with modern standards for accessibility to attract and retain a wider,



more inclusive community of consumers and employees.

NOVA RAMP UP: AN INTERIM ACCESSIBILITY INITIATIVE FOR BUSINESSES

In Nova Scotia, the Province has set a goal to be fully accessible by 2030.⁵ Provincial funding programs like the *Business*

ACCESS-Ability Grant incentivize Nova Scotian businesses to make improvements that align with the province's goal. A collaboration funded through this program called *Nova Ramp Up*, led by the John Howard Society of Nova Scotia, applied a version of the *StopGap Foundation's* (www.stopgap.ca) framework for building

and distributing ad hoc storefront ramps as an interim measure to improve the accessibility of small businesses in need of updates. StopGap first tested the scheme in Toronto, Ontario, and has since grown to serve storefronts in other Canadian cities. Though not a long-term solution, the efforts of the Nova Ramp Up team directly engaged small business owners in rural areas of the province to grow awareness and make an immediate change towards providing greater accessibility for more people to local retail. Twelve towns and villages with populations ranging from 485 to 12,954 people participated.⁶ A series of interviews with participating business owners and managers were conducted through the supporting research team from Dalhousie University to assess immediate outcomes of the initiative, which ended in August 2023.

BARRIERS TO STOREFRONT ENTRANCES

Interviews with business owners – whose businesses included pet shops, cafes, hair salons, art galleries, party stores, and more – revealed equal parts enthusiasm and wariness about their accessible future. Most felt the *Nova Ramp Up* temporary ramps were an encouraging, feasible option for them to achieve greater accessibility, and that this was a social good they wished to support through their business. However, owners commonly told interviewers about roadblocks they faced when trying to make more permanent improvements to their stores. These included struggling to obtain landlord permissions to conduct renovations as tenants of their retail space, facing competing demands for upgrades such as replacing a roof or windows, and feeling deterred when past investments had not turned out. An example of the latter for one business meant securing materials, plans, and permits to renovate an accessible entrance from their parking lot, only to have work halted (and never resumed) when skilled workers could not be secured in their area.⁷

While the cost of making improvements is often seen as the limiting factor for private building operators – a common deterrent reported by the participating businesses was the inaccessibility of their surrounding environment. The state of the sidewalk, street parking, or the street itself where a business was located, were of concern to

many business owners. Some expressed that these hindered their progress or motivation to become more accessible.

Narrow sidewalk widths, for instance, especially where older buildings abut the sidewalk, can limit access as well as affecting the kind of renovations possible for store entrances along these streets. *Nova Ramp Up* observed that in some rural or communities, there may not be any sidewalk at all leading to a storefront. In others, pedestrian routes may be unpaved (e.g., compressed gravel) or simply in disrepair. Where there were sidewalks, infrequent and unreliable snow clearing in the winter discouraged several of the participating businesses. One owner summed this up, saying, ‘People [using] wheelchairs will not be able to access the sidewalk, let alone the store.’⁸ Little or no accessible street parking was also discussed by interviewees as a limiting factor. One business with a historic storefront tried to make use of a service alley as temporary parking for regular customers with disabilities, saying that even the back alley was an ‘easier, shorter distance for them than to try and park down the street.’⁸ This store lacked designated parking or an accessible drop-off area from the street. They were aware that the alley was not an accessible solution, but it exemplified both their desire to accommodate customers with disabilities and the limited surrounding infrastructure at their disposal to do so.

CONCLUSION

What *Nova Ramp Up* observed is how business owners and operators recognize the (in)accessibility of public space as a foundation to motivate or deter their own accessibility improvements to private and semi-public space. As storefront businesses seek to make socially⁹ and economically¹⁰ sustainable choices by responding to modern expectations and standards for accessibility, and as provincial governments seek to incentivize their investments, municipal governments and policymakers have a clear role to play to support this goal. An accessible business entrance – i.e., simply getting through the door – is not a complete solution unless the surrounding sidewalk, street crossings, transit stops, parking, and other public infrastructure

also support individuals in getting to and participating in local retail.¹¹

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RETAIL EVOLUTION:

The Lifecycle of Anchor Stores

By Tony Hernandez

SUMMARY

Anchor stores have been a defining element of the shopping centre business model. This article focuses on the aftermath of Target's store failure in Canada. The analysis highlights the re-use, re-configuration and re-development of former anchor store space. The findings point to the evolution of the shopping centre concept in Canada, with the right-sizing of stores, diversity in tenant mix and a shift in the balance between retail and service uses. As more shopping centre owners look to the potential to redevelop their properties to mixed-use, it is imperative for planners to factor in consumer trends and retail evolution into flexible planning solutions.

SOMMAIRE

Les magasins piliers ont été un élément déterminant du modèle commercial des centres commerciaux. Cet article se concentre sur les conséquences de la faillite des magasins Target au Canada. L'analyse met en évidence la réutilisation, la reconfiguration et le réaménagement de l'espace des anciens magasins piliers. Les conclusions soulignent l'évolution du concept de centre commercial au Canada, avec le redimensionnement des magasins, la diversité des locataires et un rééquilibrage entre les commerces et les services. Alors que de plus en plus de propriétaires de centres commerciaux envisagent de réaménager leurs propriétés pour les rendre polyvalentes, il est impératif que les urbanistes tiennent compte des tendances de consommation et de l'évolution du commerce de détail dans le cadre de solutions d'urbanisme flexibles.



The demise of several major anchor stores in Canada over the last decade has sent a series of shockwaves through the commercial real estate and retail industry. The jaw-dropping collapse of Target Canada (a discount general merchandiser) in 2015¹ was followed two years later by the somewhat more predictable fall of Sears Canada (a traditional department store).² The post-pandemic closure of Nordstrom's full-line department and off-price 'Rack' format stores in 2023³ added to the debate on shopping centres and the future of anchor stores. These nationwide store closures have created a retail space absorption challenge. However, beyond the news headlines that feed into the ill-informed retail apocalypse media narrative, what happens to anchor store space after retail failure? This article provides insights into the changes that have taken place at former Target store locations in Canada based

on an analysis of site plans and media reporting. The analysis highlights the need for planners and building owners to provide flexibility with regard to the re-use and redevelopment of commercial spaces to accommodate underlying retail evolution.

TARGET'S CANADIAN JOURNEY BEGAN IN 2011, ENDED IN 2015

Before getting into the data, here is a quick re-cap of the Target Canada story. The formal starting point of Target's entry to Canada was via a corporate announcement on January 13, 2011, with the \$1.8 billion purchase of 220 leasehold rights from the Canadian general merchandise icon, Zellers (interestingly experimenting with a format re-birth in 2023). Fast-forward two years to 2013, when consumer and industry expectations of Target Canada had time to (over)inflate, and the first Target stores began to roll out. In total, Target identified 140 store locations, of which 133 opened. The operating stores were found across

the retail hierarchy, with over two-thirds in enclosed centres (regional, community and super-regional), and one-quarter in unenclosed power centres. The Target stores were located, for the most part, in highly managed and planned centres. It is important to note that Target's entry to Canada was seen by many landlords, at the time, as a much-needed boost to their centres, directly replacing a tired Zellers format and potentially compensating for poorly performing traditional department store anchors. On January 15, 2015, Target Corp. (US) announced that all stores in Canada would be closing, as it sought to cut its significant losses in Canada and end its costly experiment north of the border (estimated at a staggering \$7 billion). While it was widely known that Target had been struggling to establish a foothold in the Canadian marketplace, not helped by long-standing supply chain issues that meant many Canadian stores were not properly stocked, the timing of

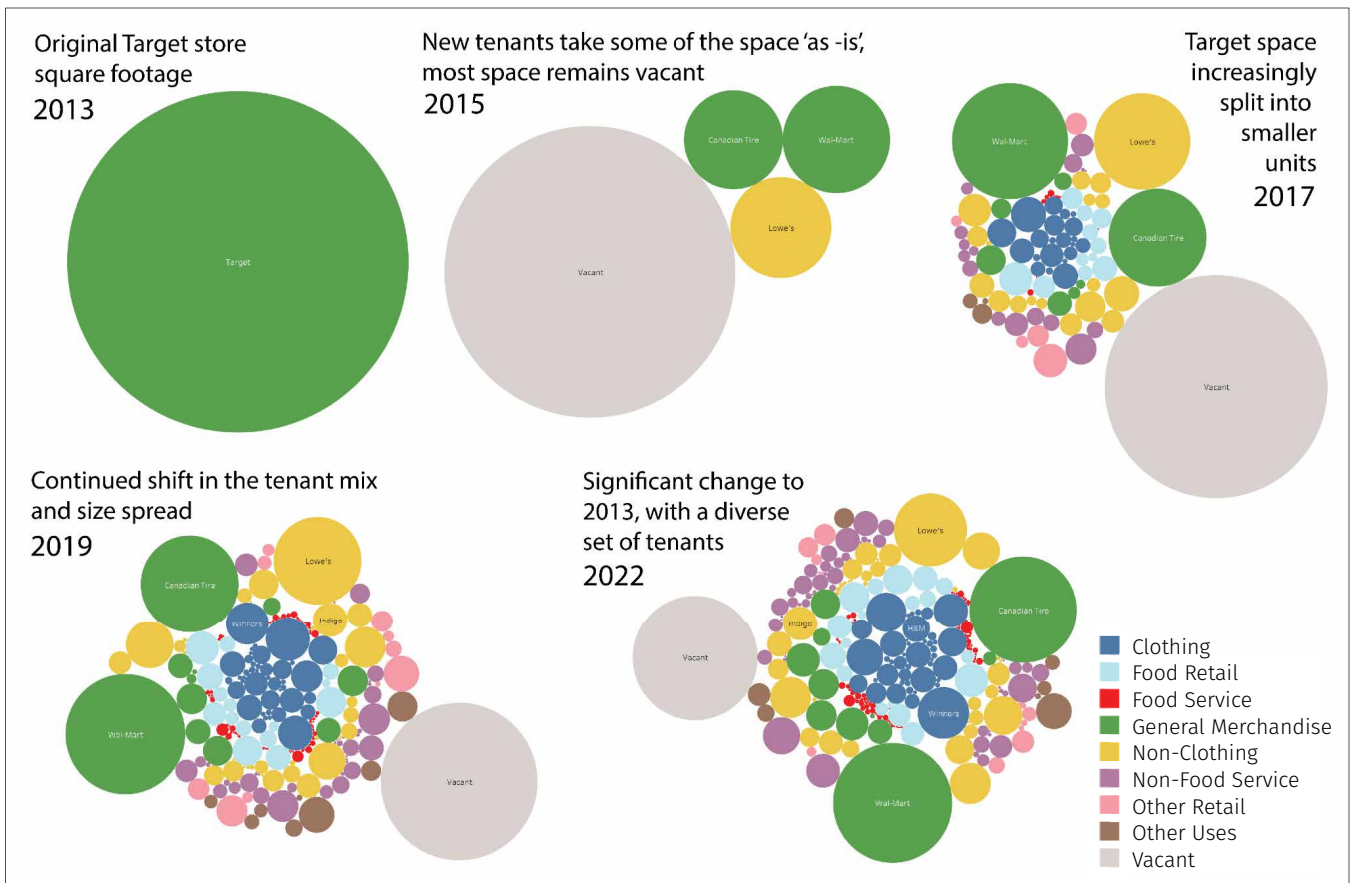


Figure 1: The use of Target's anchor store space: 2013 to 2022.

the announced closures took many retail analysts off-guard.⁴ By mid-April 2015, Target's exit from Canada left behind 140 stores, totaling nearly 16 million square feet. If this were a stage play, the script would read, enter the throng of lawyers and consultants, stage left, with sadly over 17,000 employees exiting stage right along with many impacted businesses that worked with Target. A legal 'monitor' was appointed to handle the closures, and the resulting legal wranglings over space, property and lost earnings began.

The period following Target's departure from Canada can be broadly categorized into (i) the immediate aftermath of closure, (ii) the realization of the leasing challenge, (iii) retailing in the shadow of a global pandemic, and most recently, (iv) the push towards shopping centre re-development and mixed-use. Figure 1 shows the changing tenant mix of Target store space from 2013 to 2022. The bubble chart in 2013 captures the square footage of all the Target stores operating. At the time of Target's collapse,

only three retailers offered to acquire former Target space: Walmart, Canadian Tire and Lowe's. Fast forward to 2017 and 2019, and the process of re-configuration of space can be seen to be taking place. There was minimal demand from large format retailers to occupy entire store footprints, instead most of the landlords began the process of reconfiguring the space into different combinations of mid- and smaller size units, often reducing the overall footprint to accommodate internal common area corridors. The re-configuration of space provided a range of different-sized units for a wide range of retail and service uses, reflecting the growing importance of mid-sized (mini-anchor) stores and smaller services (e.g., food, personal care). The increased diversity of tenants is reflective of a broader trend of integrating more service tenants within shopping centres to serve a myriad of consumer needs. It is important to note that while landlords were dealing with the initial re-configuration of Target space, the departure of Sears Canada

added more than 16 million square feet of vacant space in 2018, arguably, much more challenging to deal with compared to the Target space,⁵ further added to by the recent closure of Nordstrom. To add to the space absorption woes, the disruption to the operation of shopping centres due to the pandemic in 2020 raised many questions about the future of retail space demand. By the end of 2022, 2.1 million square feet of former Target space remained vacant, including vacant units within newly reconfigured spaces.

PACE OF CHANGE IS ACCELERATING, RAISING NEW CHALLENGES FOR LANDLORDS, PLANNERS

A clear pattern of change can be identified with re-use, re-configuration and re-development. Landlords' initial efforts focused on re-using space as-is, essentially keeping to their lane and pursuing a direct replacement tenant. Due to limited demand from large format retailers, there was a prolonged period of re-configuration of

space, with leasing activities focused on dividing up the space to accommodate mid-sized retailers (some serving as mini-anchors) and in-fill services. As time has passed since the Target closure, more drastic change is needed to address structural vacancy for the locations that were unable to secure new tenants. These centres become candidates to add to the growing list of shopping centres that are exploring re-development opportunities, most often to some combination of mixed-use, with an emphasis on adding residential to further support the retail and service uses. As planners question the relevance of existing retail hierarchies, more work is needed to define the different types of mixed-use that include sizable retail and service uses.

It is approaching a decade since the closure of Target in Canada. The Target story can be seen within the context of a retail system evolving to constant change (with major shocks and disruption along the way). Counter to the retail apocalypse narrative,⁶ the re-use, re-configuration and re-development of former anchor store space is part of retail evolution. As with any form of evolution, some catalysts accelerate change (particularly consumer-facing technological innovations), and there are elements of inertia that hinder change. For example, some long-standing shopping centre tenants have clauses in their leases requiring their approval to make

any significant changes to the centre, e.g., adding other non-retail uses or markedly reducing the retail footprint (the lawyers enter stage left, yet again). The challenge lies in the fact that the changes are taking place faster than in the past. From a planning perspective, there is an increasing need to plan with as much flexibility as possible to allow for the evolution of commercial uses. For example, there have been increasing calls for more flexible retail uses), flexibility in retail design⁷ through to flexible zoning across uses.⁸ With an increased focus on integrating retail and service within mixed-use development, the requirement to plan for and balance the demands of different consumers (residents, employees, visitors. etc.) has served to further the long-standing needs for more planners to specialize in retail and service sector uses to ensure planning keeps pace with change.

Tony Hernandez PhD is a Professor in the School of Retail Management and Department of Real Estate Management at the Ted Rogers School of Management, Toronto Metropolitan University. Dr. Hernandez formerly served as the Director and Eaton Chair in Retailing at the Centre for the Study of Commercial Activity (CSCA) supporting retail planning

across a wide range of private and public sector organizations. The CSCA maintained national databases of major retail chains and shopping centres. Tony is also the founder of hRz Research Insights, a data-centric consulting firm focused on retail and commercial real estate planning issues.

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ADAPTING TO CHANGING DEMANDS:

How Brick-and-Mortar Retail is Thriving in Halifax's Waterfront

By Lilit Houlder

Waterfront Boardwalk in front of Muir Hotel, opened in 2021. Photo by Lilit Houlder.

SUMMARY

The retail scene in Halifax's iconic waterfront is undergoing a profound transformation that is driven by shifting real estate dynamics and a growing population. The increase of online shopping has prompted retailers to revisit the types of spaces they need for brick-and-mortar stores, while the surge in downtown residents and tourists has contributed to a significant growth in retail traffic. The waterfront's history of revitalization, starting with the notable Bishop's Landing development, is emblematic of its ability to adapt to changing urban trends and points towards a promising future of mixed-use developments and vibrant waterfront retail.

SOMMAIRE

La scène du commerce de détail sur le front de mer emblématique d'Halifax subit une profonde transformation sous l'effet de l'évolution de la dynamique immobilière et de l'accroissement de la population. L'augmentation des achats en ligne a incité les détaillants à revoir les types d'espaces dont ils ont besoin pour leurs magasins briques et mortier, tandis que l'augmentation du nombre de résidents du centre-ville et de touristes a contribué à une croissance significative de l'achalandage des commerces de détail. L'histoire de la revitalisation du front de mer, qui a commencé avec le développement remarquable de Bishop's Landing, est emblématique de sa capacité à s'adapter à l'évolution des tendances urbaines et laisse entrevoir un avenir prometteur de développements à usage mixte et de commerces de détail dynamiques sur le front de mer.

Halifax's waterfront has a rich history dating far back beyond the time it was used as a port for commercial fishing and container shipping in the 1950s.¹ Over the recent years, this area has evolved into a major activity node, welcoming residents, workers, and tourists alike. However, the retail scene in downtown Halifax, and specifically along the waterfront, is undergoing a transformation that is driven by various factors such as changing consumer habits, a shifting real estate landscape, and population growth.

Consumer trends have been growing more and more towards online shopping since 2022.² As a result, retailers are re-evaluating footprints of their brick-and-mortar stores, looking for smaller spaces to adapt to new consumer preferences.² This has prompted a shift in the types of retailers establishing a presence along the

waterfront. According to some real estate reports, such as Avison Young's Retail Market Snapshot in Q1 of 2023, popular retailers now encompass a mix of fine dining restaurants, gyms, grocery stores, and luxury retail in Halifax. In response to these shifts, warehousing and distribution to support online retailers and flex spaces have become some of the most popular assets in the commercial real estate landscape in Halifax. Halifax's retail leasing is on an upward trajectory² and the types of retail spaces in demand are changing.

The future of retail in the Halifax waterfront, in particular, is in mixed-use developments. Malls across the city are reinventing themselves by incorporating a strong residential component to support existing and future retail. Take Scotia Square for example, this mixed-use development includes a shopping centre, office towers, hotels, with a very recent

announcement to develop the Marlstone, a 291-unit residential tower that will complement the existing complex and support its commercial uses. Evidently, the 'live-work-shop' trend is gaining traction in Halifax, with the number of residential applications on commercially zoned parcels having increased.³ One notable aspect of Halifax's evolving retail landscape is the increasing prominence of high-fashion and fine-dining establishments. While mom-and-pop shops have a place in the area's history, they no longer have the same prevalence along the waterfront.

Halifax's downtown is also experiencing a significant population boom. The 2023 State of Downtown Halifax Report reveals that the downtown population has grown by 26% from 2016 to 2021 to include approximately 19,500 people, a number that has certainly increased in 2023. One of the most notable aspects of Halifax's waterfront is the remarkable



Halifax Waterfront September 2022. Photo licensed through Adobe Suite.

ADAPTING TO CHANGING DEMANDS

growth in foot traffic. This influx has been accompanied by a boom in tourism, with the downtown area receiving around three million visitors⁴ within each fiscal quarter. This number, which includes residents, workers, and tourists, surpasses the pre-COVID levels. Increase in residents and the visiting population in Halifax creates more demand for commercial uses, which can be seen by the increase of non-residential building permits (by 5.7%) overall from February 2023 to January 2023.⁵ Retail traffic has also surged by 50% after the COVID-19 pandemic,⁶ driven by tourism and the increasing residential population. Build Nova Scotia has also invested in public space improvements around the waterfront district and proposed year-round use of retail spaces.

Over the next five years, projections indicate that approximately 1,800 residential units will be added to the downtown through 24 private and public development projects that are already actively taking place⁴. Take for example the

Cunard mixed-use development, which is set to add 231 residential units⁷ and public space upgrades to the Halifax waterfront, while Purdy's Wharf (commercial office complex) is in talks to retrofit one of its two towers to a multi-family residential use.

How is the current municipal planning framework and its land use policies helping Halifax support commercial uses that are becoming more in demand due to the ever-rising population? Halifax's waterfront is situated within the Centre Plan's (and the

Land Use By-Law's) two special areas: the *Halifax Waterfront* and the *Lower Central Downtown Halifax*, which prioritize flexible building form and design and diversity of commercial uses, all while maintaining viewsheds and public access to the water's edge. The objectives of the special areas are clear: to encourage a wide range of housing options and to support tourism development, creating vibrant public spaces and a thriving community.⁸ It is not surprising to see compatibility between current development



Nightlife at Bishop's Landing. Photo by Lilit Houlder.

demands and what local policies and regulations allow for, after all, the Centre Plan and the Regional Centre Land Use By-Law were both recently approved in 2021, with extensive public consultation efforts done to prepare major policies fitting for Halifax.⁹

In addition, updates to the Regional Plan have been in the works since 2020, with the long-term strategic document anticipated to be passed in 2024.¹⁰ The updated Regional Plan will reflect the recent challenges of population growth and housing demand in Halifax. Some of the proposed policies in the draft Regional Plan direct growth to established mixed-use commercial nodes and encourage the adaptive reuse of former institutional or commercial properties, which has been demonstrated by the approval of the development projects in downtown Halifax mentioned earlier.

Incorporation of mixed-use developments is associated with walkable, livable, and sustainable communities, significantly reducing reliance on private vehicles and contributing to overall public health, increased social interaction, and active lifestyles.¹⁰ However, the process of establishing mixed-use developments along Halifax's waterfront does not come without its challenges. In 2020, the same Cunard mixed-use development mentioned earlier was originally rejected by City Council over concerns for design regulations, including (but not limited to) provision of adequate public access to the boardwalk, design of the towers, as well as the design of street-level architecture.¹¹ Developing in a key tourist area, particularly the waterfront, has increased the pressure on developers to

account for quality public realm design, as least as witnessed in the case of Cunard.

Another challenge to anticipate with brick-and-mortar stores within the waterfront, in particular, may be to balance the varying needs of user groups such as residents, workers, shoppers, or tourists, and to provide adequate commercial retail opportunities. Luxury shopping and hotels may not be the first preference for local residents, while grocery stores may not be of particular interest to tourists.

Back in 2003, Bishop's Landing emerged as the first major multi-unit mixed-use development along the Halifax waterfront,¹² integrating residential and retail uses. This project set the stage for further developments and where the waterfront's retail scene was to be headed. Today, changing retail and population trends, with support of a flexible planning framework, contribute to a promising future for the commercial brick-and-mortar presence in the waterfront. This area's historical journey is a testament to its adaptability and evolution, as it continues to shape itself in the era of uncertainty, population boom, and changing retail trends.

Lilit Houlder MPlan, is a Planner with Invistec Consulting, based in Edmonton, Alberta. Lilit is currently the Co-Chair of Women in Urbanism, a national non-profit advocating for women's rights in cities, and recently attended the national CIP Conference in Halifax, where she saw the iconic waterfront for the first time.

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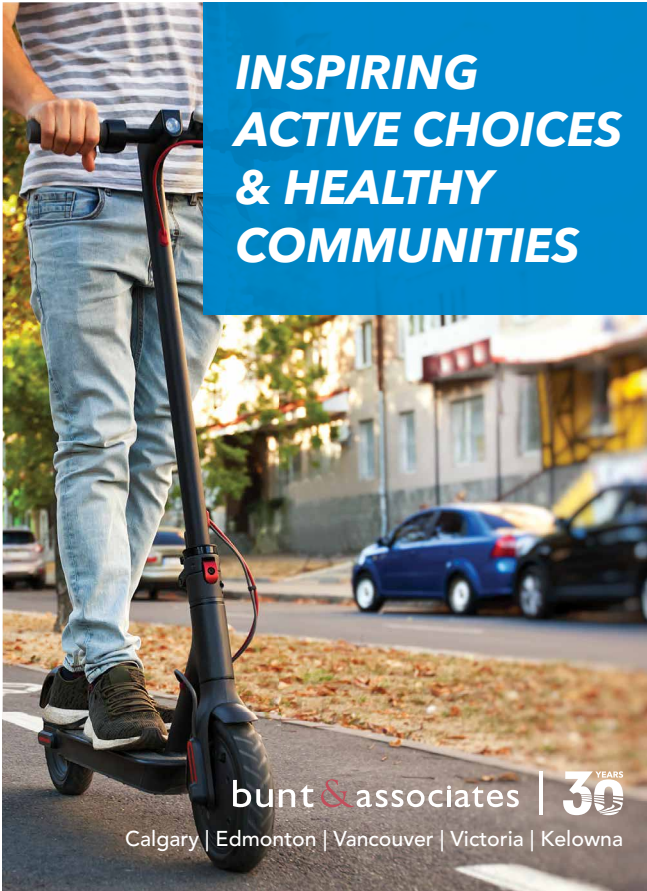
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FOUR SCENARIOS FOR THE FUTURE OF RETAIL AS A LAND USE IN CANADA

By Greg Landry

SUMMARY

The retail industry is constantly evolving and the rise of e-commerce, sophisticated analytics, personalized customer experiences, and automated home delivery are some elements that will likely shape the shopping experience in the future. This article presents data illustrating how e-commerce has recently changed the Canadian retail landscape and then offers four scenarios that provide a glimpse into what the retail industry may look like in the years to come, along with their impact on land use.

SOMMAIRE

L'industrie du commerce de détail est en constante évolution et l'essor du commerce électronique, les analyses sophistiquées, les expériences client personnalisées et la livraison automatisée à domicile sont autant d'éléments qui façonneront probablement l'expérience d'achat à l'avenir. Cet article présente des données illustrant la manière dont le commerce électronique a récemment modifié le contexte de la vente au détail au Canada, puis propose quatre scénarios qui donnent un aperçu de ce à quoi l'industrie de la vente au détail pourrait ressembler dans les années à venir, ainsi que leur impact sur l'utilisation des sols.

Throughout history, the retail industry has been shaped and reshaped by political, economic, ecological, social, and technological trends. Open-air markets emerged thousands of years ago, after money was introduced to allow commerce to occur more easily. In medieval Europe, customers went directly to the workshops of tradespeople while markets or street vendors were used by merchants to sell perishable goods. By the seventeenth century, permanent shops

with more regular trading hours were beginning to replace markets as the main retail outlet. In the nineteenth century, more affluent Americans with broader tastes brought about department stores such as Macy's, Bloomingdales, and Sears. Later, the growth of suburban shopping malls was correlated with the growth in automobile ownership. By the 1960s, big box stores such as Walmart had arrived on the urban periphery, offering customers lower costs.¹ Similar trends defined Canada's retail landscape.

Today, it is online shopping that is reshaping the retail sector. Between 2012 and 2021, e-commerce sales have outpaced brick-and-mortar (in-store) sales in almost every retail segment in Canada (figure 1). This trend has also been greatly accelerated during the COVID-19 pandemic. Changes in the composition of retail sales are driving the physical transformation of the sector with the expansion of non-store retailers such as Amazon and supporting distribution centres and couriers.

Many retailers have closed or curtailed their physical locations across the country in what some call the 'retail apocalypse.' These stores include well-known brands such as Target, Gap, Victoria's Secret, Nordstrom, Banana Republic, and Bed Bath & Beyond.² There

have also been mergers and acquisitions, downsizing and closures of electronics stores such as RadioShack and Future Shop, as well as the closure of many record stores due to the rise of digital music streaming services. The fact that economic output in many retail industries continues to grow while employment has declined can be attributed to e-commerce but also store-front automation such as self-checkouts.

So, what does the future hold for retail as a land use in Canadian communities? Forecasting is typically based on the extrapolation of historical data and trends. However, global megatrends such as climate change, growing inequality, demographic changes, and geopolitical and economic instability, along with rapid

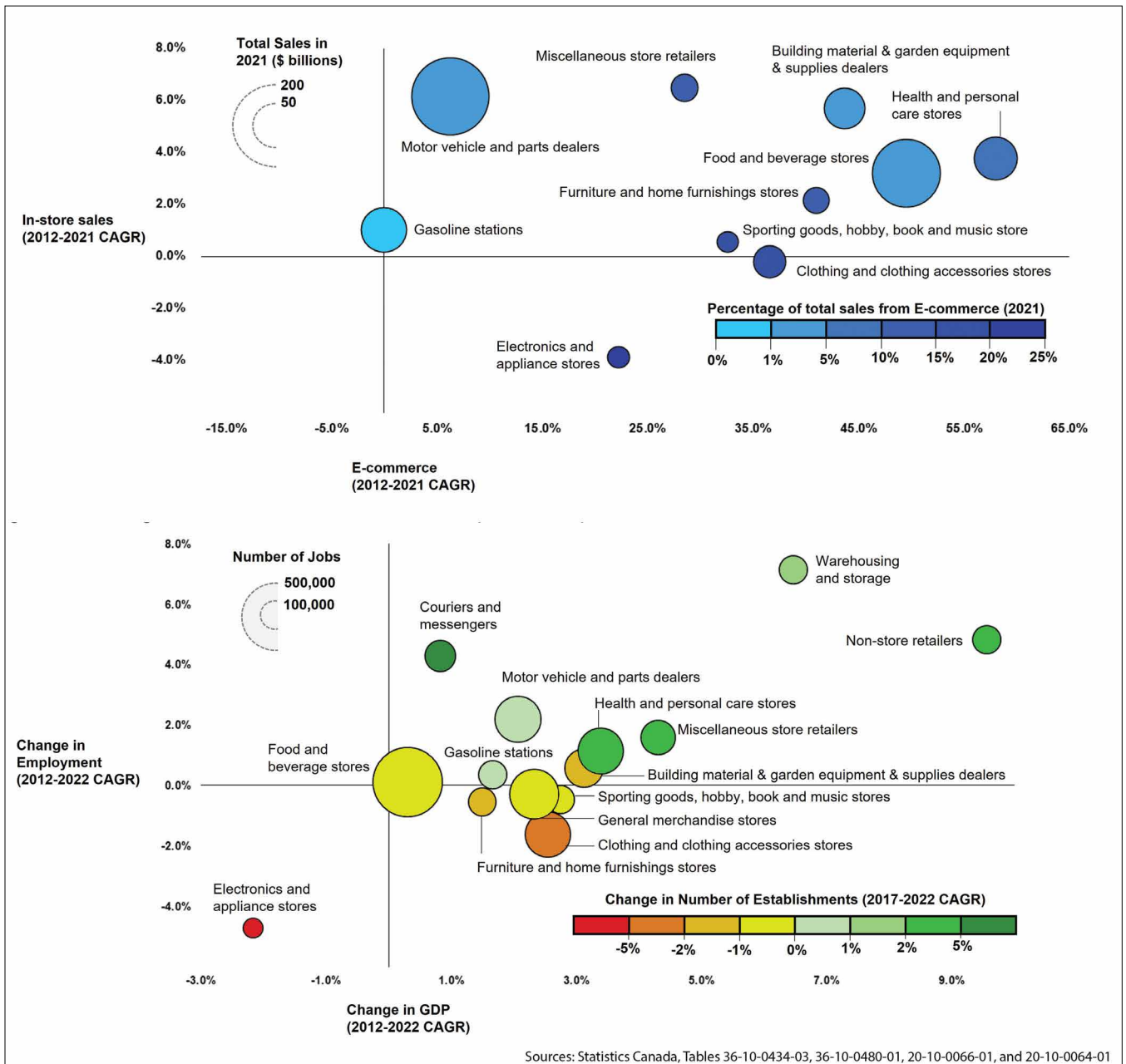


Figure 1: Changes in the Canadian Retail Sector.



advancements in technology compound to create an increasingly complex and uncertain future. This makes traditional forecasting difficult, if not impossible.

In these uncertain times, one alternative technique that can be used to help prepare for the future is scenario planning. It is a strategic foresight tool that involves creating multiple plausible future scenarios and then testing current planning assumptions against each of the different scenarios. The remainder of this article provides four short scenarios of how the retail sector may transform over time.

SPECIALIZED RETAIL DISTRICTS

The first scenario involves the emergence of smaller and more concentrated retail districts where it is not a competition between online and bricks-and-mortar retail that matters, but how the two work together. As on-line purchases increase, traditional stores may function more as showrooms with goods shipped to the consumer from regional warehouses. In this case, less space would be needed for inventory in physical stores and consumer foot traffic to such stores can be expected to decline. This situation will place more pressure on retailers to reduce costs associated with physical space and locate in areas where they can capture the most value from remaining consumer travel.³

To adjust to this changing landscape, retailers with potential synergies may avail themselves of new opportunities to share space. One emerging trend is the store-within-a-store concept where retailers benefit from co-branding. Examples in Canada where a large retailer offers floor space for another brand include MAC at Hudson's Bay or Apple at Best Buy. The continuation of this trend could have implications for the amount of retail land required to be allocated in municipal plans as multiple brands share the same building rather than occupy separate locations.

Smaller and more concentrated retail districts may facilitate more 'one-stop-shopping' and reduce the number of shopping trips and the length of customer travel between stores. Unfortunately, shoppers may have to travel longer distances from their homes to a smaller number of more scattered shopping destinations, which could contribute to more automobile dependency. In this scenario, planners may want to consider increasing residential densities near established retail districts and ensure retail is accessible through public transportation.

MIXED-USE DEVELOPMENT

In the second scenario, most large retail shopping centres would be reinvented into mixed-use spaces for shopping, living, dining, entertainment and a range of other activities. While today's mall is a place that acts primarily as a shopping destination for customers, the mall of tomorrow may become more of a hub of daily life. The move towards more mixed-use within malls is already underway; in 2015, 72.7 percent of space in Canadian malls was retail but by 2020, that had declined to 65.8 percent as other uses proliferated.⁴

More radical mall makeovers are also in the offing, with some being transformed into mixed-use districts that would reduce reliance on vehicle transportation. The 'M District' in Dartmouth,



Nova Scotia provides an example of this type of transformation. The planned development will retain an existing mall in its entirety while the vast swathes of surrounding surface parking will be transformed into a pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use, medium-rise community that will include more than 2000 residential units as well as integrated office, commercial and open space. Parking will be placed underground while some of the current asphalt parking surfaces will be converted into green pedestrian corridors.

The mixing of land uses in this type of development can create a place where both residents and visitors can enjoy new services and amenities, while the increased density can help to revitalize currently flagging shopping centres. The creation of walkable, mixed-use developments can also provide opportunities for employment, reduce trips by car, and create spaces for people to gather and socialize. Planners can contribute to the realization of this scenario by ensuring a high-quality urban design and good transit access to these emerging mixed-use nodes.

GLOBAL E-COMMERCE GIANTS

While the former two scenarios envision a world where retailers reinvent brick-and-mortar stores, the next two scenarios speculate that online shopping will become the dominant form of retail well into the future. As shown above, e-commerce is currently expanding at a rapid rate. Amazon's annual revenue increased from \$245 billion in 2019 to \$434 billion in 2022 and has become the default shopping channel for many consumers.^{5,6}

In a third scenario, the current growth trajectory of e-commerce could further accelerate with advances in artificial intelligence (AI) that will predict purchases in advance of buyer decision-making and arrange for almost instantaneous delivery through pre-stocked delivery trucks or even specialized vehicles that 3-D print consumer goods enroute. If further fueled by future wildcard events similar to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imaginable that global e-commerce giants could supply the bulk of all retail goods.

This scenario would significantly increase demand for industrial warehousing space, distribution centres, urban freight corridors,

and curbside delivery spaces. It could also involve the proliferation of new types of facilities used to fulfill online orders. One example is the conversion of retail stores into small distribution outlets that are not open to shoppers. Often referred to as “dark stores,” these facilities enable online retailers to store and manage inventory more efficiently and help streamline the product distribution process with robots that can pick and pack items quickly and accurately. However, the location of these facilities could result in land use conflicts as parking demand and traffic generation for these types of facilities are different than for traditional retail stores.⁷

One way to address such conflicts would be to switch to non-truck ‘final kilometre’ delivery. In 2019, the City of Montreal launched a project called Colibri that provided a vacant bus depot as a consolidation space for delivery trucks to unload packages to then be delivered by zero-emission e-cargo bikes to their final delivery destination.⁸ The reduction in road traffic could be improved even further if the last kilometre delivery was accomplished through the use of sidewalk delivery robots or flying delivery drones equipped with sophisticated sensing technology to avoid conflicts with pedestrians.⁹ Traffic issues could also be mitigated through the installation of parcel lockers or very small storage units located close to the final delivery point in urban or rural areas that can be conveniently accessed by customers.¹⁰

METAVESE-ENABLED EXPERIENCES

The fourth scenario envisions a retail environment where the consumer is also the producer. Omnichannel shopping is a journey that allows customers to interact with multiple sales channels, both online and offline, while enjoying a seamless and holistic shopping experience. The shopping experience of the future could involve customers searching for product designs on the metaverse, purchasing those designs through cryptocurrencies, and then using those designs to produce the products in their own homes using advanced 3D printers. The designers of products for top brands would become as famous as pop stars in today’s world.

If consumers used 3D printers at home to make their own products, it could have both positive and negative implications on traffic. On the one hand, it would reduce traffic associated with consumers traveling to stores or trucks, vans, and delivery vehicles shipping finished products to homes. On the other hand, there would remain the need to acquire the raw materials for printing, such as filament,

resin, or powder. These materials would have to be transported from suppliers to people’s homes and the production and transportation of these materials could potentially consume more energy and resources than conventional manufacturing methods.¹¹ Planners would need to consider restricting the scale of 3D printing in residential areas and delivery micro-hubs for raw materials rather than finished products could help mitigate traffic issues.

RETAIL’S FUTURE AS A LAND USE: TBD

This article presented four distinct scenarios that provide a view of what the retail landscape could look like as well as some potential implications for planners. The future of the retail industry may be a hybrid of these scenarios or something altogether different. The scenarios presented do not represent a preferred future, instead, the intent is to provoke thought, generate conversations, and “stress-test” current and proposed land use plans against multiple possibilities in order to be better prepared for uncertainty. Tactics such as increased densification and delivery micro-hubs appear to mitigate challenges and seize opportunities associated with retail transformation in multiple scenarios. This provides an example of how planners can use strategic foresight tools to help build additional resiliency in their planning efforts.

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IMPACTS OF E-COMMERCE ON STREETS, CURBS, AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

By James Stiver



SUMMARY

With the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, the shift from in-person to online retail sales drastically accelerated. Many shoppers turned away from stores because of pandemic restrictions and closures yet kept buying goods, increasingly online. This demand fuelled an accelerated increase in e-commerce activity globally for which most cities are not fully prepared, mostly notably in the area of curbside management. As those impacts are becoming better understood, how can cities best plan to accommodate e-commerce delivery systems in urban environments by balancing business needs, changing consumer preferences, and public space considerations.

SOMMAIRE

Avec l'apparition de la pandémie de Covid-19 au début de l'année 2020, le passage de la vente en personne à la vente en ligne s'est considérablement accéléré. De nombreux acheteurs se sont détournés des magasins en raison des restrictions et des fermetures liées à la pandémie, mais ont continué à acheter des biens, de plus en plus en ligne. Cette demande a alimenté une augmentation accélérée de l'activité de commerce électronique au niveau mondial, à laquelle la plupart des villes ne sont pas totalement préparées, notamment dans le domaine de la gestion de la collecte à l'auto. Alors que ces impacts sont de mieux en mieux compris, comment les villes peuvent-elles mieux planifier l'intégration des systèmes de livraison du commerce électronique dans les environnements urbains en conciliant les besoins des entreprises, l'évolution des préférences des consommateurs et les considérations relatives à l'espace public.

UNDERSTANDING E-COMMERCE

E-commerce, the buying and selling of goods and services online with delivery directly to the consumer, has steadily grown over the past 20 years. This growth has recently accelerated by the rapid increase in online transactions in general, thanks in part to the uptake in digital interactions, and increasing online presence of retailers, and perhaps most significantly driven by global pandemic. In early 2020, e-commerce experienced vast increases in volume resulting in changing needs for brick-and-mortar retail spaces (further spurred on by physical distancing requirements), as well as warehousing, fulfilment, and distribution facilities and spaces. This transformation is continuing to apply significant pressures on both retail and industrial markets in many local and regional economies, as well as transportation and goods movement systems. In late 2022, Metro Vancouver commissioned a study by Colliers Strategy & Consulting Group¹ to explore the implications of the rapid growth in e-commerce on industrial and commercial areas and goods movement in the region.

CONFLICT OVER SPACE

Urban areas often have complex, dynamic networks of land uses and transportation systems. The rise of e-commerce is driving a growing tension, and at places conflict, over public curbside infrastructure space. The increasing requirement for packages being delivered directly to consumers, rather than distributed through traditional retail spaces, has led to increased and changing traffic and parking/loading demands in areas that had previously not been designed for frequent short-term loading and unloading, such as residential and mixed-use multi-unit neighbourhoods. E-commerce deliveries, and associated short-term ad hoc truck stopping, are placing greater demands on curb space. This is over and above the increasing demands seen from other new and growing services such as ride-hailing, and more traditional curbside needs such as parking, cycling, public transit, and waste collection.

CHANGING FORMS OF RETAIL

The retail shopping shift to more of a hybrid model, split between in-person and online shopping, is resulting in a changing reliance on brick-and-mortar stores. There is still a need for the brick-and-mortar retail experience, but more stages of the supply chain may be housed in one structure. The Colliers study showed that the need for traditional physical retail space is declining, while some of these retail storefront units are being converted to facilitate order pick-up and returns. At the same time, warehousing and distribution space in urban areas, close to users, customers, and the workforce, is creating demand for and driving up the cost of industrial spaces. This in turn is increasing pressures on smaller industrial firms, unable to compete with the higher rents, pushing them to relocate in peripheral suburban locations. Similar to e-commerce companies, some of these smaller industrial firms also depend on close proximity to users, customers and workforce, but for different reasons.

DARK STORES

With the changing function of brick-and-mortar retail spaces, a new urban logistics phenomenon is emerging. 'Dark Stores' are increasingly occupying traditional retail spaces, in or in close proximity to residential or mixed-use areas. These spaces differ from standard shops as they are not, or only partially, publicly accessible and instead store and handle goods for the fulfilment of online orders, then direct-to-consumer delivery, to hold orders for consumer pick-up, or to process returns. The geographic location of these spaces in close proximity to residential neighbourhoods, and therefore consumers, supports the growing demands for same-day deliveries.

While the presence of Dark Stores in residential neighbourhoods as distributed urban logistics hubs alters truck traffic and curbside use, another principal concern over their emergence is concerning the impact on surrounding neighbourhood vitality. Dark Stores are ideally located as close as

possible to their respective consumers. They may fit with applicable zoning constraints of retail or other commercial zones and therefore be permitted within existing commercial and mixed-use areas. These storefronts, which used to be vibrant retail locations in neighbourhoods such as convenience stores or small groceries that generated street activity, are evolving into warehouse spaces closed to the public, or simply unneeded and vacant in softer retail markets. While the continued use of these local spaces is good in terms of tax revenues and employment opportunities, this can negatively impact the established social interactions in a neighbourhood, its urban design (with blank or covered windows), and streetscape activity. Examples of dark stores are starting to appear in large cities in the US, UK and more recently, can be seen in Toronto, Edmonton and Vancouver as locations for Walmart or Skip the Dishes.

IMPLICATIONS ON EMPLOYMENT AND THE ECONOMY

Employment in industrial jobs is generally higher paying than regional averages and supports vital sectors of a diversified and healthy economy. As some traditional industrial uses are being driven further away from urban areas over competition for space, there is a resulting impact on the labour force as employees are forced to travel further distances to places of employment. Conversely, if there is insufficient industrial land to meet employment demands, jobs may relocate to other markets where there is a more suitable supply of both land and facilities. Given the limited available supply of industrial land in the Metro Vancouver region, record-low vacancy rates for industrial land and warehousing space, the growing pressures from e-commerce fulfilment centres adds more upward pressures on prices for warehousing and logistics space, with little to gain in terms of jobs as the locations are becoming increasingly automated.

IMPACTS OF E-COMMERCE ON STREETS, CURBS AND NEIGHBOURHOODS

OPERATIONAL IMPACTS AND IMPLICATIONS

Curbs and sidewalks have emerged as major congestion points for the rise of e-commerce. Delivery companies need convenient, functional, and safe access to the curb to unload quickly. Much like the congestion and conflicts sparked by ride-hailing, e-commerce delivery is creating a much greater need for comprehensive loading and parking strategies. Many cities and parcel delivery companies are exploring options like parcel delivery storage lockers, which can be more efficiently served, and supporting the uptake of cargo bikes and e-cargo bikes as last-mile delivery services. The potential benefits of switching from traditional delivery vehicles to cargo bikes include lower emissions, less vehicle congestion, and better access to dense urban areas, however they do tend to be wider than regular bikes and can overwhelm standard bike lanes and bike parking areas.

Other emerging technologies that could result in a sea-change of curbside pressures include drone delivery and self-driving vehicles, although not yet operational or feasible in most contexts. A creative solution that has been introduced in Paris, France to minimize heightened congestion due to the rise of e-commerce deliveries is to consolidate urban freight into 'logistics hotels' that distribute goods more efficiently. The City of Paris defines logistic services as 'buildings and facilities necessary for public service or collective public interest' rather than simply industrial or commercial uses. The City owns and locates these distributed hubs, which are close to the end consumer. They are rented to logistic partners, who are

involved in the site development process and give the City input on building and site design and space needs. Examples are appearing in Metro Vancouver at SkyTrain stations in the form of Amazon delivery lockers (see page 30) and at an increasing number of residential condo buildings in Toronto, Ottawa and Calgary.

CONCLUSIONS

While the long-term uptake in e-commerce and its implications are difficult to accurately predict, the trends outlined are expected to continue, but perhaps not at the same rapid pace. As the world of retail and warehousing continue to evolve, to minimize the impacts while maximizing the benefits of this shift in retailing, and balancing other urban objectives, policy and decision makers should consider the following:

- *Curb-management policies* - there is a growing need to create and monitor up-to-date citywide inventories of loading zones, curbs and congestion points as competition for curbside space intensifies.
- *Designated delivery areas* - the designation of location-specific curbside delivery areas adjacent to multi-unit buildings will help mitigate parking flow interruptions, conflicts, and double parking.
- *Microdistribution hubs* - integrating small, local logistics hubs into high-density commercial, residential and mixed-use communities, would allow for the controlled access and management of delivery and pick-ups while minimizing curbside conflicts.
- *Neighbourhood vibrancy* - integrating distributed package delivery storage

lockers, that consumers can access at their convenience, particularly in transit-oriented locations, would also minimize curbside conflicts and incidents of package theft. In some cases, traditional brick-and-mortar shops could include in-store pick-ups and include processing online returns without compromising neighbourhood vibrancy.

Successfully addressing this interconnected matter requires a concerted effort by all stakeholders, including: municipalities, delivery operators, building developers, transportation engineers, and urban designers. Professional planners are ideally positioned to lead this conversation, focusing primarily on building complete and vibrant communities.

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TRANSFORMING PLANNING PROCESSES

AT THE INTERSECTIONS OF CLIMATE, EQUITY, AND DECOLONIZATION

By Lindsay Cole and Maggie Low

SUMMARY

Local and regional governments are facing increasing pressures to address complex challenges of climate change, equity, and reconciliation with Indigenous Peoples as entangled challenges. Innovation into how planning processes are imagined, designed, and facilitated is urgently needed as a response to these pressures. It is no longer good enough to work on these challenges discretely, within departmental or disciplinary silos, or solely within the dominant, western colonial paradigm and practices of planning. This article describes a transformative planning process drawing from social innovation, systemic design, and decolonizing approaches. This article is a summary of a recently published open access journal article in *Nature Urban Sustainability*.

SOMMAIRE

Les gouvernements locaux et régionaux sont soumis à des pressions croissantes pour relever les défis complexes du changement climatique, de l'équité et de la réconciliation avec les Peuples Autochtones qui sont autant d'enjeux enchevêtrés. Pour répondre à ces pressions, il est urgent d'innover dans la manière dont les processus d'aménagement sont imaginés, conçus et facilités. Il ne suffit plus de travailler sur ces défis de manière discrète, au sein de silos départementaux ou disciplinaires, ou uniquement dans le cadre du paradigme et des pratiques d'aménagement dominants et coloniaux occidentaux. Cet article décrit un processus d'aménagement transformateur qui s'inspire de l'innovation sociale, de la conception systémique et des approches décolonisatrices. Cet article est un résumé d'un article récemment publié en libre accès dans *Nature Urban Sustainability*.

NEED FOR INNOVATIONS IN PLANNING

Over the past decade, the possibilities and pressures that local governments are facing related to complex challenges like climate change have surged. The International Panel on Climate Change has begun emphasizing the vital role of local and regional governments in climate adaptation and mitigation work related to land-use planning, infrastructure, transportation, housing, community development, and others. Political and civil servant leadership from local governments is a powerful force for change on the world stage, with growing influence on other levels of government, business, civil society, and the public imagination.

While local government leadership on climate-related work continues to strengthen, it is often treated as a technical, engineering, land use, communications, political, and/or financial challenge. The related systemic challenges of reconciliation and equity tend to be under-addressed in climate plans and policies. While local governments work to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate, the very same lands, waters and people who have been systematically excluded, oppressed, and exploited by the dominant structures and processes of government continue to be left out. There are ongoing harms being caused by climate work that does not embed justice, and there are missed opportunities for synergies. This is a compelling impetus for transformative innovation in planning, so that in their eagerness to act on climate, local governments do not recreate and perpetuate problematic practices from the past/present that result in inequities and oppression.

DOMINANT PLANNING PARADIGMS

The standard planning processes used in local and regional governments in Canada (and beyond), are embedded in the New Public Management, western, colonial governance paradigms. These paradigms and processes are being reinforced rather than reimagined in climate work even as their suitability to respond to complex, social and ecological justice challenges at the rate, scale, and depth required is being questioned. Urban planning is characterized by evidence-based rationality and objectivity, bureaucratic routines and procedures, and significant



While local governments work to mitigate and adapt to a changing climate, the very same lands, waters and people who have been systematically excluded, oppressed, and exploited by the dominant structures and processes of government continue to be left out.

emphasis on a planner’s ability to know what is good for people and the public interest. While some planning work has consciously tried to redistribute power through equity planning, to better align with the goals of communities through radical planning, planning processes often impede innovation and adaptation to dynamic pressures. Planning must evolve to address the unpredictable and systemic nature of the complex challenges we face.

There is an opportunity and responsibility to reimagine the planning processes of local and regional governments to ensure that climate-related concerns are considered in an integrated way with equity, justice, reconciliation, and decolonization work. Climate change issues have the same systemic root causes of colonialism, capitalism, white supremacy, patriarchy, ableism, and cis-heteronormativity and can and should be worked on together. What then is demanded/required of planners if the dominant approaches taken in their work no longer serve complex, intersectional, and systemic challenges of climate, equity, and decolonization? And where else might we look, beyond the field of planning, to inform and transform these approaches?

SITUATING EQUITY AND DECOLONIZATION

Concepts like justice, equity, and decolonization are not static, singular, with clear and agreed-upon meanings. They are contested and actively being worked out in institutions, processes, and everyday life and are expressed differently according to place, context, history, and culture. Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang point out that settler colonialism and its decolonization implicates and unsettles everyone and argue that decolonization is only about

land and Indigenous life. In other words, decolonization is not a metaphor for “other things we want to do to improve our societies.”⁵ Decolonization is rooted in the assertion of Indigenous self-determination.

In this article, we encourage planners to think critically about the word ‘decolonization’ and what it means in planning practice. Tuck and Yang’s settler ‘moves to innocence’ reveal attempts to reconcile settler guilt and complicity that do not require giving up land, power, or privilege. We agree the central work of decolonization should be the return of land. At the same time, as planners doing research entangled with practice, we are motivated to find meaningful entry points to decolonization through practices that every planner can enact.

In this research we take the perspective that settler colonialism is an ongoing structure and not an event. Our guiding principle, at least for now, is that decolonization work is for all of us to do and so we are enacting it as practice(s), and expressing these practices in multiple and embodied ways in the specific context of complex planning challenges. That said, decolonization work will look different for non-Indigenous peoples than it does for Indigenous people. Here we focus on planning practice happening within settler colonial systems of local government, and explore what and how we might (un) learn and practice equity, justice, and decolonization for/among each other in the context of climate work in local government.

Theories and practices from the fields of social innovation, systemic design, and decolonizing methodologies offer promising alternatives for planners to work differently on complex challenges, each of which is discussed briefly next.

COMMON APPROACH	TRANSFORMATIVE APPROACH
FRAMING	
Climate, equity, decolonization are discrete	Climate, equity, and decolonization are interrelated
Planning is neutral	Planning is personal and rooted in place
Time is scarce and constrained	Time is abundant and non-linear
Challenges are complicated and technical	Challenges are complex, systemic, and adaptive
INITIATING	
Begin with outcome	Begin with question
Project charter and project management plan	Design brief and theory of change
RESEARCH	
Scenario planning	Speculative and visionary fiction
Policy research and best practices	Action and user research
ENGAGING + ENABLING	
Inform, consult and engage	Co-create
Distinct, hierarchical, disciplinary roles	Teams are self-organizing, whole, purposeful
Stakeholders represent known interest groups	Centre systemically excluded perspectives
IMPLEMENTING	
Pre-determined solution	Experimentation and prototyping
Linear cause/ effect pathway	Iterate
Project completed when plan/ policy approved	Project ongoing into implementation
EVALUATING + LEARNING	
Council Report	Storytelling
Quantitative/summative evaluation at end of project	Learning, reflection, evaluation throughout

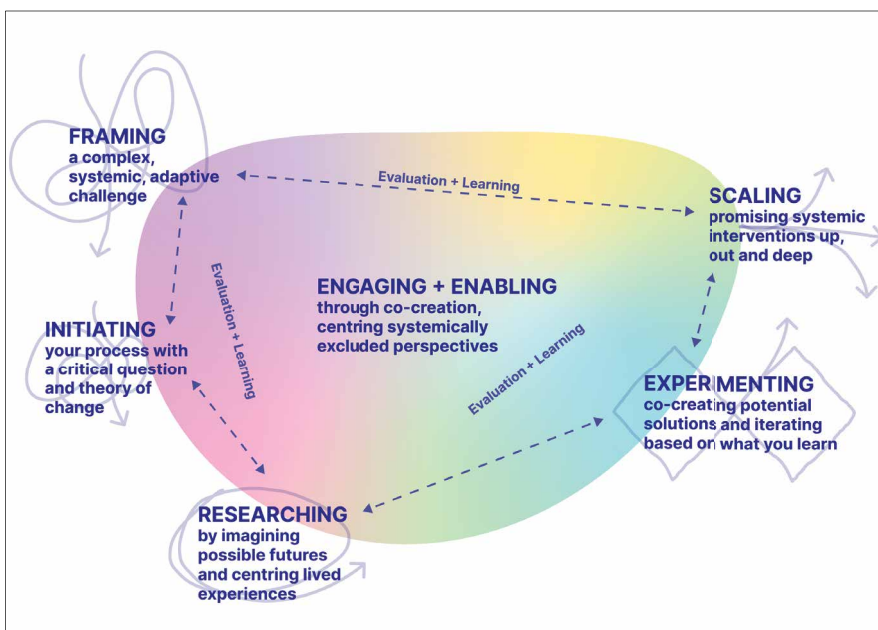


Figure 1: Transformative policy making and planning process map.

SOCIAL INNOVATION

Social innovation processes work to transform the deep places in social systems - behaviours, structures, mindsets, and beliefs. An innovation is 'social' in that it aims to shift social practices, ideas, beliefs, interests, power, and agency so that innovations are diffused, scaled, institutionalized, or otherwise integrated and made routine. By doing this, the intent is to address root causes of wicked challenges more skillfully and effectively respond than is possible through existing or commonly used approaches.

SYSTEMIC DESIGN

Systemic design processes integrate systems thinking, human-centered, and service design. They bring a 'designerly' mindset, practices, and experiences to working with complexity. This approach

results in processes that hold a creative experimentation and action-as-learning bias, and that oscillate between divergent and convergent thinking-and-doing. This ensures that innovations land in the real world, in testable experiences, enable right-sized risk taking, and are with and for the people and places most affected by a challenge.

DECOLONIZING METHODOLOGIES

Decolonizing methodologies ensure that social innovations and systemic design do not work within dominant and problematic paradigms of colonization and oppression and inadvertently perpetuate these systems under the guise of ‘innovation.’ Instead, wisdom and insight is sourced from culture, history, people, and possibility and is deeply grounded in place-based and relational practice. For instance, a pressing challenge for planning is reconciling its role in perpetuating the dispossession, oppression, and marginalization of Indigenous peoples and communities and grappling with the reality that all planning in local and regional governments in Canada happens on stolen Indigenous lands.

Together, these domains of theory and practice can inform the evolution/remaking of planning processes in ways that may result in more significant shifts than are possible when working within dominant systems that have oppression, inequity, and exploitation of humans and nature baked in.

TRANSFORMATIVE PLANNING PROCESS

This process map (Figure 1) is designed as an alternative to the dominant approach to planning described earlier. This transformative planning process was generated through applied research with 40 people working on complex climate, equity, and decolonization challenges in Canadian local governments.

The process map captures key stages of this transformative approach, as well as the movement and connections between the stages. These stages are described briefly in comparison to more common planning approaches.

Note that these stages are not drawn as discrete, linear steps but rather as interrelated and entangled with iteration between. There is a general movement (indicated by the looping solid lines) from

broad/messy/open/exploratory that begins with framing, and toward a gradual focusing/clarifying process as we move through initiating, researching, experimenting, and eventual implementation at the scaling stage. Engaging and enabling, and evaluation and learning, happen throughout. As the connecting dotted lines indicate, there is iterative movement between stages when insights and learning require reframing, renewed experimentation, and/or return to learning from those most impacted by the challenge.

PUTTING THIS PROCESS INTO PRACTICE

Remembering our goal in this work of identifying accessible and actionable approaches to working transformatively at the intersections of climate, equity, and decolonization we close with seven key moves that planners can make when trying to transform the processes that they use:

1. Begin well: take care, from the very beginning, to make different choices and signal that something other than what people are used to is going to happen.
2. Co-create an equitable, just, feminist, and decolonized space.
3. Enact a pro-love approach: prioritize being in a caring, loving, supportive, and collaborative community with/for each other.
4. Focus on practicing not problem solving: emphasize building and practicing competencies and capacities for transformation.
5. Draw on different theories and practices from social innovation, systemic design, and decolonizing methodologies.
6. Work with fear: surface and shine a light on the fears that show up, the fear of messing up, of saying the wrong thing, of offending, of failing to have impact. Then support each other and the system to develop different, more generative relationships with these fears.
7. Redefine impact and outcomes: there is no clear finish line in this work as it is long-term, ongoing, and generational. Imagining, enabling, and enacting transformative planning processes will require equipping both new and established planners with emerging/resurging approaches to complex climate, equity, and decolonization challenges.

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research was funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (Canada), New Frontiers in Research Fund. The authors would like to thank their five research collaborators in this project: Dr. Mumbi Maina, Lily Raphael, Kyla Pascal, Moura Quayle, and Dr. Rob VanWynsberghe. The authors would also like to thank their co-researchers from all of the Canadian cities that joined this learning journey.

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ON **BULLSHIT** & PLANNING DIALOGUE

By Alex Hallborn and Wes Regan

ON BULLSHIT & PLANNING DIALOGUE

SUMMARY

This article introduces planners to philosopher Harry Frankfurt's theory of Bullshit, which he defines as statements made without regard for their truth or falsehood. We use the language of *bullshit* to better understand and navigate planning dialogue, through the examples of common arguments in planning discourse, the recent international backlash against 15-minute cities, and planners' own communication with the public. Ultimately, planners need to learn to cut through *bullshit* to facilitate authentic dialogue on the future of our communities.

SOMMAIRE

Cet article présente aux urbanistes la théorie des conneries du philosophe Harry Frankfurt, qu'il définit comme des déclarations faites sans tenir compte de leur véracité ou de leur fausseté. Nous utilisons le langage de la *connerie* pour mieux comprendre et naviguer dans le dialogue sur l'urbanisme, à travers des exemples d'arguments courants dans le discours sur l'urbanisme, la récente réaction internationale contre les villes de 15 minutes, et la propre communication des urbanistes avec le public. En fin de compte, les urbanistes doivent apprendre à se débarrasser des *conneries* pour faciliter un dialogue authentique sur l'avenir de nos communautés.



INTRODUCTION

As planners, we are often tasked with facilitating public dialogue on the future of our communities. The question at the core of this dialogue – being how best to use land in planning for the future – can be a political one, and is linked to the pressing issues of today: climate change, biodiversity collapse, and the housing crisis, to name a few. As such, we mediate deep disagreements regarding how the economy should be structured, who belongs in our communities, and how to consider the needs of future generations. The planner's role is to work through these differences and collaborate with diverse publics to pursue a shared vision of the public interest. It's a lofty and perhaps impossible goal, but one worth striving for.

Any planner who has attended public meetings has likely thought to themselves when hearing some comments: "this sounds like total bullshit!" Some may also have experience with the public 'calling bullshit' on the outcome of what was intended to be an objective and balanced decision-making process. What do we mean when we say bullshit, and what can and should planners do about this?

FRANKFURT'S THEORY OF BULLSHIT

Thankfully, there is a theory of bullshit which can help us make sense of things. In his 1986 essay, *On Bullshit* (1986), philosopher Harry Frankfurt coined the term *bullshit*, which he defines as statements made without regard for their truth or falsehood, and to pursue a concealed interest. For Frankfurt, this lax relationship with truth can be more insidious than lying – he argues that *bullshit* is likely to be met with "an impatient or irritated shrug", where lies lead to confrontation and a "sense of violation or outrage."¹

Planning is a political process, and common sense might agree with Frankfurt when he states that politics is "replete with instances of bullshit so unmitigated that they can serve among the most indisputable and classic paradigms of the concept." In an analysis of *bullshit* in politics, Gibbons notes that, for politicians, voters, and the media, there are significant costs related to working with the best



available knowledge on a subject and significant benefits to bending the truth in order to save face, be more persuasive, or appease an electorate.² He argues that *bullshit* is inevitable within large political communities due to this strong pattern of incentives. It may be the case that the political roles which planners, community members, developers, and elected officials find themselves requiring at least a modicum of bullshit if they want to pursue their interests. Often beneath the *bullshit*, there are usually reasonable concerns, valid emotions, and the potential for constructive discourse.

When faced with a proposal for multi-unit family or social housing, for instance, nearby residents may express concerns about 'neighbourhood character'; they might claim not to oppose the project, but that their backyard is not a suitable location for it. Anxieties about change are certainly not *bullshit*,³ but arguments based on vague and malleable concepts like 'neighbourhood character' can often conceal more than they reveal and invite us to probe deeper. What is the neighbourhood character? What embodies it in the built form or other community characteristics, and why is it meaningful? What is really at risk of being

lost and is there a way to preserve this as change happens?

Alternatively, when a proposed development meets public resistance, developers may argue that the economic vitality of the whole community is at stake if Council implements a more restrictive development regime or seeks to extract additional public amenities from their project. The development community is incentivized to advocate for land use policies which prioritize returns on their investment, so planners should make sure to take their perspective with a grain of salt and be mindful of our commitments to the public interest.

While opportunities may be lost if the development does not proceed, exaggeration from both actors about benefits, risks, and community impacts can quickly approach the *bullshit* zone. These two examples highlight how cutting through the *bullshit* can require both deeper conversations about values and emotions, or more technical ones about evidence and objective data. Knowing when *bullshit* might be addressed through these methods is a skill which planners often bring to the job (though our default may be towards the latter).⁴

ON BULLSHIT & PLANNING DIALOGUE

DECLINE OF AUTHENTIC DISCOURSE

Working with *bullshit* is arguably part of the role of a planner, whether it comes from the public, a development applicant, a politician, or fellow planners. But if *bullshit* is endemic to planning due to the political nature of our work, then should planners do anything about *bullshit*?

Frankfurt argues that we should see *bullshit* as a social problem because it undermines our ability to reason and make informed decisions. He states that when one forms a habit of *bullshitting*, their “normal habit of attending to the way things are may become attenuated or lost.” Similarly, Gibbons argues that *bullshit* in politics “inhibits our ability to make reliably accurate decisions on politically important matters”. Within the planning profession, this raises the question of what happens to planning discourse if we allow too much space for *bullshit* in the place of genuine debate?

Recent work by democratic philosophers Robert Talisse and Scott Aikin has explored how America’s capacity to engage in

authentic argument has rapidly declined. If our ability to form arguments and explore our differences in good faith is crucial to a pluralistic democracy, then *bullshit*, or ‘simulated political debate’, is detrimental.⁵ Gibbons characterizes the situation caused by such simulated political debate as a “tragedy of the epistemic commons,” which creates some localized benefits for the bullshitters, but at significant cost to society as a whole. In consideration of populist extreme views and hateful speech that have increasingly entered public discourse in Canada, it is fair to say that our society is not immune from this. Recent political spectacles, such as contentious school board meetings over conspiratorial assertions about race and gender,⁶ or ‘freedom rallies’ in opposition to the COVID-19 pandemic response like the one which paralyzed Ottawa in 2022, provide tangible warnings of democratic decline. Events like these are arguably driven by succumbing to *bullshit* and our failures as a society to resolve divisions through constructive dialogue.

The planning profession has not been immune to these breakdowns in dialogue either. Over the past year, we have seen a surge of opposition to the 15-Minute City concept. Similar to ‘Complete Community’ and ‘New Urbanism’ planning concepts before it, the 15-Minute City is the most recent shorthand for compact, mixed-use, and amenity-rich neighbourhoods. In Canada, this opposition began in Edmonton during its CityPlan process,⁷ and continued to affect several other communities including a viral video spreading misinformation about a large-site redevelopment in Mississauga⁸ and mass opposition to routine updates to official community plans in Brandon, Manitoba⁹ and Essex County, Ontario.¹⁰ It even led to the creation and distribution of a flyer spreading misinformation about the City of Kamloops’ Climate Action Plan which falsely incorporated the City’s branding standards. The flyer stated that, in becoming a 15-Minute City, Kamloops would “ban all full-sized vehicles from residential areas” and force residents to ride e-bikes.¹¹

Backlash against the 15-Minute City has evolved to target long-established, evidence-based, and widely practiced planning initiatives more broadly. For instance, a global Facebook page¹² devoted to demonizing the 15-Minute City sees nearly 30,000 members posting misinformation about routine planning work such as traffic calming interventions and cycling infrastructure. These common best practices are now bound up in conspiracist rhetoric and frames of thinking that evoke a totalitarian surveillance state and other extreme ideas. A joint statement released by the Canadian Institute of Planners and the Provincial and Territorial Institutes recognizes this, noting that the backlash against the 15-Minute City is threatening our profession and institutions. The statement describes concern at recent “alarming instances of hostile behaviour and threats towards planners and public servants, disruptive conduct in consultation meetings, and the need for law enforcement interventions.”¹³

This is a wake-up call to take *bullshit* statements in planning discourse seriously.



WHAT CAN WE DO ABOUT OUR OWN BULLSHIT?

Sherry Arnstein's 1969 cornerstone planning theory work, 'A Ladder of Citizen Participation' analyzes participatory planning processes for the level of power-sharing between politicians and the public. Arnstein uses language which resonates with the bullshit theory in critiquing the shallowest forms of engagement, where "tokenistic" processes serve only to "manipulate" or "placate" the public. As Arnstein puts it, "What citizens achieve in all this [participatory planning] activity is that they have 'participated in participation.'"¹⁴ For the public, this may feel like *bullshit*.

Consideration of tokenism in the planning process provides a new context for arguments against the 15-Minute City and extreme views in public discourse more broadly. If the fundamental arguments of the anti-15-Minute City activists are that we should not intensify land uses, reduce automobile dependency, or make significant changes to our economic system to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, then perhaps it is true that their input is not being legitimately considered. This is because mainstream planning processes typically do not make space for ideas that are explicitly counter to contemporary practices of 'good planning', which are often distilled into the policies that guide our work and define the public interest.

It's difficult to determine whether and how to manage *bullshit* when planners, politicians, developers, and the public are all potential sources – and when there is good reason to believe that *bullshit* is leading to negative political outcomes for all. One possible means of addressing this is to prioritize communication and engagement with communities and stakeholders early in the planning process, to build an epistemic foundation that ensures local discourse is more '*bullshit* resistant'. As part of this early engagement, we suggest transparency can be key in establishing an understanding of what will and will not be engaged on through the process, focusing the dialogue around elements that will have the most impact.

The increasingly frenzied pace and demands of our work may arguably make

our processes susceptible to *bullshit*. Wilson and Tewdwr-Jones suggest planners could combat this through using new digital communications technologies specifically designed to engage with the public in meaningful ways.¹⁵ These platforms invite both expressions of story, place attachment, and meaning, alongside data visualization, modeling, and other information to help explore the implications of change in ways that leave people feeling informed and empowered, and not bewildered and *bullshitted*.

As a professional community, planners need to develop practical and theoretical tools for determining what is and is not *bullshit*, and, when successfully identified, determine what to do about it. The *bullshit* label cannot be wielded as a tool to silence legitimate dissent, but the ability to 'call bullshit' is crucial if we want to maintain functioning democratic institutions, and the genuine good-faith forms of debate and disagreement they require. Arguably this is for the benefit of professional planners and practices – as recent *bullshit* regarding the 15-Minute City encouraged members of the public to act in a threatening and abusive manner towards planners – but also for the broader public who wants their legitimate concerns to be heard. Planners have a duty to help those voices rise above the din of *bullshit* plaguing public discourse. How that is achieved is a topic planning theory and practice should devote more attention to.

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Selections from the Fellows Library on Planning, People, and Personalities

By John Steil

I recently compiled a list of 120 books written by CIP Fellows between 1948 and 2022. The list, which I do not claim is complete, includes a vast range of topics – far too extensive to cover in a short article – will eventually appear on CIP’s new website. Here are 14 personal favourites that reflect ‘planning as experience.’

Humphrey Carver’s *Cities in the Suburbs* and his 1975 autobiography *Compassionate Landscape* – a title that stirred my imagination as he was also a poet and a

painter – have been on my bookshelf since I was in graduate school. His first book, *Houses for Canadians*, written in 1948 during his tenure at the School of Social Work, was the first Canadian attempt to show that the economic market would never fulfil all housing needs and that this could only be achieved by adding a substantial public program. Seventy-five years on, this is still the case.

In his 1962 book on the suburbs, Carver wrote “If all we have is bad, more (of

the same) is going to be worse.” Carver was seeking a new kind of suburb, unfolding ideas of what might be. In his autobiography, reflecting on the experiences of his generation, he asks, as we all might, “Why am I both conservative and radical, both timid and brash, both stupid and imaginative?”

I met Harry Lash shortly after he published his 1976 book, *Planning in a Human Way*, about planning the Vancouver region. He had to learn to be himself, as

well as a planner; planning, like people, is not entirely logical and rational. Understanding human interactions among actors during the planning process can contribute to success. That regional plan was about livability – just another version of Carver’s compassionate landscape. Lash wrote, “The reality of the city is as much within us as it is in the bricks and mortar that surround us.”

I’m intrigued by how Carver and other Fellows related their planning careers in such a personal and experiential way. One recent example is Gordon Harris’ *Building Community* which focuses on the UniverCity community at SFU. Harris notes that success demands passion (his own and that of others like Michael Geller, FCIP who played a key early role there). Their experiences contain lessons to be shared and learned. It’s an interesting take that shows strong connections between personalities and planning in process.

In *Radical Rumbings* (2005), Len Gertler (founder of the School of Urban and Regional Planning at the U. of Waterloo) confesses a fascination with “the human factor, how people interact with broader, objective forces, to shape the outcome of plans, developments, personal destinies.” Ken Cameron and Michael Harcourt (CIP Honorary Member), in their 2007 book *City Making in Paradise*, write that it is “often as much about the people behind the critical decisions as it is about the decisions themselves.” In his 2022 memoir, *Context & Content*, Jack Diamond wrote, “At times, big decisions can turn on seemingly inconsequential factors.”

In 2019, Larry Beasley tackled *Vancouverism*. As he writes, “This book presents an insider’s view. It describes the unfolding of events, the shaping of new ideas, their application on the ground, the continuing challenges, and what the city may aspire to in the future – all from the perspective of a person who lived the drama and holds an undiminished passion for the place.”

Through my visits with Ira Robinson in a Victoria seniors home, I appreciated his memoir *An Urban Life Journey*, published in 2011. He described the special interrelationships between the passions of his personal life, career and profession,

WOMEN FELLOWS AS AUTHORS

At least eight women Fellows are published authors. Two of the most prolific women authors are **Jill Grant**, whose six books include *The Drama of Democracy* (1994) through to *Changing Neighbourhoods: Social and Spatial Polarization in Canadian Cities* (2020, with Alan Walks and Howard Ramos); and **Sasha Tsenkova**, who has published six books on housing policy, the most recent of which is *Transforming Social Housing* (2020). **Beate Bowron** (with Gary Davidson, FCIP) is the author of two books on climate change, including *Climate Change Adaptation Planning: A Handbook for Small Canadian Communities*. **Beth Moore Milroy** (*Thinking Planning and Urbanism*, 2010), **Barbara Rahder** (*Just Doing It: Popular Collective Action in the Americas*, 2002 with Gene Desfor and Deborah Barndt) and **Jeanne Wolfe** have also published two books each. Jeanne’s first book in 1995 *L’urbanisation des pays en développement* (with Mario Polese and Sylvain Lefebvre) was in French. Other authors on the list include **Pamela Shaw** (*A Field Guide to Communication*, 2009) and **Mary Rawson** (*Subdivision Casebook*, 1963). Additions to the Fellows Library are welcome and encouraged.

and the cities he lived in (NYC, Chicago, Los Angeles, Calgary, Bangkok, Vancouver and Victoria). Another author who takes us to many cities is Joe Berridge, with *Perfect City* (2019). Berridge, like Beasley, refers to himself as an urban insider. As we are toured around numerous world cities, such as London, Sydney, Shanghai, Berridge shares his “joys, confusions, struggles, successes, and failures in pursuit” of the art of planning. He says good food is the most reliable measure of urban health. Two quotes I like show us how planning gets done by people: “Nothing good in a city happens unless one individual makes it so” and “Everything in a city is made by a team.”

The autobiography of Hans Blumenfeld, *Life Begins at 65, the Not Entirely Candid Autobiography of a Drifter*, published in 1987, describes working in Germany, Austria, the Soviet Union, USA, and Canada, where he played a key role in planning Metro Toronto. In an earlier book, Blumenfeld (who was one of my professors) defines a dilettante as someone who takes delight in their work; “one must remain a universal dilettante with different interests and perspectives or one ceases to be a planner.” He saw the planner as an outsider who can look at the work of other professionals as a valued part of the process. An insider who is also an outsider!

James Wilson, who published *People in the Way* in 1973, documents his experience with resettlement planning in Arrow Lakes because of flooding from hydro-electric

development of the Columbia River. He was an insider, working for BC Hydro, but more than once, he refers to himself as an outsider to the local communities. Wilson intended his book as a case study for students in planning, engineering, and public administration so “they will see how, in practice, all their fields have common ground in history, politics, and human behaviour, and how dependent they are on them.” He points out this was not a clinical experience for him – it brought him close to the suffering of people.

There are many other excellent books in the Fellows library. Professional ideas are shared about theory and decision making, public art and the public realm, history and planning Canadian communities, age and gender, conflict and community participation. But what is of great interest to me is planning as experience. It’s often the interplay of personal passion, personalities, projects, places, purposes, and processes that makes for interesting, informative, and truly lived stories from which planners can learn. As Wilson wrote in the *Epilogue* of his book, “only fools insist on learning all their lessons anew and we have to right to foolishness.”

John Steil RPP, FCIP is a planner in Stantec’s Vancouver office. He is a former President of CIP, a past Chair of the College of Fellows, and co-author of *The Public Art in Vancouver: Angels Among Lions*. ■

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Melanie Hare

FELLOWS CORNER

TRANSFORMING THE 'MALL' – INNOVATIONS IN COMMUNITY BUILDING

Across our country, mall sites are being rethought, redesigned and intensified. Once the contemporary models of suburban planning and billed as the 'heart' of new communities, shopping malls are being transformed. In the City of Toronto alone, 19 malls have active development applications, with the potential to generate 60,000 residential units. From Victoria to Halifax, these large sites occupy increasingly valuable land dominated by surface parking created to serve retail stores from another era. As Canada's housing crisis intensifies, redeveloping these underutilized sites as vertical communities represents an opportunity to redefine the hearts of aging shopping districts.

In Canada, one of the catalysts for mall transformation was a 2006 Ontario Municipal Board decision that allowed Cadillac Fairview to replace the aging Don Mills Centre with 'Shops at Don Mills.' The first phase opened three years later as an 'urban lifestyle village' and is a successful precedent to this day, with potential for additional retail expansion, more housing, attractive public spaces and access to higher order transit.¹

What does success look like in rethinking and redesigning these major sites? Key questions are: do we achieve more than simply intensification of underutilized urban land and additional housing in vertical formats? Through the transformation of some of the last available large-scale urban sites, can we create more resilient places,

TRANSFORMER LE « CENTRE COMMERCIAL » - INNOVATIONS EN MATIÈRE DE CONSTRUCTION COMMUNAUTAIRE

DE CÔTÉ DES FELLOWS

Dans tout le pays, les sites des centres commerciaux sont repensés, redessinés et intensifiés. Autrefois modèles contemporains d'aménagement des banlieues et présentés comme le « cœur » des nouvelles communautés, les centres commerciaux sont en train d'être transformés. Dans la seule ville de Toronto, 19 centres commerciaux font l'objet de demandes de développement actives, avec un potentiel de 60 000 unités résidentielles. De Victoria à Halifax, ces grands sites occupent des terrains de plus en plus précieux, dominés par des stationnements de surface créés pour desservir des magasins de détail d'une autre époque. Alors que la crise du logement s'intensifie au Canada, le réaménagement de ces sites sous-utilisés

en communautés verticales représente une opportunité de redéfinir le cœur des quartiers commerciaux vieillissants.

Au Canada, l'un des catalyseurs de la transformation des centres commerciaux a été la décision prise en 2006 par la Commission des affaires municipales de l'Ontario, qui a autorisé Cadillac Fairview à remplacer le vieillissant Don Mills Centre par « Shops at Don Mills ». La première phase a ouvert ses portes trois ans plus tard sous la forme d'un « village de style de vie urbain » et constitue encore aujourd'hui un précédent réussi, avec un potentiel d'expansion des commerces, de construction de logements, d'espaces publics attrayants et d'accès à un réseau de transport en commun d'un niveau supérieur.¹

inclusive experiences and foster community gathering? Can we create new 'hearts' in our rapidly growing cities and suburbs?

My review of more than a dozen large-scale mall redevelopments across Canada suggests there are no two alike, but there are some common elements. These include:

- Compelling core placemaking ideas – the distinguishing 'why here?';
- New city building opportunities, including high density housing and significant community benefits or new public facilities;
- Evolving partnerships which are key to implementation – between public and private sector, but also involving community-based collaborations; and
- Phasing of redevelopments over time – in some cases decades – to achieve the full entitlement, often involving very complex sequencing in order to limit displacement of existing retail and amenity, which can be key to local communities.

The following examples of shopping mall transformations focus on placemaking and city building. As planned, each of these sites will increase their density by as much as 10 times existing use. However, the key to creating more than just more housing and intensity is the potential to redefine place, community gathering and public space in future vertical neighbourhoods.

REIMAGINING A REGIONAL-SCALE MALL

Galleria Mall is an outdated, failing retail mall northwest of Toronto's core, that, despite its lackluster offering, is an important place of informal community gathering. The Galleria site and adjacent Wallace Emerson Park, through a master plan process, have been reconfigured from a traditional internal mall into a new 'diagonal street' that acts as the public 'seam' between the new park and community centre space and the vertically

integrated mixed-use development blocks to the north. Success for Galleria will be to have recreated and enhanced this 'community heart' of the Wallace Emerson community with the retention of retail businesses that serve the community (grocery, drug stores and fitness centre), the introduction of significant amounts of housing, the largest community centre and daycare in the City, and reorganized and renewed public spaces to complement a revitalized shopping experience.

LEVERAGING HIGHER ORDER TRANSIT

The Oak Ridges Mall redevelopment is one of Vancouver's most ambitious shopping centre transformations. Sitting on top of the Skytrain station on the Expo Line (connecting to both the downtown and the airport), the proposal reconfigures the site by inserting towers, opening up the retail experience, including food, and integrating this with nine acres

Comment réussir à repenser et à réaménager ces sites majeurs? Les questions clés sont les suivantes : pouvons-nous faire plus que simplement intensifier des terrains urbains sous-utilisés et ajouter des logements dans des formats verticaux? En transformant certains des derniers grands sites urbains disponibles, pouvons-nous créer des lieux plus résilients, des expériences inclusives et favoriser le rassemblement de la communauté? Pouvons-nous créer de nouveaux « cœurs » dans nos villes et nos banlieues en pleine expansion?

L'examen de plus d'une douzaine de réaménagements de centres commerciaux à grande échelle au Canada montre qu'il n'y en a pas deux pareils, mais qu'il y a des éléments communs. Il s'agit notamment des éléments suivants :

- Des idées de base convaincantes pour la création d'un lieu, le « pourquoi ici » qui distingue le lieu;
- De nouvelles possibilités de construire des villes, y compris des logements à haute densité et des avantages communautaires significatifs ou de nouvelles installations publiques;
- L'évolution des partenariats entre le secteur public et le secteur privé qui sont essentiels à la mise en œuvre, mais aussi qui impliquent des collaborations au niveau communautaire; et
- L'échelonnement des réaménagements dans le temps, dans certains cas des décennies, afin d'atteindre la totalité des droits, ce qui implique souvent un séquençage très complexe afin de limiter le déplacement des commerces et des équipements existants, qui peuvent être

essentiels pour les communautés locales. Les exemples suivants de transformation de centres commerciaux mettent l'accent sur l'aménagement du territoire et la construction de villes. Tels qu'ils sont planifiés, chacun de ces sites verra sa densité multipliée par 10 par rapport à l'utilisation actuelle. Cependant, la clé pour créer plus qu'une simple augmentation du nombre de logements et de l'intensité, c'est la possibilité de redéfinir les lieux, les rassemblements communautaires et les espaces publics dans les futurs quartiers verticaux.

RÉIMAGINER UN CENTRE COMMERCIAL D'ÉCHELLE RÉGIONALE

le centre commercial Galleria est un centre commercial désuet et défaillant situé au nord-ouest du centre de Toronto qui, en dépit de son offre médiocre, est

of park and open space (7.2 acres on the rooftop), a new community centre, a senior's centre, a child care centre, and spaces to accommodate cultural events and festivals. In the interests of sustainability and resilience, the project has also set a target GHG footprint per resident that is significantly less than typical Vancouver high rises, made possible by organizing redevelopment around a new district energy system. Success at Oak Ridges will mean the creation of a new 'complete community,' built around sustainable, affordable housing, a range of cultural amenities, public parks and enhanced access to Vancouver's SkyTrain system.

EXTENDING THE EXPERIENCE INTO THE CITY CENTRE

Following the opening of Square One Shopping Centre in the 1970s, the City of Mississauga has continued to expand the district around the mall to create a new



Source: Almadev/Hariri Pontarini Architects

un lieu important de rassemblement communautaire informel. Le site de Galleria et le parc Wallace Emerson adjacent ont été reconfigurés, dans le cadre d'un plan directeur, pour passer d'un centre commercial interne traditionnel à une nouvelle « rue diagonale » qui fait office « d'interface » public entre le nouveau parc et le centre communautaire et les blocs de développement à usage mixte intégrés verticalement au nord. La réussite de Galleria sera d'avoir recréé et amélioré ce « cœur communautaire » de la communauté de Wallace Emerson en conservant les commerces de détail qui servent la communauté (épiceries, pharmacies et centre de conditionnement physique), en introduisant un nombre important de logements, le plus grand centre communautaire et la plus grande garderie

de la ville, et en réorganisant et renouvelant les espaces publics pour compléter une expérience de magasinage revitalisée.

TIRER PARTI D'UN TRANSPORT EN COMMUN D'UN NIVEAU SUPÉRIEUR

Le réaménagement du Oak Ridges Mall est l'une des transformations les plus ambitieuses d'un centre commercial à Vancouver. Situé au-dessus de la station de Skytrain sur la ligne Expo (reliant le centre-ville et l'aéroport), le projet reconfigure le site en insérant des tours, en élargissant l'expérience de la vente au détail, y compris l'alimentation, et en l'intégrant avec neuf acres de parc et d'espace ouvert (7,2 acres sur le toit), un nouveau centre communautaire, un centre pour personnes âgées, une garderie, et des espaces pour accueillir des événements culturels et des festivals. Dans

l'intérêt de la durabilité et de la résilience, le projet a également fixé un objectif d'empreinte de GES par résident qui est nettement inférieur à celui des immeubles de grande hauteur typiques de Vancouver, ce qui a été rendu possible en organisant le réaménagement autour d'un nouveau système énergétique de quartier. Le succès d'Oak Ridges se traduira par la création d'une nouvelle « communauté complète », construite autour de logements durables et abordables, d'une série d'équipements culturels, de parcs publics et d'un meilleur accès au système SkyTrain de Vancouver.

ÉLARGIR L'EXPÉRIENCE DANS LE CENTRE-VILLE

Après l'ouverture du centre commercial Square One dans les années 1970, la ville de Mississauga a continué à agrandir le



Source: Oxford Properties Inc/ Hariri Pontarini Architects

downtown, adding housing, civic, institutional uses and improved transportation. The next planned phase of the evolution is 'The Strand' – a structuring framework intended to diversify the uses along the Strand to include new office, residential, civic and public spaces, to better connect with LRT/GO and MiWay transit hubs, and within the mall to include an entertainment focus. The planned 18 million square feet of new development will clearly need to be implemented over many years, with phasing that begins at the edges, but which sets the stage for transforming Square One into one of many urban experiences within in the City Centre. Success in Square One will be about better integration – to existing and new transit – and seamless connection to experience within and beyond the shopping centre to connect that experience the City Centre civic and public spaces. There are also plans to take advantage of the scale of new development to establish a district energy system.

quartier autour du centre commercial pour créer un nouveau centre-ville, en y ajoutant des logements, des utilisations civiques et institutionnelles et en améliorant les transports. La prochaine phase prévue de l'évolution est « The Strand », un cadre structurant destiné à diversifier les utilisations le long du Strand pour inclure de nouveaux bureaux, des espaces résidentiels, civiques et publics, pour mieux se connecter aux centres de transport en commun LRT/GO et MiWay, et à l'intérieur du centre commercial pour inclure un centre de divertissement. Les 18 millions de mètres carrés de nouveaux aménagements prévus devront de toute évidence être mis en œuvre sur plusieurs années, avec des étapes progressives qui commencent par les bords, mais qui prépare le terrain pour transformer Square One en une expérience

urbaine parmi d'autres dans le centre-ville. Le succès de Square One passera par une meilleure intégration aux transports en commun existants et nouveaux et par une connexion transparente aux expériences à l'intérieur et au-delà du centre commercial, afin de relier ces expériences aux espaces civiques et publics du centre-ville. Il est également prévu de profiter de l'ampleur du nouveau développement pour mettre en place un système d'énergie de quartier.

Les partenariats innovants nécessaires à la mise en œuvre de ces développements transformateurs constituent l'une des opportunités les plus stimulantes et les plus passionnantes. Alors que les réaménagements de centres commerciaux sont menés par le secteur privé et offriront de nouveaux équipements communautaires importants, l'ajout de composantes

publiques (centres communautaires, parcs et espaces culturels) sera important pour créer le cœur de ces nouvelles communautés, et sera entrepris, dans de nombreux cas, par le biais de partenariats entre les promoteurs, les municipalités et les groupes communautaires. À Galleria, Almadev dirige la conception et la construction du nouveau Wallace Emerson Community Centre and Park et le livre clé en main à la ville de Toronto. À Oakridges, les espaces communautaires et culturels sont conçus en partenariat avec Westbank/Quadreal et la ville de Vancouver, dans le cadre d'un vaste processus de consultation de la communauté, afin de garantir que la programmation des espaces soit culturellement significative pour la communauté. Pour Square One, l'intégration des transports en commun au

One of the most challenging and exciting opportunities is the innovative partnerships needed to implement these transformative developments. While shopping mall redevelopments are private sector-led and will deliver significant new community amenities, the addition of public components (community centres, parks, and cultural spaces) will be important to creating the hearts of these new communities, and will be undertaken, in many cases, through partnerships between developers, municipalities and community groups. In Galleria, Almadev is leading the design and building the new Wallace Emerson Community Centre and Park – and delivering it turnkey to the City of Toronto. At Oakridges, community and cultural spaces are being designed in partnership with Westbank/Quadreal and the City of Vancouver through extensive community consultation processes to ensure the programming for spaces can be culturally meaningful for the community.

For Square One, the integration of transit with development means the City, Oxford Properties and the Mississauga Transit, TTC and Metrolinx are working together to integrate existing and new higher-order transit as part of the redevelopment.

In each case, the former concept of the retail shopping centre as the retail heart of a planned community has evolved significantly in density and scale but also in land use complexity, hopefully reflecting city building and public good as a key ingredient for these new vertical communities. Importantly, rather than private spaces functioning as community hearts, these new parks and open spaces are public or publicly-accessible spaces.

These three projects (and most other mall transformations) are in the planning approvals and early construction stages. Not until actual construction completion, opening and operation of these spaces will we understand if more inclusive public

spaces and livable communities have been created, but from the planning phases the outcomes are innovative and promising.

Melanie Hare RPP, FCIP is a Partner and Urban Planner at Urban Strategies, Inc. Her practice involves large complex urban redevelopment and resilient community planning across Canada, the US and in the Caribbean, increasingly including the redevelopment of the shopping malls.

REFERENCES

- ¹ First developed in the 1950s as an open-air mall, the site was enclosed in the 1970s. Changing demographics, competition from other malls and the loss of Eaton's and other anchor stores led Cadillac-Fairview to establish its current third incarnation as a retail mall. ■

développement signifie que la ville, Oxford Properties et Mississauga Transit, TTC et Metrolinx travaillent ensemble pour intégrer les transports en commun existants et les nouveaux transports en commun de niveau supérieur dans le cadre du réaménagement.

Dans chaque cas, l'ancien concept de centre commercial comme cœur d'une communauté aménagée a évolué de manière significative en termes de densité et d'échelle, mais aussi en termes de complexité de l'utilisation des sols, reflétant ainsi la construction de la ville et le bien public comme ingrédient clé de ces nouvelles communautés verticales. Il est important de noter que ces nouveaux parcs et espaces ouverts sont des espaces publics ou accessibles au public, plutôt que des espaces privés fonctionnant comme des cœurs de communauté.

Ces trois projets (et la plupart des autres transformations de centres commerciaux) en sont au stade de l'approbation des plans et des premières étapes de la construction. Il faudra attendre l'achèvement des travaux, l'ouverture et l'exploitation de ces espaces pour savoir si des espaces publics plus inclusifs et des communautés plus vivables ont été créés, mais dès les phases de planification, les résultats sont novateurs et prometteurs.

Melanie Hare UPC, FICU est partenaire et urbaniste chez Urban Strategies, Inc. Sa pratique porte sur le réaménagement urbain complexe et la planification de communautés résilientes au Canada, aux États-Unis

et dans les Caraïbes, y compris, de plus en plus, le réaménagement des centres commerciaux.

RÉFÉRENCES

- ¹ D'abord aménagé dans les années 1950 comme un centre commercial à ciel ouvert, le site a été fermé dans les années 1970. L'évolution démographique, la concurrence d'autres centres commerciaux et la perte d'Eaton et d'autres magasins piliers ont conduit Cadillac-Fairview à établir sa troisième incarnation actuelle en tant que centre commercial.



Passings

Ian MacNaughton FCIP

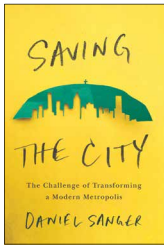
Ian MacNaughton (1944-2023) died in October, just a few weeks before the 50th anniversary of MacNaughton Hermsen Britton Clarkson, the hugely successful consulting firm he founded in 1973. A proud graduate of the University of Waterloo School of Urban and Regional Planning, with both a BA in planning and an MA in Regional Planning and Resource Management, Ian also served as the School's Planner in Residence in 2010. Among his many accomplishments in a career dedicated to 'making land use planning better,' he worked on the original Niagara Escarpment Plan and helped establish Canada's first-ever environmental advisory committee. More recently, he served on several provincial task forces and was a member of Kitchener's Downtown Task Force and Pragma Council.

Jen Powley MFA, MPlan

Jen Powley, a planner, author and advocate for people with disabilities in Nova Scotia, has passed away at age 45. Jen was an environmentalist and had worked at Ecology Action Centre in Halifax. A quadriplegic, she was a passionate advocate for accessibility and the rights of people with disabilities, using her own apartment as a model for how young people with severe disabilities can live independently and with dignity. Jen was a graduate of the School of Planning at Dalhousie University and the Creative Writing program at King's College. She wrote two books, *Just Jen: Thriving Through Multiple Sclerosis* (2017), *Making a Home: Assisted Living in the Community for Young Disabled People* (2023). ■

Readers are invited to submit short summaries (maximum 100 words) of new or recently released books on planning and related topics to glenrobinmiller@gmail.com. Preference will be given to books by Canadian authors. Full reviews of books are also welcome.

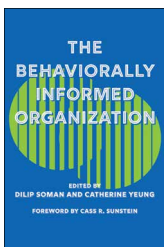
Les lecteurs sont invités à soumettre de courts résumés (100 mots maximum) de livres nouveaux ou récemment publiés sur l'urbanisme et les sujets connexes à glenrobinmiller@gmail.com. La préférence sera donnée aux livres d'auteurs canadiens. Les critiques complètes de livres sont également les bienvenues.



SAVING THE CITY: THE CHALLENGE OF TRANSFORMING A MODERN METROPOLIS

300 pages. Daniel Sanger. Véhicule Press, 2021.

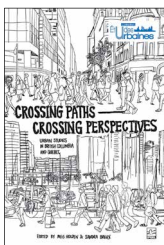
The author offers unique glimpses of the forces driving the evolution of Projet Montréal, which, among other things, advocated successfully (and annoyingly for some) for 'green' measures and actions to curb car use long before such ideas became mainstream elsewhere. Equal parts reportage, oral history and memoir, award-winning journalist Daniel Sanger chronicles what the party did right, where it failed, and where it's headed. The movement helped launch Valérie Plante as Montreal's mayor, whose tagline is "A city, for today and tomorrow – many ideas, one vision." A primer for anyone seeking to understand how to simultaneously move ahead on affordable housing, transit, safety and ecological health.



THE BEHAVIORALLY INFORMED ORGANIZATION

320 pages. Dilip Soman and Catherine Yeung, eds. University of Toronto Press, 2021.

Hidden behind the unappealing title, this weighty volume offers a pragmatic framework for applying behavioural science to better understand how to navigate and potentially influence positive change. The book's advice for handling interactions involving stakeholders could be particularly beneficial for planners. One example is the challenge governments face when trying to get private companies to comply with environmental regulations. Soman is a Canada Research Chair in Behavioural Science and economics at Rotman, while his co-author teaches marketing at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. The editors have organized case studies that bring a strategic perspective to integrate 'behavioural insights' into day-to-day operations.



CROSSING PATHS CROSSING PERSPECTIVES: URBAN STUDIES IN BRITISH COLUMBIA AND QUEBEC

250 pages. Meg Holden and Sandra Breux, eds. Les Presses de l'Université Laval, 2023.

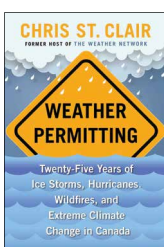
This diverse collection of essays sampling innovative examples of research, policy and practice from 20 urban studies specialists brings perspectives from across the country from B.C. to Quebec, with a focus on issues such as affordability and transportation affecting quality of life in Vancouver and Montreal. Topics also range from food systems and climate action to urban indigeneity. A goal of the editors (based at Simon Fraser University and INRS respectively) is to offer "continued, critical and comparative conversation" as a bridge across francophone and anglophone divides to reflect trends and diverse perspectives in the field of urban studies. The book is also available in French.



THE FUTURE IS ANALOG: HOW TO CREATE A MORE HUMAN WORLD

288 pages. David Sax. Public Affairs (Hatchett Book Group), 2022.

Best-selling author David Sax questions whether it is possible to reject the downsides of digital technology without rejecting change. Brimming with relatable examples (appreciating sights of the passing sidewalk from a crowded streetcar instead of focusing on his phone), Sax challenges readers – planners – to ask ourselves if the overwhelming impact of the digital universe (think the anonymity of online shopping vs the joy of browsing in a bookstore) is pushing us to design cities that lack the character we treasure from the past. On the future of work, he quotes a productivity expert who says informal (analog) encounters in the office "are the most valuable."



WEATHER PERMITTING

256 pages. Chris St. Clair. Simon & Schuster, 2022.

Detailing Canada's disastrous weather events shouldn't be this entertaining! But there's no disguising the author's passion – and undoubted expertise. For more than 25 years, St. Clair hosted the Weather Network, which saw him sheltering from fires, battling hurricane-force winds, and reporting waist-deep in floodwaters. In 12 fact-filled chapters, he also educates, explaining the science, putting extreme weather into the context of climate change. We discover that most piped infrastructure needs upsizing and how some communities learn from adversity (investment in the controversial Winnipeg Floodway continues to pay off as storms get worse; Hurricane Hazel gave rise to comprehensive land use reform in Toronto). ■

This digest presents recent research that deals directly with planning issues in Canadian communities. The articles are chosen for their potential interest to practicing planners, while covering a range of topics, community sizes, and regions.

Ce condensé a pour but de faire connaître les recherches récentes portant directement sur les questions urbanistiques touchant les collectivités canadiennes. Ses articles, qui abordent un large éventail de sujets, de collectivités et de régions, sont choisis en fonction de leur pertinence potentielle auprès des urbanistes professionnels.

GENTRIFICATION, NEIGHBORHOOD SOCIOECONOMIC FACTORS AND URBAN VEGETATION INEQUITIES: A STUDY OF GREENSPACE AND TREE CANOPY INCREASES IN MONTREAL, CANADA

Kiani, Behzad, Benoit Thierry, Daniel Fuller, Caislin Firth, Meghan Winters, and Yan Kestens. *Landscape and Urban Planning* 240. 2023. This study investigates the impact of urban greening initiatives on socio-spatial disparities in vegetation distribution, focusing on greenspace and tree canopy in Montreal. While such initiatives aim to enhance living conditions and address environmental injustice, findings suggest that, historically, higher socioeconomic status (SES) neighbourhoods have more urban vegetation. The research employs a comprehensive approach, analyzing associations between SES factors and vegetation changes over time. Results reveal that areas with higher material deprivation and visible minorities had less greenspace/tree canopy growth. Gentrification's role is nuanced, with high-income areas experiencing more substantial increases. The study underscores the need for tailored, equity-focused urban vegetation initiatives to avoid exacerbating disparities.

DO YOUNG ADULTS WANT TO LIVE DOWNTOWN? UNDERSTANDING ATTITUDES IN PRINCE GEORGE, BC

Graham, Rylan. *Planning Practice & Research* 1-24. 2023, 1–24. Examining the dynamics of re-urbanization, this study delves into the disparities between large and mid-sized North American cities. While major urban centres observe a downtown resurgence, mid-sized counterparts like Prince George grapple with challenges in drawing residents to their cores. Utilizing an online survey, the research investigates factors shaping young adults' interest in downtown living, focusing on Prince George as a case study. The findings underscore distinct constraints to downtown growth in mid-sized cities, advocating for nuanced interventions that address both demand and supply-side factors. The study also highlights opportunities for further exploration, particularly concerning vulnerable populations and broader urban policy considerations.

EXAMINING THE PREVALENCE OF CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS AMONG SINGLE ADULTS ACCORDING TO NATIONAL DEFINITIONS IN CANADA

Agha, Ayda, Stephen W Hwang, Ri Wang, Rosane Nisenbaum, Anita Palepu, Patrick Hunter, and Tim Aubry. *Canadian Journal of Urban Research* 32, no. 1. 2023, 16–31. This research investigates the prevalence and characteristics of chronic homelessness in Canada, utilizing various definitions, including the 2019 Reaching Home definition (RH-D) and the Alberta definition (AB-D). Examining a longitudinal dataset of single adults experiencing homelessness, the study reveals that estimates based solely on shelter use may significantly underrepresent those chronically homeless outside shelters. Demographic variations and health implications associated with chronic homelessness are explored, highlighting differences among definitions. The findings underscore the limitations of traditional methods, emphasizing the need for more inclusive estimates to inform resource allocation and service provision for this vulnerable population, especially those facing hidden homelessness and substance use challenges.

LOCAL AGRI-FOOD SYSTEMS AS A MUNICIPAL PRIORITY: CONSIDERING THE ROLE, APPROACH AND CAPACITY OF MUNICIPAL PLANNING DEPARTMENTS

Zink, Regan, Wayne J. Caldwell and Sara Epp. *Sustainable Development and Planning* 12. 2022, 167–176. This article traces the evolution of food system planning in North America, highlighting its emergence in the early 2000s with a focus on community food security. Initially, planners overlooked food systems, deeming them non-problematic. Over time, the field, inclusive of agriculture planning, has grown, encompassing urban sprawl, economic development, public health, and environmental sustainability. The paper explores the vital role of municipal planning departments in Ontario's agricultural/agri-food systems, identifying ten key roles. Despite growing recognition, skepticism persists about integrating food systems into planning effectively. The article emphasizes the non-neutral, advocacy-driven role of planning departments in fostering sustainable regional development. It underscores the need for further research on departmental capacity to fulfill these roles, considering financial, staff, and council support.

AT THE INTERSECTION OF EQUITY AND INNOVATION: TRANS INCLUSION IN THE CITY OF VANCOUVER

Myrdahl, Tiffany Muller. *Urban Planning* 8, no. 2S1. 2023, 223–234.

Examining the impact of the Supporting Trans Equality policy in Vancouver, this research explores the transformative effects of a 2016 initiative aimed at fostering a safer environment for Two-Spirit, trans, and gender-diverse (TGD2S) individuals accessing city services. Against a backdrop of anti-trans legislation, the policy emerges as a beacon of inclusivity, striving to eradicate discrimination and reshape institutional practices. The study delves into the policy's development, adoption, and broader outcomes, situating it within the urban policy and planning literature. It illustrates how equity strategies, exemplified by the TGD2S policy, function as innovation tools, profoundly influencing institutional practices and cultivating a more inclusive city for all residents.

BEFORE DISPLACEMENT: STUDENTIFICATION, CAMPUS-LED GENTRIFICATION AND RENTAL MARKET TRANSFORMATION IN A MULTIETHNIC NEIGHBORHOOD (PARC-EXTENSION, MONTRÉAL)

Jolivet, Violaine, Chloé Reiser, Yannick Baumann, and Rodolphe Gonzalès. *Urban Geography* 44, no. 5. 2023, 983–1002.

This article investigates the impact of Université de Montréal's new science campus, the MIL, on the Parc-Extension neighbourhood, highlighting concerns about displacement in the midst of a housing crisis. Despite promoting sustainable urbanism, the MIL project is accused of accelerating gentrification, transforming Parc-Extension into a desirable area for predominantly white residents. The study employs innovative mixed methods to analyze the rental market, emphasizing the concept of displacement pressure. The findings connect studentification and campus-led gentrification, contributing empirically, methodologically, and practically to the literature. The article aims to empower activists with critical data, shedding light on the complex dynamics of urban redevelopment and its social implications. ■



Prepared in cooperation with the Provincial-Territorial Officials Committee (PTOC) on Local Government.

Préparé en collaboration avec le Comité des fonctionnaires des provinces et territoires (CFPT) pour les administrations locales.

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