

# PLAN NORTH WEST

A journal for professional planners of Alberta, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Saskatchewan

Autumn 2016, Issue 1



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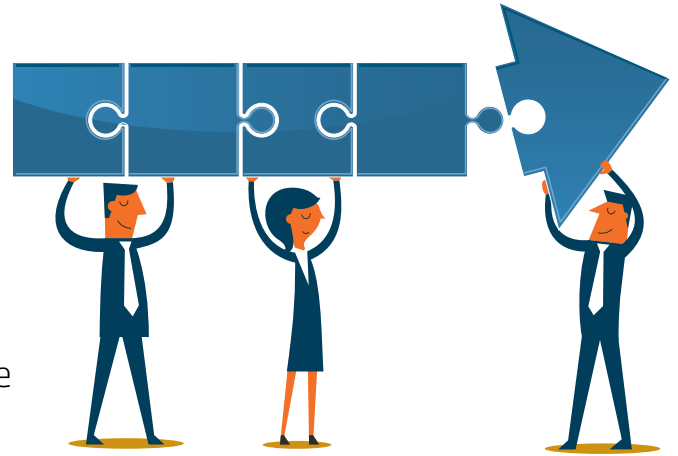
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*PLAN North West* offers opportunity for publication of original works that are both community-based and research oriented, and relevant to Alberta, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Nunavut and the Northwest Territories. Types of submissions include case studies, analysis of events and/or trends, profiles of notable planners, projects, or programs, overviews of best practices and guidelines, book reviews or excerpts, and opinion pieces.

## Journal Submissions

We are always looking for articles for future issues of *PLAN North West*. Submit an article or idea at any time and a member of the Committee will help you through the process of getting it published. Potential subject areas we are interested in receiving article submissions on include:

- sustainability initiatives
- member accomplishments
- member research
- community development projects
- urban design
- student experiences
- innovative ideas
- planning successes
- water (see page 23 for more information)

We are also interested in articles on any other topics that would be of value to the planning community. For more information, please contact the Committee at [plannorthwest@gmail.com](mailto:plannorthwest@gmail.com) or 780 435 8716.

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**Feedback**

The *PLAN North West* Committee welcomes your feedback. Please submit any comments you may have about this issue to [plannorthwest@gmail.com](mailto:plannorthwest@gmail.com). Your comments, suggestions and feedback are critical for *PLAN North West's* continued improvement and for us to provide the best possible publication that meets the expectations of our readers.

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# MESSAGE FROM THE JOURNAL COMMITTEE

*PLAN North West* welcomes our readers in Alberta, Manitoba, Northwest Territories, Nunavut, and Saskatchewan, to the first issue of our shared planning journal. The intent of *PLAN North West* is to widen our horizons through sharing knowledge and experiences from a much larger area than could otherwise be shared by each individual province and territory. Our first issue delivers on that intention by including articles representing all three of the Tri-PTIA's (Provincial and Territorial Institutions and Associations).

The title for the journal, *PLAN North West*, describes our profession and location of our region. Our geographic region is broad, and the new journal similarly gives room for a broad range of ideas, topics and ways of thinking. For this inaugural edition, we asked you to submit your introductions, inspirations, and hopes for the future of planning. Using our new journal as a blank canvas, we hoped to showcase the colour, character and variety of our shared experiences in planning.

The submissions we received for the first issue have done just that. They represent each region's strengths and challenges. They also represent our shared issues as planners, and the collective consciousness that shows in our responses to these challenges. We saw many common themes emerge and one theme in particular stood out—water. Water is one of our most important shared natural resources, with river basins such as the Saskatchewan, Mackenzie and Assiniboine paying no respect to political boundaries. The Journal Committee would like to dedicate an entire future issue of *PLAN North West* to water—how we use it, manage it and protect it, and invites all authors with a special interest in this topic to submit an article for consideration (see page 23 for more information).

*PLAN North West* is produced by a group of volunteers. The Journal Committee for the inaugural issue includes Carley Friesen, who began working on *PLAN North West* from Manitoba but who has just moved to Alberta; Laurie Kimber, Miles Dibble, Beatrice McMillan, and Jamie Doyle, also from Alberta; Brittany Shewchuk and Semra Kalkan from Saskatchewan; and Dianne Himbeault from Manitoba. The *PLAN North West* Journal Committee would like to thank the authors who contributed to the first issue and met our extremely tight submission deadlines.

You and your colleagues have filled the blank canvas of *PLAN North West* with colourful stories. As the special cover design for this issue illustrates, each of our regions is distinct, and each brings life and character to north western Canada. Let yourself become inspired as you read through this inaugural edition. Although we each face similar challenges in our day-to-day work as planners, our solutions must be—will be—unique. Take the inspiration, combine it with your own creativity, and enjoy planning in the North West.

# The Changing Northwestern Landscape

## INTRODUCTION TO *PLAN NORTH WEST*

The inaugural issue of *PLAN North West* provides our readers in the Northwest Territories, Nunavut, Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta articles about planning and planners in all parts of the region. In addition to its wide geographical reach, *PLAN North West* has a broad variety of subjects. From the use of analytics in Edmonton to the protection of water in Saskatchewan, and from essential skills for new planners to new approaches in planning Canada's North, *PLAN North West's* content and geographic scope is broad. *PLAN North West* is a single journal delivered through a cooperative effort from three provincial and territorial professional planning jurisdictions, dedicated to planning and planners. Even with its new broad scope, *PLAN North West* demonstrates our shrinking world, where communication and the exchange of ideas, whether through print or internet, eliminates boundaries and shrinks distances.

*PLAN North West* is about bringing people, their ideas and experiences together, so that the exchange strengthens the skills and knowledge of planners, and by extension, successful planning outcomes in communities throughout the region.

The profession of planning is becoming more relevant and vital to communities, because planners are, above all, communicators, coordinators and integrators of ideas. As community and resource development becomes more complex, the planning profession is needed to help develop, implement and communicate

plans to manage today's complex issues. *PLAN North West* is a way for planners in each of the provinces and territories to reach beyond their own boundaries to share and to learn, and in the process strengthen the region as a whole.

In this initial issue, each of the provincial and territorial institutions or associations, as a way of introducing themselves to their neighbours and partners in this journal, shares their unique nature, their challenges and successes, their changing landscape.

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# Alberta

Alberta is coming off of a record development boom, during which it outperformed the rest of Canada in economic growth, based on strong energy-related investment. Once low unemployment rates are rising and the previously robust housing market is softening with the drop in oil prices. Even with falling housing prices and reduced housing starts, Edmonton remains strong due to its more diverse business base as compared to the rest of the province.

A softer economy presents an opportunity to refocus planning efforts and apply new planning approaches that are innovative, creative, and diverse in nature. Shifts in the development landscape toward exploring renewable energy sources, harnessing environmentally-friendly approaches, materials, and technologies, and an increased emphasis on recycling and reusing, can contribute to more flexible development scenarios such as:

- housing models that adjust depending on changing household demographics and needs;
- more intense development and mixed use development not previously embraced, such as industrial/residential or community/residential development;

- quality infill development (making more with less), opening up tight regulatory controls;
- new techniques in agricultural land management practices; and
- process revisions that harness the expertise of team members and build on shared ideas, perspectives, and resources.

These are the kinds of shifts expected to become front and centre, as planning in Alberta moves forward.



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# Northwest Territories

Planners working in the Northwest Territories (NWT) operate in a distinctive setting that shapes what they do and how they do it: vast land areas and few people, many small communities, a mix of First Nation and public governance, co-management approach to environmental stewardship, and the devolution of responsibility from the Federal to the Territorial government in April 2014.

Community planning in the NWT was largely done from afar in the 1950s to 70s. Since then, community planning has become more relevant to northern communities, and tailored approaches to sustainability and climate change adaptation are now evolving.

Regional Land Use Plans in the NWT to date have been developed as a requirement of comprehensive land claim agreements (CLCA), or under the terms of an Interim Measurement Agreement (IMA). The recent devolution of responsibility is having a profound effect on land use planning. A very collaborative process is

evolving with First Nations and the Government of the NWT working as partners towards a common vision set out in the NWT Land Use Sustainability Framework:

“Land is life—it sustains and nourishes us spiritually, culturally, physically, economically and socially. Working together, Northerners will responsibly and sustainably manage the lands, waters and natural resources of the Northwest Territories for the benefit of current and future generations” (NWT Land Use Sustainability Framework).



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# Nunavut

Unique geographic and demographic factors affect how communities are developed and thrive in Nunavut. It is the most northern region of Canada, north of Hudson Bay, directly west of Greenland and east of the Northwest Territories.

Nunavut is both the least populous and the largest in area compared to the other provinces and territories of Canada. Its population (2011 Census figures identified close to 32,000) is younger than the Canadian average, and mostly Inuit. The remaining portion of the population is very diverse.

All of Nunavut's communities are fly-in. Due to its remoteness, the cost of living is higher in Nunavut than in the rest of Canada. Since becoming Nunavut's capital in 1999, Iqaluit has experienced substantial growth and the cost of housing and other types of real estate has risen substantially.

Most of the construction material is shipped to Nunavut in the summer and fall through sealift. With a short construction season due to its northern location,

development approvals for larger projects often take at least six months prior to building material arriving to allow for proper tendering and shipping of the material. An advantage in the summer is ability to work long hours due to extended daylight.

A few planning related issues on the horizon are:

- continuing to manage growth—most communities are challenged with keeping up with demand for subdivision and development approvals;
- housing affordability—escalating real estate and building costs;
- advancing use of technology—to the same capacity as in the rest of Canada. Bandwidth is a limiting factor; and
- very challenging terrain.



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# Manitoba

With the second lowest unemployment rate in Canada and modest population growth, Manitoba continues with slow and steady growth. The single family housing market is stable or softening with growth of townhomes and more affordable, attached, single family dwellings and multi-family units.

The City of Winnipeg has been working hard to find a sustainable solution to their infrastructure deficit, and discussions on development cost charges are beginning. In the meantime, the city has continued to increase their commitment to spending on large infrastructure projects, including:

- Phase 2 of Bus Rapid Transit, connecting downtown to the University of Manitoba;
- establishing and upgrading cycling facilities in existing neighbourhoods and the downtown; and
- sewer renewal, focusing on the reduction of combined sewers in older neighbourhoods.

The City of Winnipeg has also established an Office of Public Engagement, demonstrating their understanding of the benefits of good public engagement. Extensive public engagement plans and processes are becoming an integral part of each major City project.

In the capital region, The Partnership of the Manitoba Capital Region (PMCR) is moving forward with a regional growth strategy for the 16 member municipalities. The regional growth strategy is an ambitious regional planning effort that will build on and complement existing local projects while ensuring a regional lens is applied to them. The PMCR understands that to achieve key regional goals, the member municipalities need to work together as a region. Ensuring sustainable management of local resources, protection of land and water, and resilient development will allow the region to maintain economic prosperity and protect the way of life for today and into the future.

Around the province, municipal amalgamation has been an issue at the forefront. Smaller municipalities (1000 people or less) have been amalgamated with an adjacent municipality reducing the number of municipalities from 197 to 137. This has resulted in the need for a significant number of municipalities to reestablish their vision and update their Development Plans and Zoning By-laws.



# Saskatchewan

Saskatchewan's recent period of rapid growth, much like in Alberta, is slowing down. However, in terms of community planning, this provides an opportunity in the province for municipalities with the latitude to better plan for future growth, rather than play catch-up. As a result, large and small municipalities throughout Saskatchewan have been initiating the development of innovative projects which will lay out the groundwork for communities to begin to think about growth and development in a more sustainable and responsible manner than in the past.

For example, the P4G Planning for Growth project, focused around the communities of Saskatoon, Warman, Osler, Martensville, and Corman Park, looks to ensure that future development in the region will accommodate a population growth of 500,000 in a 20 year horizon, and is done in a coordinated manner, keeping in mind the most optimal strategies for servicing, financing, and the projection of the environment.

This past April, the City of Saskatoon adopted, in principle, the Growth Plan to Half a Million (Growth Plan), a plan to guide the growth of Saskatoon to 500,000 people. The Growth Plan will help shape growth patterns and increase transportation choices by focusing on fundamental shifts through the main initiatives of Corridor Growth, Transit, and Core Bridges. Combined with existing plans for the transportation network and emerging plans for Active Transportation and Employment Areas, these initiatives will set the stage for a new growth model for Saskatoon. Fundamentally, the Growth Plan is about urbanizing existing areas of the city along its major transportation

corridors to make complete communities in areas that are well served by a variety of high-quality transportation options. Focusing growth in this manner creates more choices for residents in how they move around and where they live.

The City of Regina has recently approved the Laneway and Garden Suites Guidelines and associated Pilot Project, and is in the midst of development of the Regina Revitalization Initiative Railyard Renewal Project. Both of these initiatives have an eye on increasing density and development in the city's core, with the future goal of a more connected, urban, and sustainable Regina.

Other ongoing and unique projects such as Swift Current's Downtown Master Plan, and Warman's Environmental Master Plan are also engaging communities to improve upon the assets they value most. It is wonderful to see proactive planning efforts being applied throughout Saskatchewan, and those municipalities taking charge should be commended for their efforts.



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# Annexation: Opportunity for Collaboration

SOURCE: iStock

“Coming together is a beginning; keeping together is progress; working together is success.” – Henry Ford

Annexation of land is the act of transferring land from one municipal jurisdiction to another. Annexation that is contested can potentially give rise to overarching obstacles that impede a region’s ability to strengthen its position as a whole. However, the above quotation by Henry Ford makes reference to the value of collaboration, which should be at the forefront throughout contested annexation debates.

This article will discuss the nature of the contested annexation process in the province of Alberta, and a possible means for the development of a more productive standard. This future standard looks towards engaging participants from the outset in a discussion framed by mutual problem and solution identification, rather than in an adversarial dispute. Municipal planners and administrators are tasked to find solutions to community and intermunicipal challenges through a process of collaboration and compromise. Historically, bound by the prescribed process set out in the Alberta Municipal Government Act (MGA), contested annexation is inherently positional and adversarial. This oppositional approach

puts municipal planners and administrators in an uncomfortable position, and can be looked upon as the antithesis of regionalism, as it forces a debate over which jurisdiction should “own” new growth, rather than looking at scenarios that benefit the broader community.

Although the MGA outlines a statutory process to facilitate collaborative approaches for resolving intermunicipal problems, this same legislation provides a legal framework for resolving boundary disputes that is inherently positional. The contested annexation process is necessarily positional as it relies on an independent third party tribunal, the Municipal Government Board (MGB), to consider the position of the parties as established through expert testimony to arrive at a conclusion.

# 15 Principles of Annexation

- 1 Intermunicipal cooperation is given priority.
- 2 All municipalities must be able to grow.
- 3 Municipal autonomy must remain intact.
- 4 Annexation must be supported by growth projections.
- 5 Annexation must achieve a logical extension of growth patterns.
- 6 There must be an efficient and coordinated administration of services.
- 7 There must be sensitivity and respect for key environmental features.
- 8 Proper coordination of resources is demonstrated when annexation is supported by comprehensive planning, including Intermunicipal Development Plans (IDPs).
- 9 Annexation must consider the financial impacts on both municipalities.
- 10 Impacts on other institutions providing services to the area must be considered.
- 11 Weight is given to annexation proposals that include solutions to impacts on property owners.
- 12 There must be effective public consultation.
- 13 Revenue sharing may be warranted.
- 14 Annexation must not simply be a tax initiative.
- 15 Conditions of annexation must be certain, unambiguous, enforceable, and time specific.

*Adapted from the Municipal Government Board's 15 Principles of Annexation*

Given this inevitable outcome, the parties are not likely to openly share information related to their respective positions. While there may be hope of reaching agreement, full disclosure of information is a tall expectation when a quasi-judicial examination of it remains the default.

Unfortunately, the MGA falls short of requiring the deployment of such tools as Intermunicipal Development Plans (IDPs) as a precursor to annexation. Such tools can support an annexation process and the development of an agreement that is anchored by a set of mutually beneficial planning objectives relating to boundary adjustments.

While most annexations in Alberta move forward without objection, many proceed as contested processes (Duncan 2016). If comprehensive growth management is concerned with the good of a region as a whole, as it should be, it would not be unfair to characterize contested annexations as the place where growth management and regionalism collide. However, as this process stands now, it is decidedly positional rather than collaborative, and territorial rather than regional.

It would be easy to point to urban municipalities' need to consume ever more raw land for urban growth and development as the fundamental problem. But regardless of local decisions around urban form and

SOURCE: *Municipal Government Board, 2006*

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Municipal Government Board. 2006. *Board Order No. MGB 123/06*. Retrieved from <http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/documents/mgb/M123-06.pdf>

the direction of growth, jurisdictional questions are inevitable. Rather, the inherent weaknesses in the annexation process are related to the tools provided to municipalities by provincial governments to sort out jurisdictional questions. There is a healthy debate to be had around growth management at a regional or intermunicipal scale, and that is as it should be. The management of growth in a regional setting requires complex solutions and there are many dimensions to consider. Growth management in a regional context is concerned with more than forecasting land supply and demand figures. It is about more than defining a desired development form. While these are critical aspects of growth management, it is also the exercise through which the financial costs and benefits of growth are considered. Such considerations play no small part in the formulation of growth management policy.

Planning tools exist to help define a path forward in relation to the management of growth in an intermunicipal context and the infrastructure required to support it. For example, the Alberta MGA provides the opportunity for two or more willing municipal partners to enter into an IDP. An IDP can range in complexity from being a very simple instrument to set out methods to resolve intermunicipal conflict, to complex policy documents that delineate future land uses, determining the manner of future development in the area, and identifying opportunities for boundary adjustments where logical.

Annexation applications in Alberta are managed on behalf of the province by the MGB. Contested annexations are resource intensive, judicial in nature, high on cost, and low on certainty for all participants. While the MGB is set up to be an independent board operating at arm's length from government (Alberta Municipal Affairs 2016), decisions on annexation are made by provincial cabinet, and are inherently political. Municipal Government Board hearings are like a court room procedure where two principal sides must represent their own interests. Evidence is entered, examined and cross-examined.

The process is often hostile as the participants argue their positions. In the end, there is a winner and there is a loser.

The MGB has adopted a set of principles in the absence of any guiding criteria in the MGA. The principles contain elements that encourage collaborative approaches supported by comprehensive planning. However, the underlying legal framework that establishes the annexation process simply requires that the parties negotiate in good faith, and then undertake mediation in an attempt to resolve any outstanding

matters. If the annexation proceeds as a contested process, it is 'argued out' at a MGB hearing.

So let us consider the true cost of a contested annexation, as its financial cost is certainly quantifiable. For example, Leduc County spent \$1,020,000.00 on lawyers, experts and staff from January 2013 to the end of the MGB Merit hearing in June 2015, for the annexation initiated by the Town of Beaumont (Leduc County 2015). The government's final decision has yet to be announced. However, the financial costs of an MGB hearing are only part of the true costs of a contested annexation. To define the true cost, the opportunity costs must also be considered. For example, what is the long term cost of resolving boundary disputes through a process that is necessarily adversarial? What is the cost of developing adversarial relationships between neighbours rather than productive ones? What is the cost of the deterioration of trust, and the absence of cooperation?

Questions around municipal jurisdiction should not just be challenges; they should be looked upon as opportunities to build strong and lasting relationships between communities and to share innovation, successes, and best practices, and to do so in a process that is open and transparent to the public.

Regional planning issues cannot be solved by urban municipalities alone any more than they can be solved by rural municipalities. Growth management in a regional context is a complex task that requires consideration of perspectives beyond the boundaries of a single municipality to create sustainable solutions.

So what is the way forward? In Alberta, the provincial government could provide a more productive framework for resolving jurisdictional questions related to growth. For example, some form of collaborative joint planning could be mandatory so that municipal boundaries are outcomes of comprehensive intermunicipal planning rather than the weighing of one municipality's needs against another. Intermunicipal and/or regional cost/revenue sharing could play a more prominent role in annexation discussions to enable a fulsome consideration of alternatives in light of the expected costs and benefits of new growth. Such arrangements may actually diminish the importance of where boundaries are drawn in the first place. ■

**Grant Bain** MCIP, RPP has been a professional planner in the public sector for 24 years and has served municipalities in four Canadian provinces. He has a Bachelor of Environmental Studies with a major in geography and a Master of Public Administration. Grant is presently the Director of Planning and Development with Leduc County, AB.

About the Author



# Generation “Y” in Lethbridge

Generation “Y” (Gen Y), also referred to as millennials but not specifically defined, generally includes individuals born between 1980 and 2002. In terms of population, this is the second largest generation next to the baby boomers (1946–1964). Many members of Gen Y are beginning to enter the stage of their lives where they are becoming increasingly influential: economically, politically and socially in the communities where they live, work, and play, as they move up the career ladder, purchase homes, and start families of their own. From a community planning perspective, it is crucial to understand the needs and preferences of this vital demographic in order to best plan our communities for the future.

This article is a condensed version of a larger report\* by University of Lethbridge students Devin Diano and Max Moline. The report was done on behalf of the City of Lethbridge Planning and Development Services Department, and will aid in their research as they complete their Efficient Land Use Strategy. Its purpose was to contribute an advanced level of understanding of the housing, lifestyle, and transportation needs of Gen Y in Lethbridge, Alberta. Further, it sought out to identify if there are differences between the needs of Gen Y in Lethbridge, compared with the broader understanding of Gen Y from a Canadian and North American perspective.

Much of the existing literature, surveys and other research that has been done on the preferences of Gen Y is limited by being focused almost exclusively on millennials living in large urban centres. Our review of the existing literature and body of knowledge surrounding Gen Y was compiled from a variety of sources; however, there were two studies that we examined most closely. These were the Urban Land Institute’s (ULI) report: *Gen Y and Housing—What They Want and Where They Want It*, and a report titled: *Youthification: The New Kid on the Block*, led by planning professor Markus Moos from the University of Waterloo.

Farmer’s Market

SOURCE: City of Edmonton

\* The full report can be found at: <https://www.dropbox.com/s/fiqm9yqwdys7r29/Generation%20Y%20in%20Lethbridge.pdf?dl=0>

The most prevalent themes throughout the existing literature on Gen Y include:

- Housing cost considerations are dominant.
- Home ownership is still valued.
- They are open to alternative transportation methods when available (ability to walk, cycle, and take public transportation).
- Automobiles are still dominant.
- They value accessibility to amenities.

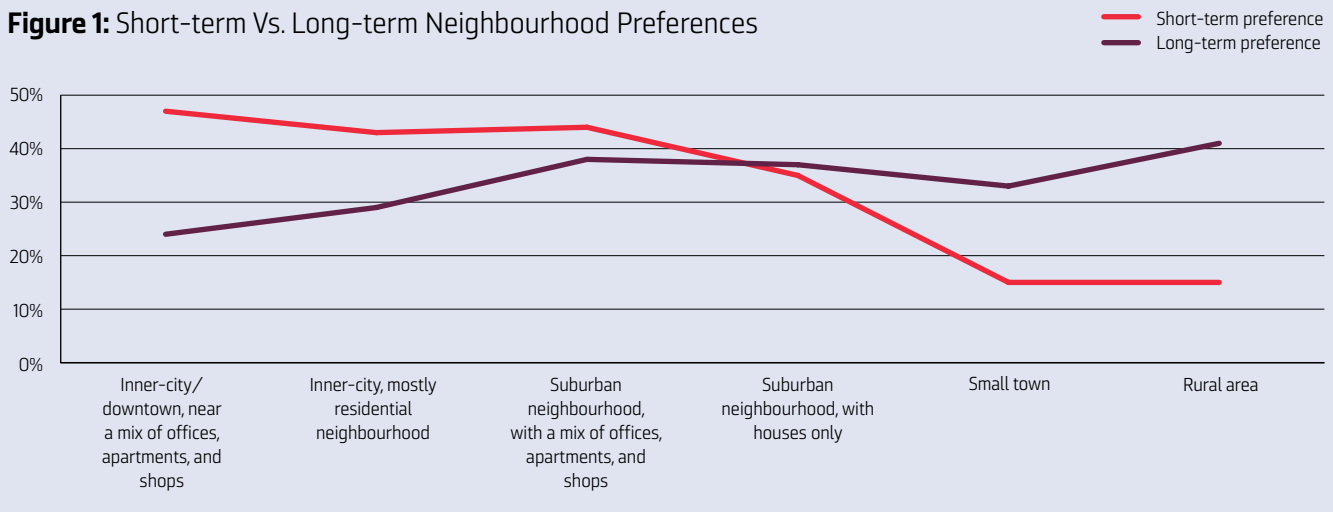
Also acknowledged is the unpredictable nature of this demographic group, with a highlighted need for more research to be done in order to gain a more complete understanding of millennials.

In our report, these themes were explored in relation to how they apply to Lethbridge, Alberta. For the purposes of this article, the findings of our report may apply more broadly to other mid-sized cities across western Canada. An online Google forum survey conducted from February 22, 2016 to March 8, 2016

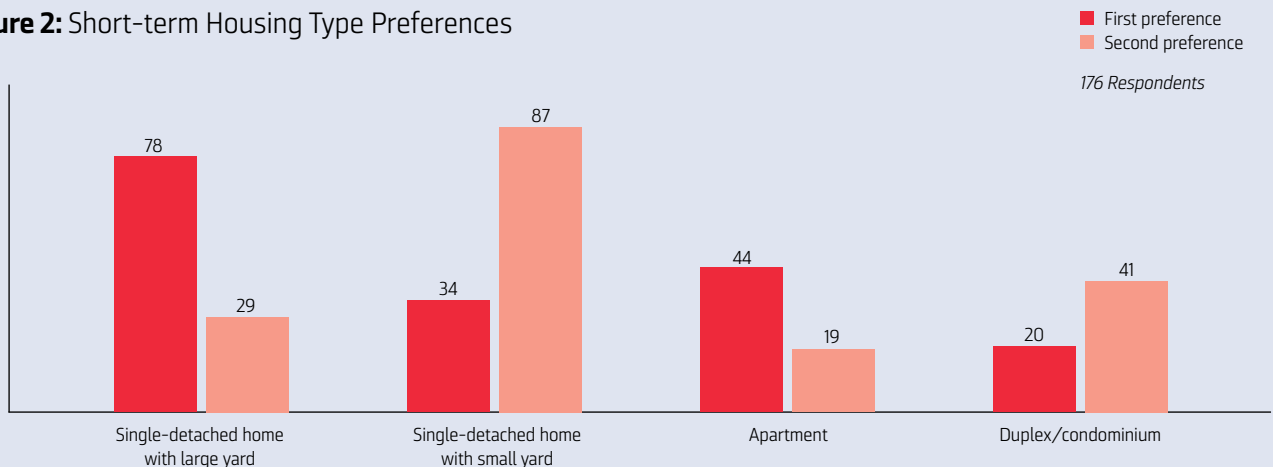
revealed neighbourhood and housing preferences of Gen Y in Lethbridge:

- They have diverse values.
- They have conflicting preferences and desires.
- Single family homes are the dominant form of housing for both short-term and long-term preferences.
- In the short-term, they prefer the inner-city and showed a general trend of preferences for mixed use neighbourhoods.
- In the long-term, they prefer moving out of the city entirely, and showed a general trend towards more suburban neighbourhoods and rural areas.
- They value privacy.
- They want housing that is close to amenities.
- Affordable housing is a priority for them.
- They expressed a moderate interest in redevelopment.
- Parks, open space and backyards are important to them.
- They want walkable neighbourhoods.

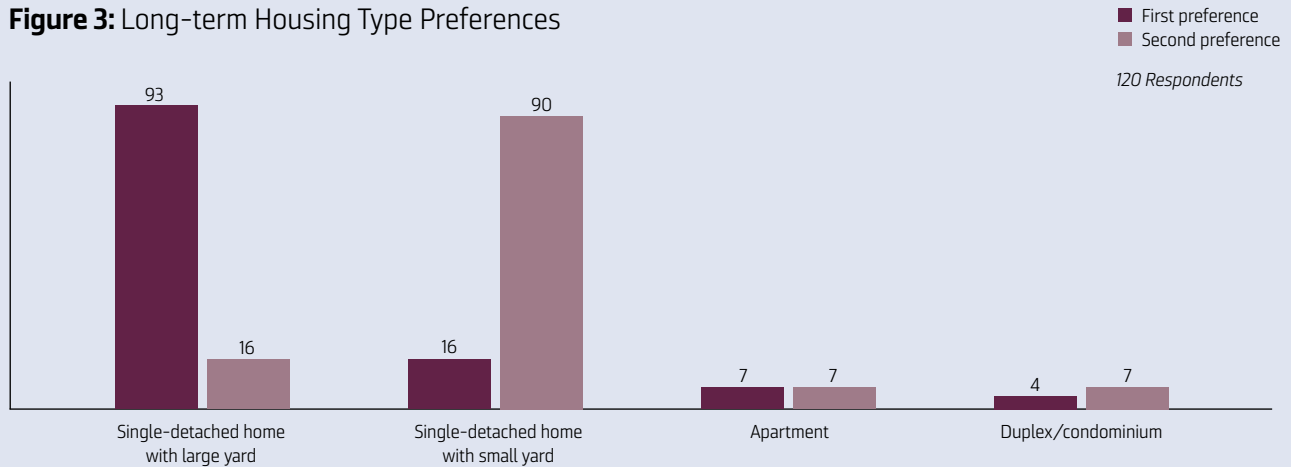
**Figure 1: Short-term Vs. Long-term Neighbourhood Preferences**



**Figure 2: Short-term Housing Type Preferences**



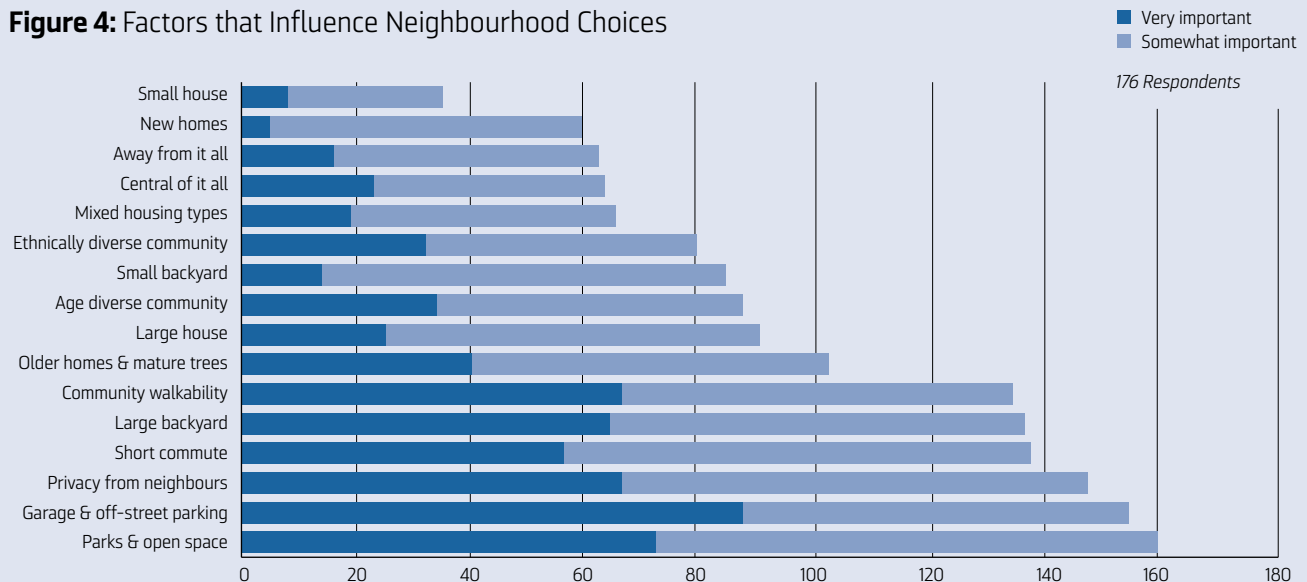
**Figure 3: Long-term Housing Type Preferences**



From a neighbourhood and housing perspective, millennials in Lethbridge are well aligned with the profile of Gen Y found in the literature review. Generation “Y” in Lethbridge determined affordable housing as the most important issue for Lethbridge to address. This finding matches the literature, specifically the ULI study that found cost considerations to be the most important neighbourhood and housing consideration. Further, the top three community features found in the ULI study (cost of housing, neighbourhood safety, and proximity to work) all match up with the attitudes of millennials in Lethbridge. Privacy, which could be considered related to neighbourhood safety, was listed as the third most important factor that influences neighbourhood choice for Gen Y in Lethbridge. A short commute was listed

as the fourth most important in our study, matching up with short commute importance in the ULI study. The diverse values and conflicting wants evident in the survey, particularly in the split of preferences between mixed use and predominately residential neighbourhoods, matches the literature finding of the largely unpredictable nature of Gen Y. The importance of parks, open space and backyards to millennials in Lethbridge did not match the findings from the ULI study, which surprisingly found that parks and recreation opportunities were among the least important community features to millennials. The desire for single-family homes and walkable neighbourhoods in our study exceeded the preference for single-family homes and walkable neighbourhood that was found in the literature.

**Figure 4: Factors that Influence Neighbourhood Choices**



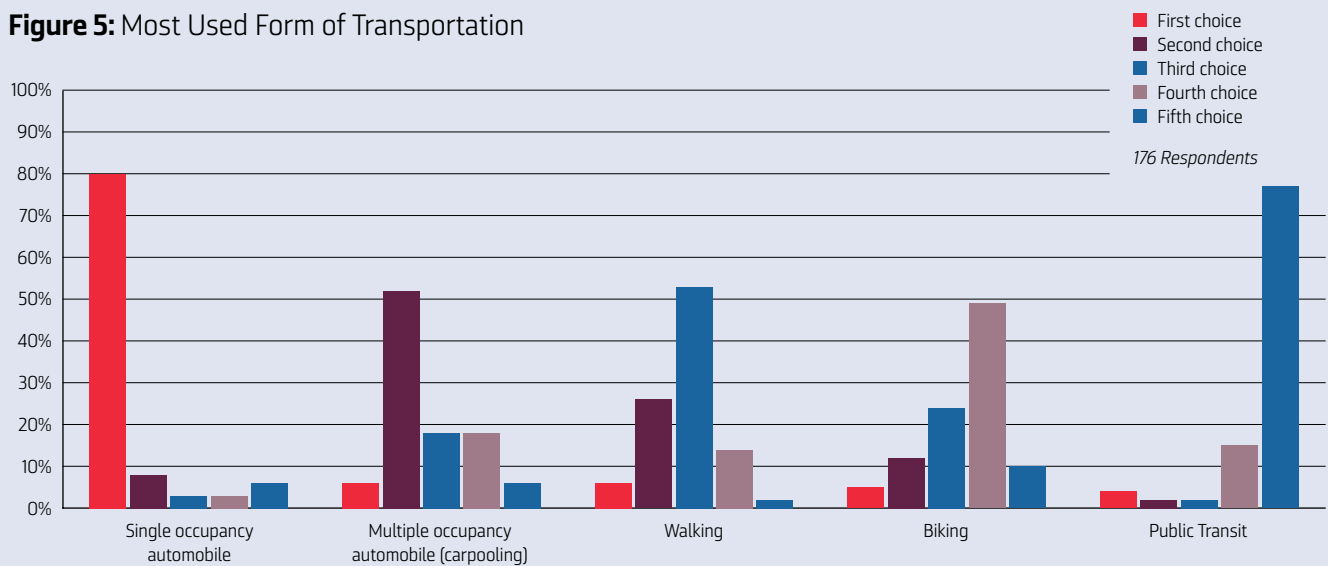
In terms of transportation, the literature highlight was that Gen Y:

- wants to be less reliant on their automobiles,
- focuses on alternative forms of transportation,
- puts a high value on public transportation,
- prefers to live in an area that has highly accessible public transportation,
- values walkable neighbourhoods, and
- wants easy access to public transportation.

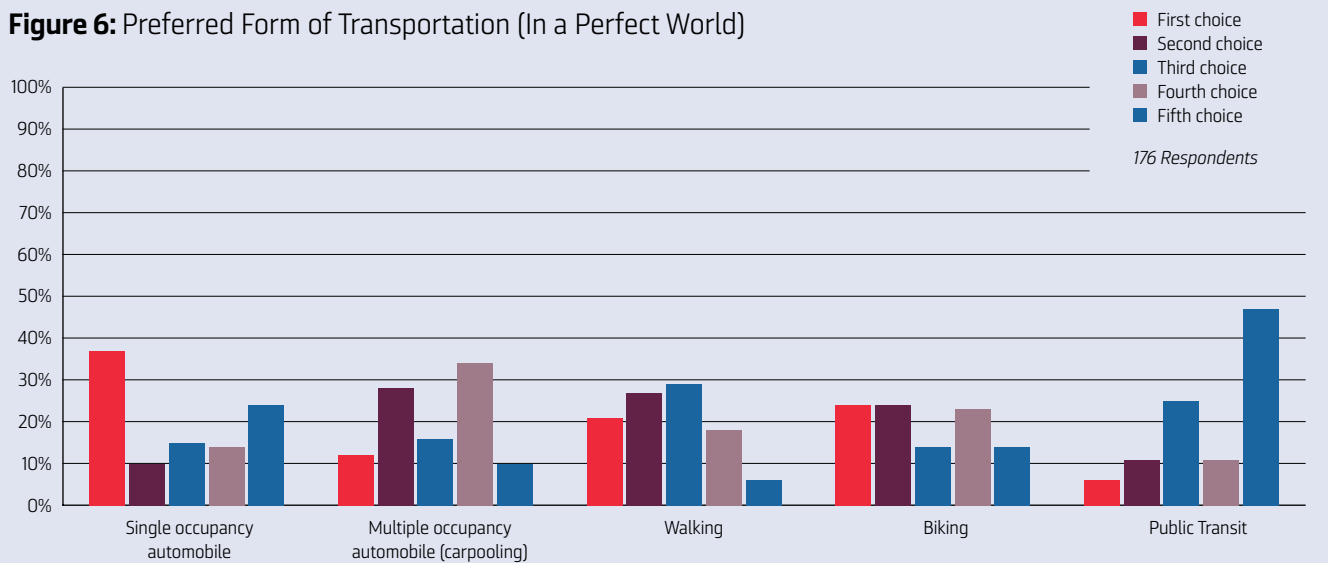
However, these findings were based on large American cities, and from analyzing our findings on transportation in Lethbridge, a mid-sized city, we have found that these trends do not entirely match up.

When looking at the data on transportation from Lethbridge, it is very clear that Gen Y is not interested in public transportation. The data showed that 71% of respondents use public transportation as their last choice, and only 4% use it as their first choice. Additionally, when respondents were asked their preferred mode of transportation in a "perfect world," only 6% of respondents preferred it as their first choice, which is a relatively small increase. However, data did show that Gen Y in Lethbridge is open to walking and biking as a preferred first choice, and there is a large decrease in preferences for single-occupancy automobile.

**Figure 5: Most Used Form of Transportation**



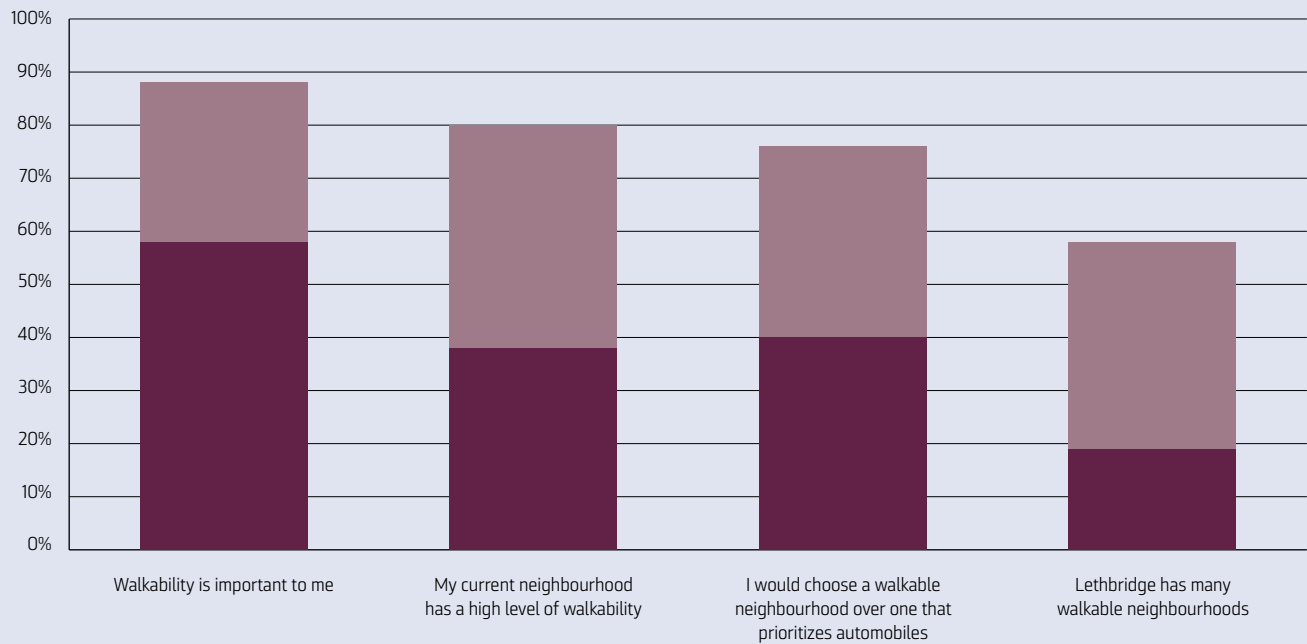
**Figure 6: Preferred Form of Transportation (In a Perfect World)**





**Figure 7: Walkability**

Strongly agree  
Agree  
176 Respondents



In a “perfect world” it can be argued that the literature review showing Gen Y being open to walkable neighbourhoods and being less reliant on the automobile does match up with the preferences of Gen Y in Lethbridge. This is especially true when looking at our findings on walkability, which showed that 90% of respondents believe that walkability is important to them, and 75% of respondents would choose a walkable neighbourhood over one that prioritizes the automobile.

In summary, the key takeaway from our study is that Gen Y is a diverse demographic group with unique neighbourhood, housing, lifestyle, and transportation preferences. It is important not to over generalize an entire demographic group. Within each city, Gen Y will likely express unique needs and preferences depending on the differing geographical and social landscapes in the communities they reside. Nevertheless, our findings deepen our common understanding of Gen Y and can be used as a comparative for other mid-sized cities across Western Canada when planning for the future needs of their communities. ■

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About the Authors

# Five Skills for Young Professional Planners

As a young professional working as a planning consultant, I often speak to students about my experiences in the industry. While academic studies provides a solid foundation in planning theory and history, students often ask what skills and competencies are needed to succeed early in their careers and beyond.

## Communication

Planners need to be able to articulate their message to a wide range of stakeholders and audiences. An accomplished planner will be fluent in the technical lingo of architects and engineers, but still be able to express their views in plain and accessible language for the broader public. We must be active and patient listeners, in order to truly understand the feedback and input that we seek out from stakeholders. Moreover, we often act as mediators and facilitators between groups with varying interests and potentially conflicting views. Public speaking is also an asset for planners, who serve as advocates for the public good and sound planning practice. Finally, written communication is also key, as writing planning reports, background studies, and development plans are common tasks in the planning profession.

## Research and Analysis

The ability to compile, analyze, and synthesize large amounts of information is invaluable to planners. While data is everywhere in today's digital world, it is a planner's job to distill it in order to pull out common themes and assess their relevance. Researching growth projections, demographic trends, local context, market conditions, and geography, etc., is crucial for the background studies that lay the foundation for plans. The ability to provide a planning rationale based on best practice, data, relevant information, and facts will help communities achieve their planning goals.

## Interdisciplinary Approach

From engineers and landscape architects to city councillors and residents, planners are often the professionals that coordinate between diverse groups, professions and disciplines. Planners should be able to see the "big picture," which is why they are often looked

upon to integrate transportation, sustainability, and design (among others) into land-use planning. Planning is also an iterative practice, where the interdisciplinary exchange of ideas and expertise occurs throughout a project's life-cycle.

## Problem Solving

Planning is about managing change. How can we accommodate density in existing neighbourhoods when residents are in stark opposition? How do we plan for alternative modes of transportation in self-proclaimed "car cities"? These are the types of problems that planners tackle on a daily basis, whether through policy, engagement, or other planning tools. Envisioning alternatives, proposing creative solutions, and applying best practices to the local context are just some of the methods respected planners employ to overcome barriers and constraints.

## Understanding the Planning Framework

Density. Sustainability. Mixed-used development. While these planning concepts are ingrained early in our studies, it often takes time and experience to understand the local planning framework within which to implement them. Know your province's legal framework for planning, including its planning act and any accompanying regulations. Recognize the difference between development plans, secondary plans, and zoning by-laws. Understand the application and approvals process for variances, conditional uses, rezonings, and subdivisions. Planners are most effective when they understand the implementation tools at their disposal and how these tools work in concert.

To the young planners hoping to gain experience (either on the job or elsewhere): Seek out opportunities for professional development, stay current on local context, get involved in your local affiliate, approach a mentor, and keep an open mind. ■

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About the Author



# Planning on the Prairies: First Nations Source Water Protection

Lake Winnipeg, Manitoba  
SOURCE: Carley Friesen

Drinking water contamination in First Nations (FN) communities on the prairies remains high despite advances in water treatment technology and improved water quality monitoring. Across the three prairie provinces, there were 51 drinking water advisories in effect including two boil water orders and two do not consume orders in FN communities as of March 31 2016.

Contributing factors to drinking water contamination in FN communities are many including water treatment plant malfunctions and lack of operator training (Galway 2016). Perception of drinking water safety and the economic consequence of bottled-water dependence are additional concerns for FN communities (Dupont, et al 2014). Finding solutions to drinking water quality problems in FN communities is complicated, but protection of drinking water sources from contamination has been identified as a critical first step (Patrick 2011; CCME 2004; O'Connor 2002).

## Issues

Source water is untreated water from groundwater or surface water sources that supplies drinking water for human consumption. Source water protection (SWP) is

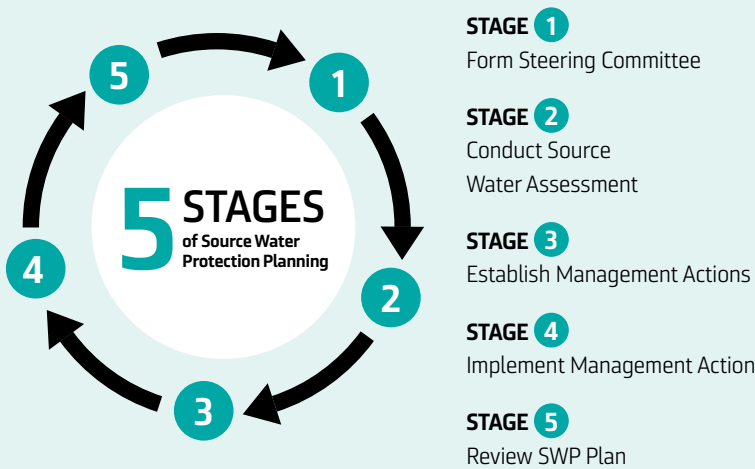
a vital first step in the protection of water supplies (CCME 2004). The concept of SWP gained media attention across Canada following the Walkerton, Ontario water contamination event of May 2000 (seven deaths; 2,300 serious illnesses). While Walkerton will forever remain a tragic event in Canada, water quality issues continue to plague FN communities, attracting little media attention. Recent funding announcements by the Federal government prioritize water treatment and distribution but do not mention SWP planning. This suggests the Federal government may be taking the approach of fixing FN community water treatment problems rather than a proactive planning approach that seeks to prevent problems from occurring at an earlier stage, such as SWP.

**Table 1:** Drinking Water Advisories, March 31, 2016

	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Manitoba
Boil Water Advisory	18	21	8
Boil Water Order	0	2	0
Do Not Consume	0	0	2
<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>10</b>
Average Duration	1.75 years	4 years	1.5 years
People Affected	9,600 (approx.)	15,000 (approx.)	8,300 (approx.)

SOURCE: Health Canada 2016

**Figure 1:** Source Water Protection Planning Process



SOURCE: AANDC 2013

SOURCE: Robert J. Patrick PHD, MCIP, RPP



## Goals

The practice of SWP seeks to reduce the risk of contamination to drinking water supplies. Recent planning activities with FN communities on the prairies have followed a systematic planning framework to develop SWP plans, consisting of threat identification followed by management actions and an implementation strategy. These SWP plans identified a range of water supply risks and showed some interesting patterns. For example, the practice of truck-hauling drinking water from a treatment plant to a household cistern creates opportunity for water contamination. Similarly, poorly constructed landfills and inadequate household sewage disposal systems threaten source water. The purpose of this paper is to report the results of SWP planning processes in FN communities across the prairies and the highest risks to source water that were identified.

## Approach

The SWP planning process used in these communities followed an approach developed by Aboriginal Affairs (AANDC 2013) with the following five stages of plan development (see Figure 1).

**Stage 1:** Establish a working committee responsible for the development of the plan, consisting of volunteers from the FN community.

**Stage 2:** Complete a source water assessment of the community water system and source water supply area, including a risk assessment. This stage of the planning cycle has multiple components including a description of the water service area, source of water supply, an inventory of potential water quality threats, and a risk assessment of those threats.

**Stage 3:** Identify risk management actions to reduce or eliminate the potential risks previously identified.

**Stage 4:** Develop an implementation strategy that will identify timelines for completion of risk management action items noted in the previous stage. In addition, key partnerships to help facilitate plan implementation will be identified as part of the implementation strategy.

**Stage 5:** Review and update of the SWP plan should occur on a regular basis to record completion of specific management actions. A full review of the plan should occur on a five-year cycle with a purpose to report plan implementation progress, including water quality monitoring results, to re-evaluate risk management actions, and to re-engage the working committee and the broader community on planning progress and next steps.



Wapiti River, Alberta  
SOURCE: Carley Friesen

Risks to drinking water sources, either groundwater or surface water supplies, from five different prairie FN communities are listed in Table 2. Individual FN communities are not identified for confidentiality; however, the provincial jurisdiction is indicated. For each community the risk factor was calculated by multiplying the likelihood of an impact (value 1-5) by the consequence of an impact

(value 1-5). For example, the likelihood of a flood event in the community may be high (value 5) but the consequence to water quality may only be moderate (value 3). In this example the risk rank is 15. Therefore, the lowest possible risk rank is 1, the greatest 25. Using a consensus model, the risk ranks were the product of open discussion within the working committee.

**Table 2: Risks to Drinking Water Sources**

RISK RANK	Alberta 1	Alberta 2	Saskatchewan 1	Saskatchewan 2	Saskatchewan 3
<b>HIGH</b> 16-25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cisterns</li> <li>• Industrial drilling</li> <li>• Transport hazardous goods</li> <li>• Septic 'shoot outs'</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diesel spillage</li> <li>• Illegal dump sites</li> <li>• Livestock close to wells</li> <li>• Abandoned vehicles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Septic tank</li> <li>• 'Jet outs'</li> <li>• Agricultural land</li> <li>• Septic fields</li> <li>• Sewage lagoons</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sewage lagoons</li> <li>• Private wells</li> <li>• Cisterns</li> <li>• Flooded wells</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Vulnerable community well</li> <li>• Septic tank</li> <li>• 'shoot outs'</li> <li>• Abandoned wells</li> <li>• Illegal dumpsites</li> </ul>
<b>MODERATE</b> 9-15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pipelines</li> <li>• Commercial fuel tanks</li> <li>• Recreational off roading</li> <li>• Illegal dump sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abandoned wells</li> <li>• Private fuel tanks</li> <li>• Rail transport and rail lines</li> <li>• Pesticide containers</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Backyard mechanics</li> <li>• Old vehicles</li> <li>• Private fuel tanks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Animal carcasses</li> <li>• Agriculture</li> <li>• Horses</li> <li>• Dogs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Landfill</li> </ul>
<b>LOW</b> 1-8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Septic fields</li> <li>• landfill</li> <li>• Private fuel tanks</li> <li>• Sewage lagoon</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Abandoned septic tanks</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Aerial spraying</li> <li>• Recreational activities</li> <li>• Agricultural waste</li> <li>• Dugouts and ponding water</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Diesel Shed</li> <li>• Backyard mechanics</li> <li>• Garbage sites</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Former industrial sites</li> <li>• Old sewage lagoons</li> </ul>



South Saskatchewan River, Saskatchewan

SOURCE: Daniel LeMay

## Challenges

As in any planning process the question of appropriate governance structure must be addressed at the outset. Questions of plan legitimacy, committee structure, support from the FN chief and council, and the plan relationship with adjacent jurisdictions and agencies must be addressed. There is no question the FN community should take ownership of the planning process; however, other questions must be addressed. Will the plan only assess FN community concerns? How might local watershed organizations contribute? Will a FN council resolution be sought at the outset of plan-making? What will be the make-up of the working committee?

A deeper philosophical challenge is faced by the type of knowledge to be included in the plan. Western-science is privileged by the rational planning model identified in this paper. Western-science may be useful for gaining technical information but may miss traditional and local knowledge. The inclusion of multiple knowledge types will enhance plan ownership and strengthen planning outcomes.

## Successes

Recent completion of several FN SWP plans on the prairies serve as positive examples not only for other FN communities but also for towns and municipalities wanting to develop their own SWP plans. Accessing federal funding programs has assisted plan implementation in several communities. These federal funds supported plan development, a relatively small cost, as well as plan implementation—potentially a sizeable cost.

To date, attention to drinking water quality in FN communities has centred on the water treatment plant and operator training—an approach reflecting federal programs aimed at “fixing” the water treatment problem. Much less attention has been given to preventative approaches such as SWP. Engaging with community members on the topic of planning, drinking water protection, and land management is consistent with traditional practices of caring for the land and water. By formalizing these more traditional practices through plan-making, community members become active participants, empowered and informed. Through plan-making a FN community gains greater leverage for accessing external funding to support plan implementation.

## Lessons Learned

The importance of relationship building between a SWP plan facilitator and the FN community cannot be overstated. First Nations' communities have long been isolated and often ignored by non-First Nations. As a non-First Nation planner, asking for an invitation to the community, meeting with leadership and staff, even hosting a meal, has always been warmly received in my experience. Avoid entering the First Nation as the professional on a mission of "doing research" or "fixing the problem." First Nations' communities have planned and managed their land long before "professional" planning arrived in North America. Remain open to learn from your hosts and be willing to work with the many dedicated, skilled, and knowledgeable community members.

Identification of a plan champion is critical in all plan-making. In FN communities, formal written plans are a relatively new phenomenon. As such, there may not be an identifiable person to take on the task of plan champion. Staff members will already be busy in most cases and unable to take on additional workloads. When the plan is completed there will be need for someone to act as plan implementation coordinator. This could also be the plan champion. How to resolve this issue will vary amongst FN communities. In one Alberta FN community, a plan implementation coordinator was hired on a term appointment supported by private funding. With more and more First Nations developing community plans, including SWP plans, planners will increasingly be in demand in FN communities. Plan-making offers opportunity to visit community schools to inform youth, gather youth perspectives into the plan, but also to raise awareness of planning as a profession.

Planning to protect sources of drinking water in First Nations, by First Nations, not only helps to protect water sources but also serves to engage community members in land and water management practices to empower individuals and build community capital. While First Nations have some of the worst water quality in Canada, they are well poised to be leaders in source water protection planning. ■

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About the Author

## Call for Submissions: THE WATER ISSUE

As this article demonstrates, our changing Northwestern landscape shares many issues, and the importance of water supply, use and quality is one of them. The South and North Saskatchewan River and Churchill River Basins link all three prairie provinces, while the Athabasca and Assiniboine River Basins are just two more examples of the Northwest's vital and precious water resources.

*PLAN North West* is preparing a special issue exploring water. Drought and flood, access and ownership, recreation and resource, drinking water and waste water, boundaries and lack thereof—What are the issues that your region is dealing with? Authors are invited to submit articles specific to water planning to [plannorthwest@gmail.com](mailto:plannorthwest@gmail.com).

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# Analytics: Reshaping How Communities are Planned

SOURCE: iStock

Predictive analytics is radically reshaping how governments serve their citizens. Analytics is the analysis of data or statistics, but predictive analytics goes beyond descriptive and diagnostic data analytics used in traditional Business Intelligence (BI) enabling predictions (what will happen?) and prescriptions (what should we do?). Predictive analytics aim to discover deeper insights, make predictions, and generate recommendations by utilizing machine learning algorithms.

This data-driven approach enables planning to be:

- innovative by proposing new solutions to existing municipal challenges,
- responsive by providing services based on varying levels of needs across the city,
- responsible by producing more results from public funds, and
- transparent by measuring and sharing the performance metrics and feedback on local government services and operations.

Local government leaders across North America are seeking innovation and efficiency, and analytics can help them achieve these goals.

A smart city should learn from data to predict future needs and identify potential planning issues. Predictive analytics enables communities to consider

the vast amounts of data they have at their fingertips, such as citizen demographics, development permits, and environmental data.

Analytics empowers planners to improve delivery of services, gain land use efficiencies, and assist with operations that benefit the lives of citizens. New York City was the first to recognize this with their creation of the Mayor's Office of Data Analytics (MODA). This initiative revolutionized the use of data analytics with projects, such as their groundbreaking Risk-Based Fire Inspection System.

Here in Canada, the City of Edmonton is leading the analytics charge with the Analytics Centre of Excellence (ACE), a timely response to an emergent need. ACE operates under the Open City Initiative, which was officially formed in April 2015 when City Council



approved the Open City Policy, enabling the corporation to be “open by default.” Creating a team specifically focussed on data analytics was the logical next step after the City’s hugely successful Open Data initiative.

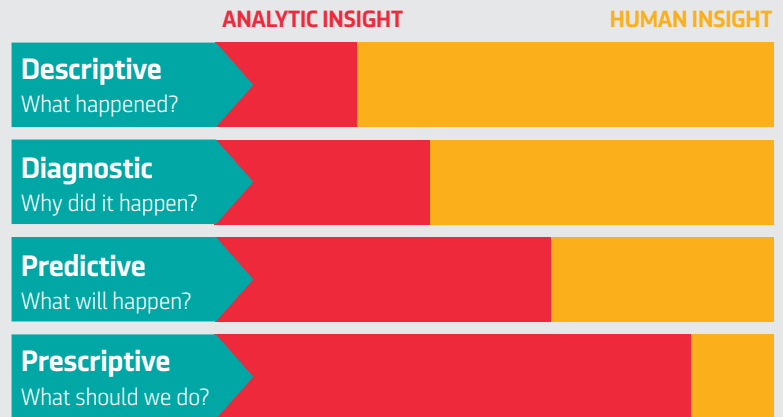
The ACE assists the City of Edmonton in understanding and leveraging analytics to improve outcomes for staff and citizens. They work collaboratively with departments to understand business processes and develop data-driven analytics solutions to tackle business problems. They also provide leadership, best practices, research, support, and training.

### Case Study: Late-Night Vibrancy Analytics

A recent example of leveraging predictive analytics is the partnership between ACE and Responsible Hospitality Edmonton (RHE). The City of Edmonton’s RHE office is responsible for policy development to support safety and vibrancy in the late-night economy. As one of the few municipalities in North America with an office dedicated to supporting the late-night economy, Edmonton is recognized as an international leader in planning for “the other 9 to 5.”

Responsible Hospitality Edmonton recognizes that the best city streets and sidewalks are vibrant and lively areas that exhibit a variety of uses. These areas attract diverse, multi-generational crowds day and night, in numbers that create a sense of welcome and liveliness that fosters civic sociability. However, high concentrations of people can also breed chaos if not

**Figure 1: Increasing Capability of Analytics**



managed properly. This concept can be expanded to apply to main streets even in smaller communities.

Using RHE’s expert knowledge about Late-night Entertainment Destinations, along with a wide range of municipal data, ACE used machine learning to develop a rule-based model for late-night vibrancy.

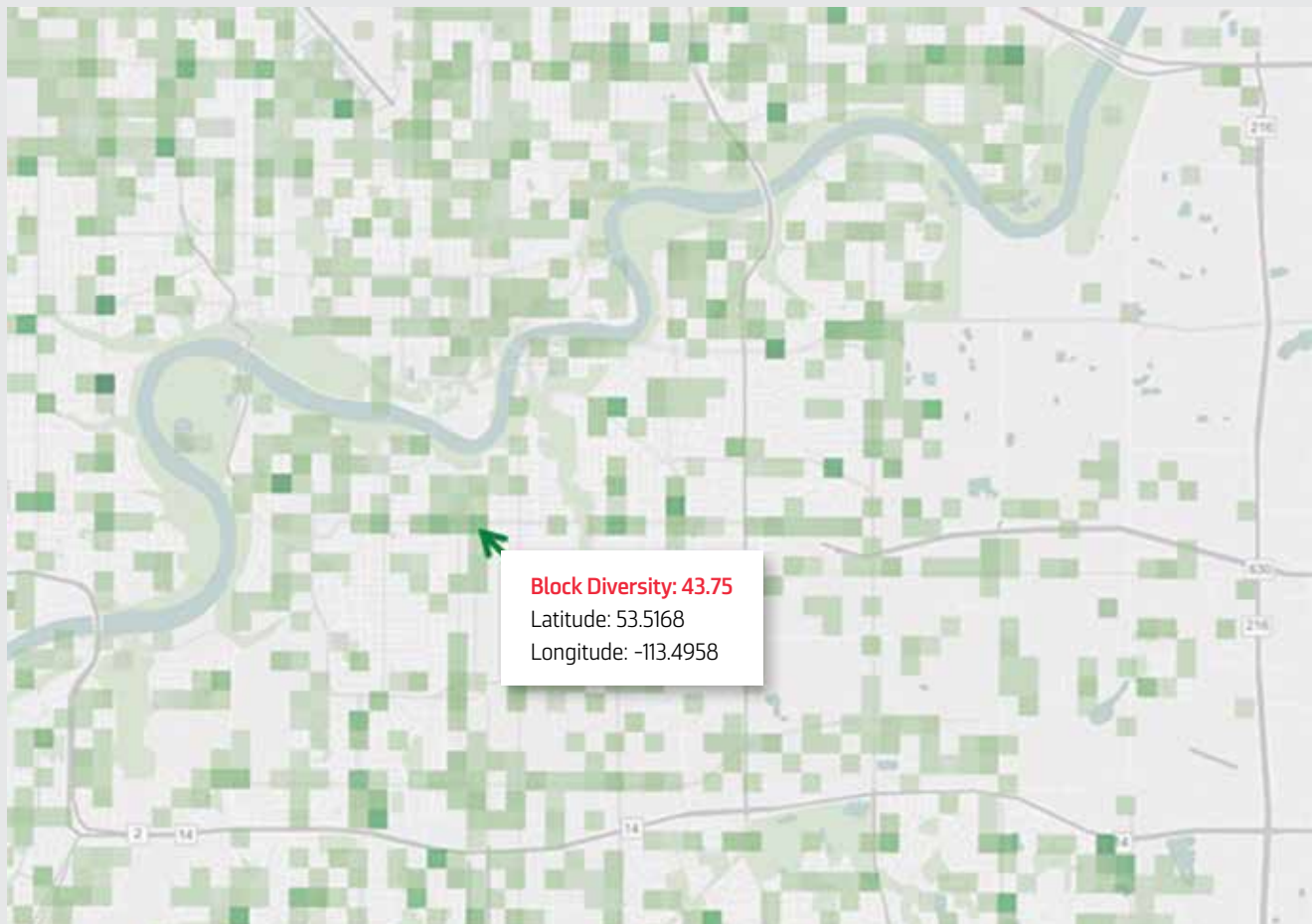
The Late-Night Vibrancy Analytics project was based on the Entertainment Destinations Capacity Theory previously developed by RHE. The theory suggests Entertainment Destination Neighbourhoods that feature a high concentration of daytime, early evening and late-night use, and operate in close

SOURCE: Adopted from Gartner Analytics Ascendancy Model

A sidewalk in a mixed-use Entertainment Area in Edmonton during the late-night.

SOURCE: RHE



**Figure 2:** Diversity and Density of Businesses in Edmonton

proximity to residents, have a tipping point between vibrancy and chaos. Entertainment Areas that generate a high volume of the complaints related to quality of life are operating beyond their capacity. RHE believes it is possible to determine, measure and manage this tipping point.

ACE used predictive analytics as a holistic approach to extract a set of patterns and insights from different layers of data (e.g., mix of uses, levels of service, and incidents) on entertainment destinations. Vibrancy levels (low, medium, high, and chaotic) were calculated using three key factors that are widely accepted among experts in planning urban entertainment areas including: number of reported crime incidents, types of businesses, and density of businesses. Figure 2 illustrates the diversity (number of different types) and density (total number) of businesses in each block of 250 m by 250 m in Edmonton (the color represents the normalized value).

Using a grid of the city, ACE took the vibrancy level at each block as the dependent variable on a wide array of data layers, represented by 523 variables aggregated by each block. Some of the indicators used in the project included:

- bylaw infractions,
- fire rescue services incidents,
- transit incidents,
- transit services (locations and frequency of service),
- statistics on different types of businesses, and
- citizen demographics and other census data.

The ACE then used a rule induction algorithm to create a set of rules modeling vibrancy levels across the city. The analysis results provide data-driven insights that can form the basis for developing policies, plans and strategies for vibrant neighbourhoods. These outcomes will



SOURCE: APPI

enable leadership in communities to improve their intuition and vision of managing neighbourhoods and precincts through a consistent approach. The thresholds and patterns that are extracted provide insights about the tipping point—when an entertainment destination goes from being vibrant to chaotic. These insights will empower informed planning and decision making by law enforcement and planners.

Responsible Hospitality Edmonton intends to use the insights from this project to help create a formula or composite index for late-night vibrancy. Although further analysis and testing is required, in particular regarding pedestrians and sidewalk uses, RHE anticipates this work will provide the City of Edmonton with insights for better planning of Entertainment Destination areas, including informing:

- area specific design features,
- changes to zoning guidelines,
- location and interrelationship of hard surfaces including sidewalks and roads,
- sidewalk width requirements,
- business licensing, and
- civic services.

Using this project’s data-driven insights, RHE will work with internal and external partners to further advance the Entertainment Destinations Capacity Theory, and to develop policies that support late-night vibrancy.

The Late-Night Vibrancy Analytics project is a testament to the efficacy of using predictive analytics and big data to inform planning policy and development. It is just one example of how predictive and prescriptive analytics can contribute to successful planning results, providing data-driven and actionable outcomes. ACE is at the forefront of the analytics frontier, ensuring innovative data-driven planning and policy development within the City of Edmonton. The Entertainment Destinations Capacity Theory and the Late-Night Vibrancy Analytics project are providing ground-breaking research in support of the night-time economy.

The City recognizes its position as part of the broader Open Government movement, and commits to participating in building out a vibrant and cohesive data and information ecosystem across regional, provincial and Canadian public sector jurisdictions and entities. ■

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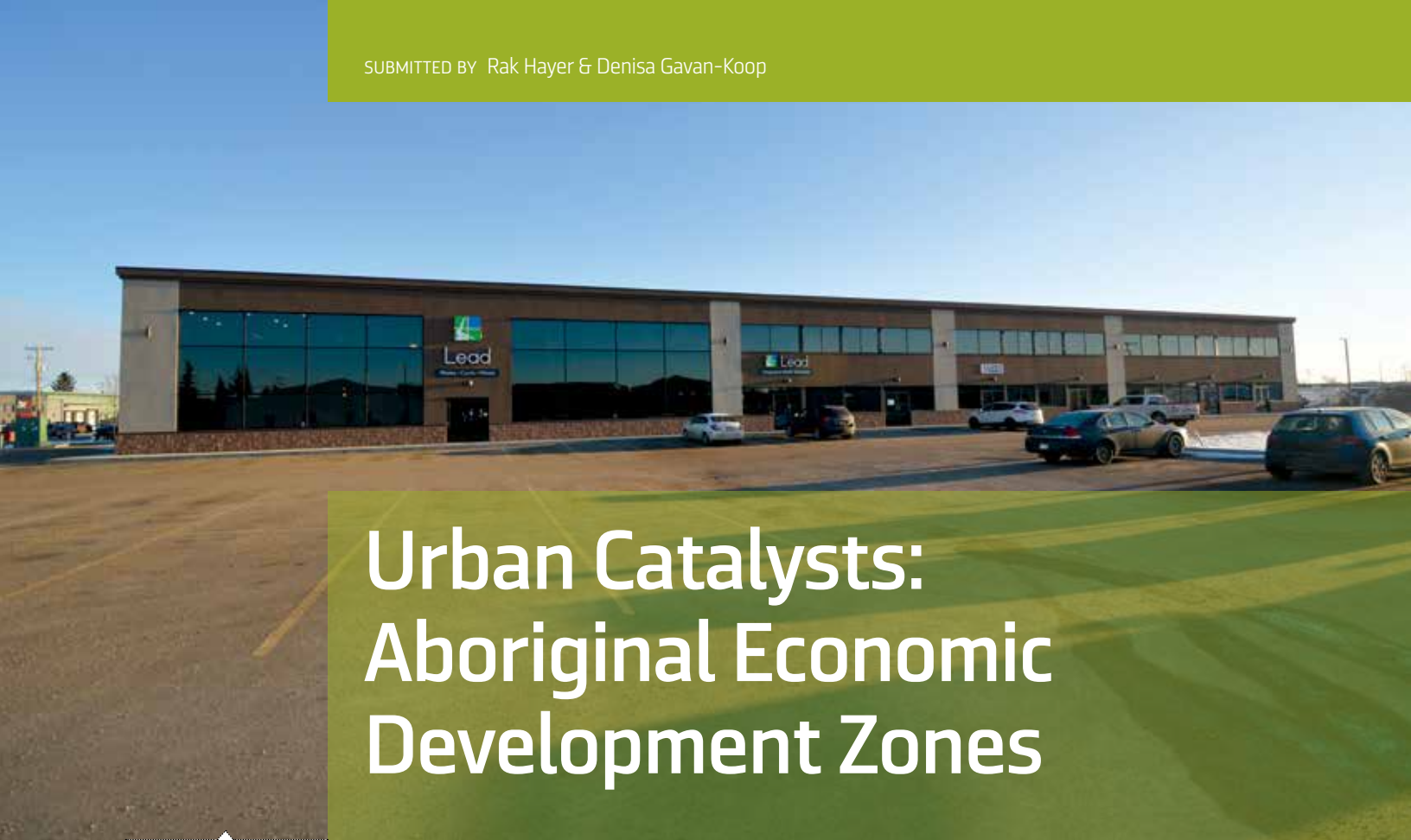
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About the Authors



# Urban Catalysts: Aboriginal Economic Development Zones

A commercial retail/office complex and newest facility held under the corporate name of Pitihkwakew Holdings LP—Muskeg Lake Cree Nation Urban Reserve, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. Named after former Chief Pitihkwakew of the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation and signatory to Treaty Six.

SOURCE: Paul Ledoux, Muskeg Lake Cree Nation Councillor

The relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people is at a turning point. In Canada, First Nations are coming out of a stage characterized by displacement and assimilation, towards a stage of reconciliation and negotiation. Increasingly, First Nations communities are re-attaining self-government and rightful access to their ancestral lands. A key outcome of this process has been a shift in many First Nations communities towards urbanization. Out-migration from rural First Nations is also providing Indigenous youth with opportunities to navigate new communities when pursuing careers in Canadian cities. According to Statistics Canada, 7% of First Nations members in Canada in 1951 lived in cities nationally; that number jumped to 41.2% in 2011.

As urban populations increase, many First Nations are looking toward urban markets to create economic development strategies for their peoples. The creation of Aboriginal Economic Development Zones (AEDZ) is one way in which First Nations are pursuing this objective. On an AEDZ band council jurisdiction replaces jurisdiction by the municipality. First Nations properties are exempt from paying municipal taxes and levies, and businesses located on an urban reserve are eligible for business assistance programs and have access to various First Nations investment capital. AEDZs provide First Nations members with an excellent environment for economic development, but they can also benefit

the surrounding cities in tandem. While municipal governments benefit from increased revenue from service provision, local businesses benefit from additional customers for their goods and services. Advantages for First Nations include proximity to large urban markets, access to skilled labour, and access to wider markets, lower transportation costs, and increased employment opportunities closer to growing populations of urban First Nations members. AEDZs within a city's core can make positive contributions to the community, and contribute to the economic development of the city and the participating First Nations.

Winnipeg is home to the largest population of First Nations people of any city in Canada. According to the 2011 Census, 11% of Winnipeg's population is of Aboriginal origin, and that number is predicted to double within the next two decades. While the Aboriginal community forms a significant proportion of Winnipeg's population, they are underrepresented in every aspect of society except those associated with poverty. Consequently, not only is the city losing out on the potential contributions from a significant portion of its population, the economic inequity between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people can and should be considered unjust. The implementation of Treaty Land Entitlement initiatives within Winnipeg (necessary for establishing urban AEDZs) is not only a means to creating economic development and opportunity for urban populations, but also a key factor in facilitating a pathway towards equity for the Aboriginal community in Winnipeg.

Unfortunately, municipal planners and First Nations are only now beginning to work together in Manitoba. Moreover, there are few resources available to help guide them through this complex relationship. Consequently, First Nations and municipal planners are left to practice this kind of collaborative work under great uncertainty. Negotiating with municipalities is one of the most pressing challenges in creating AEDZs.

However, there are success stories and best practices throughout Canada. Winnipeg's first AEDZ officially opened in February 2015 by the Long Plain First Nation at 480 Madison Street. Grand Chief Murray Clearsky hailed this development as a catalyst for economic independence. He said, "It's time we took the bull by the horns and start to have economic businesses ourselves, for ourselves, our youth and our communities." There are currently six AEDZs in Manitoba, however, in comparison, Saskatchewan boasts a total of 54 AEDZs. In fact, Canada's first AEDZ was located on the Muskeg Lake Cree Nation in 1988 in Saskatchewan. Asimakaniseekan Askiy was the first Canadian reserve to be built on land that was previously set aside for city development. As the reserve developed, it soon became a commercial hub in southeast Saskatoon that includes the McKnight Commercial Centre where the Saskatchewan Indian Gaming Authority, Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, and Peace Hills Trust are the main tenants.

AEDZs are urban catalysts that create jobs and have a reverberating economic impact on the municipality in which they are situated. According to the National Aboriginal Economic Development Board (2014) report *Improving the Economic Success of Urban Additions to*

*AEDZs are urban catalysts that create jobs and have a reverberating economic impact on the municipality in which they are situated.*



*Reserves*, significant economic and fiscal benefits are being generated from investments made on reserves. These include:

- the Shuswap Band creating 280 jobs and approximately \$1.7 million in off reserve spending by current reserve residents annually,
- the Westbank First Nation creating approximately 3,400 jobs and \$36.3 million in off reserve spending by reserve residents annually, and
- the Opaskwayak Cree Nation urban reserve creating approximately 530 jobs held by reserve residents, and approximately \$10.4 million in off reserve spending by reserve residents.

AEDZs are urban catalysts for job creation and investment, and have economic benefits to the municipalities in which they are located. They also benefit the First Nations peoples and allow them to promote their economic independence and future prosperity. ■

Winnipeg is home to the largest population of First Nations people of any city in Canada.

SOURCE: iStock

**Rak Hayer** and **Denisa Gavan-Koop** are both planning consultants with Richard Wintrup & Associates in Winnipeg, Manitoba. The firm recently organized an interdisciplinary conference that explored several pertinent issues related to successful development on Aboriginal Economic Development Zones.

About the Authors



# Planning for Sustainability: A New Paradigm for Canada's New North

Arctic Bay, Baffin Island

SOURCE: Ronald Morrison MES,  
MCIP, RPP

The North has undergone change leading to a new identity, with it being referred to as the "New North." But what does the "New North" mean? What is different? The changes that have occurred in the North are calling for different approaches and fresh thinking to transform the resource wealth of our vast untapped northern landscape.

The North is a storehouse of resources that can create shared value across Canada. The territories and northern halves of the provinces represent an immense part of the country sitting on the cusp of a new era of opportunity, waiting for a breakthrough in development planning that will set a precedent for a new model of stakeholder relations. The potential presents an opportunity to stretch the traditional spatial perspectives of our country northward from its more developed southern confines, where the majority of our population lives less than 200 kilometers from the U.S. border.

From this position, the North is commonly perceived of as an endless frozen wasteland. Government has recognized the significance of this expanse of geography in terms of its value in natural resource commodities, and asserting our national

sovereignty amid intrusions of foreign interests. The latter has become increasingly important given the more recent opening of previously ice locked northern transportation routes with climate change.

Although development has occurred as a patchwork of natural resource projects across the northern parts of the provinces, it has also been met with seemingly endless conflict, and has not realized the strategic benefits of building infrastructure and populating sustainable northern communities. One of Canada's preeminent planners, John Van Nostrand, recently referred to the "Mid-Canada Corridor," which includes much of the North, as, "...millions of square kilometers representing something of a forgotten zone through the mid-section of Canada—having the potential to become the most productive part of our economy."

Canada's enviable edge on the world stage is its natural resources. Accounting for about one fifth of our gross domestic product, they are a major contributor to the prosperity that we enjoy as Canadians.

Despite the recent downturn in the energy sector in Western Canada that has rippled throughout our national economy, our resource base holds much promise for a return to prosperous times. This will, however, require bold visions, better planning, and more collaboration than has occurred in the past. The continued development of our resources requires investment in infrastructure and strategic planning, but is faced with the challenges of ongoing legal, and political and local resistance, as well as opposition from well-funded foreign lobbies.

With these challenges it's no surprise that much of the North remains largely unpopulated, undeveloped and unappreciated, despite it being a huge part of the country with unparalleled natural beauty and economic potential. Although there have been local and regional socio-economic benefits in the North, it has yet to be planned for as a means to permanently contribute to the prosperity of our national economy and security in sovereignty, while concurrently building capacity for the First Nations people that have stewarded the land for centuries.

## The Development Dilemma and Planning Challenges in the North

For decades the North has been the subject of development proposals representing billions of dollars in public and private investments, however, many have been unable to proceed. Similarly, planning efforts at the regional level have met with limited success in balancing development and conservation land use interests. The inability to effectively collaborate and move beyond the divergence of values has created a development dilemma and challenged planning.

For example, the early campaigns against clear cut logging of old growth forests in the Clayoquot Sound area of BC, and numerous other environmental and social conflicts have polarized public opinions and stigmatized development in planning initiatives.

Almost thirty years after the initial campaigns opposing logging in Clayoquot Sound, a recent, final agreement was reached that protects the Great Bear Rainforest and ensures opportunities for economic development and jobs for local First Nations. Some claim the agreement is an ideal, modern day model, of collaboration and planning for sustainability.

Tungsten Mine, Northwest Territories

SOURCE: Ronald Morrison MES, MCIP, RPP





Consultation

SOURCE: Ronald Morrison MES,  
MCIP, RPP

*With communities and corporations embracing sustainability, opportunities for planning will continue to emerge.*

The Peel River Watershed in the Yukon is another example. After 14 years of land use planning efforts, an impasse between the Yukon government and a coalition of First Nations and environmental non-governmental organizations has pushed the future fate of the area to the Supreme Court of Canada. With significant mineral development interests in the region, the essence of the conflict are proposed changes that would reduce the area of protected wilderness land. The key to the resolution of the conflict is identifying what can be agreed upon as a reasonable and realistic balance between wilderness protection and opportunity for resource development.

There is much that can be learned from these examples to support the kind of change that would bring more balance between development and conservation to the North. This new approach will need to be open in the perception of and dialogue around development to embrace sustainability, while attracting investment, and enabling opportunities that enhance social, economic, and environmental outcomes.

It will also need to contribute to the greater good and embrace the different perspectives of the North's role in our country. It will need to question what the North means to Canada. The charter for change will need to formulate a new way of doing business in the "New North." Underlying this change will be innovation in planning that builds partnerships and adopts a broader, more realistic, and collaborative outlook to better evaluate competing land uses and to create shared value.

### **The Role of Planning and Sustainability Toward Change**

With Canada's population being over 80% urbanized, the focus of mainstream planning has been in the municipal context. Nonetheless, the huge resource potential of the North presents a significant role for planning, and the opportunity for planning to help realize significant regional and national social and economic benefits.

The building of shared equity, communication, and relationships among a cross-section of stakeholders in the North, presents opportunities for the engagement, consultation, and evaluation skills of planners.

Planning is about managing change. As past challenges in the North have resulted in missed opportunities and lost investment in capacity building, jobs, and infrastructure, planning processes in the "New North" need to better understand how change and innovation can drive new approaches and develop a new paradigm for northern development and conservation.



Perhaps the most significant change confronting planning has been the increasing influence and importance of the social dimension. Five years ago, we never heard the term “social licence.” More recently, the concept is often referred to in conflicting discussions among stakeholders where there is opposition to energy, pipeline, mining and other development proposals. There are no criteria, rules or regulatory compliance for social licence, leaving claims by project opponents undefined and vague, yet with a sense of influence and authority. The idea that some abstract form of social licence must be satisfied to approve a project or proposed land use serves only to increase polarity among stakeholders and defer development.

The uncertainty and timing around land claims represents another constraint that can limit development. It is important for project proponents to build understanding with First Nations so that treaties and revenue sharing agreements can be negotiated in concert with and/or following planning and environmental assessment processes. Opportunities for economic investment need not be forsaken while waiting for pending agreements.

Beyond the challenges of social licence and land claims, a new approach to community governance and planning is required that will balance these interests with those of First Nations communities. The approach will need to convey the message of the North as being “open for business.”

At the same time, planning processes need to carefully consider risks that can lead to court proceedings with parties at discord. Planning is a building process that takes time, but also needs to avoid protracted exercises that ultimately become costly legal and political battles. Once planning enters into litigation, the process becomes adversarial. All timelines of the planning process are thrown out and deliberations can extend indefinitely, causing escalation of costs.

## Innovation in Planning to Better Balance Land Uses

Closing the gaps among public, government, First Nations, conservation, and industry interests should be an overarching goal in seeking innovation, opportunities to reconcile land use conflicts, and greater equity from development. Community readiness to participate in economic development opportunities, fostering a competitive fiscal environment for businesses to invest, addressing regulatory complexities, and financing infrastructure projects with strong triple bottom line returns are further objectives recommended in a recent Centre for the North study by the Conference Board of Canada.

There are a variety of emerging tools in planning for sustainability that can assist in bringing about positive change. At both the national and international levels, sustainability performance standards and guidelines have been applied in planning and assessment to address issues and guide industry projects to mitigate and compensate for or offset any residual social and environmental impacts of development.

With communities and corporations embracing sustainability, opportunities for planning will continue to emerge. Professional and technical expertise in the planning process, the creation of shared social and economic value, environmental protection, and stakeholder partnerships in planning for change will be the keys to unlocking the potential of the North. As planners, we need to initiate, facilitate, and complete planning processes that are more efficient and effective in achieving common goals for a prosperous North as an important part of Canada's future. ■

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*Based on a presentation to the Northern Planning Conference, Whitehorse, Yukon, February, 2016*



Pond Inlet, Baffin Island

SOURCE: Ronald Morrison MES, MCIP, RPP

**Ronald Morrison** MES, MCIP, RPP is a registered professional planner and founder of *Sustainability North Inc.* Mr. Morrison specializes in corporate and community sustainability, regulatory affairs, and environmental planning. With more than 30 years of experience in the public and private sectors, he has worked across Canada and maintained a special interest in the North from early career assignments in the Yukon, NWT and Nunavut. He also currently serves as Vice-Chair, National Initiatives Advisory Committee of the Canadian Institute of Planners.

About the Author



# Evolution as a Kaleidoscope: Exploring Resiliency and Relevancy in Lethbridge

SOURCE: City of Lethbridge

This article explores the journey that the City of Lethbridge is currently taking to update its Municipal Development Plan (MDP). An MDP is the primary policy document that addresses future land use and development in an Alberta municipality.

Two key concepts—*resiliency* and *relevancy*—are presented to help bring focus to complex forces that influence long-range planning and community evolution. These concepts are particularly relevant in Lethbridge as it nears a population milestone of 100,000, and relate to three conversations facing the City: environmental protection, changing demographics, and building relationships with indigenous peoples.

## Understanding Community Evolution

In 2014, former Governor General Adrienne Clarkson gave a lecture series entitled *Belonging: The Paradox of Citizenship* (Clarkson 2014). In her first lecture Clarkson questions the idea of evolution as an “upward staircase” producing ever-more superior species. In this prevailing paradigm, species (or communities, seen as another type of evolving subject) change over time to become better than they once were. Evolution in this sense is both the means and the end: to become better for the sake of being better. From this perspective, as communities evolve, the pursuit of superiority reigns supreme (bringing with it boosterism and intermunicipal competition).

Clarkson refutes this notion, contending that evolution is a kaleidoscope in which the “shapes and varieties of species are constantly shifting” (Clarkson 2014 page 22). In this alternate reading, communities change in relation to outside pressures, and not just for their own intrinsic betterment. The outside pressures influence how the kaleidoscope turns and how the resulting image (community) emerges.

Contemplating community evolution in this way links two additional concepts: resiliency and relevancy. Resiliency is “the capacity to mitigate (diminish impacts) or adapt (respond to change)” (Gaia Foundation 2016). Relevancy is the “quality or state of being closely connected or appropriate” (Oxford Dictionaries 2016).

## Resiliency and Relevancy

Understanding a community's place within larger processes, and an awareness of what lies on the horizon, are foundational to resiliency and relevancy. A community cannot be resilient or relevant if incoming pressures are unanticipated, or if potential impacts are unknown.

As an example of resiliency, while it may be impossible to predict when extreme weathers will occur, resiliency implies knowing the most likely types of events, planning for them, and building mitigating and adaptive properties into municipal structures, systems, and attitudes.

In another example, relevancy implies attempting to foresee the impacts of demographic changes over time, and understanding the values and challenges faced by the diversity of a place's residents. Relevancy also relates to how a community reflects diversity through human resources and communications.

Seeing evolution as a kaleidoscope challenges us to see community development differently. Evolution is less about trying to be better than others, and more about constantly shifting to be better-suited to the world around us.

Lethbridge is approaching long-range planning from this perspective: that a willingness to understand and respond to new realities will lead to a more resilient, relevant community.

## Lethbridge

Lethbridge is located in southwestern Alberta, at the confluence of the St. Mary and Oldman Rivers, and within Blackfoot Traditional Territory. The city serves as a regional economic, service and educational hub with a trade area of over 275,000 people extending west into British Columbia and south into Montana (Economic Development Lethbridge 2016). Lethbridge is bordered by Lethbridge County and Kainai Nation.

The city was founded in 1906, and the city's post-settlement history largely reflects a changing regional economy: from fur trade, to the coal industry, and later irrigation agriculture and agri-processing. In more recent years the local economy has been strongly influenced by public sector work (e.g., university and college, regional hospital, government workforces).

## Changing Realities

Three conversations are emerging about Lethbridge's future—environmental protection, changing demographics, and relationship-building with indigenous peoples.

Southern Alberta has an extremely fragmented landscape, challenged by competing land uses: urban



SOURCE: City of Lethbridge

*Evolution is less about trying to be better than others, and more about constantly shifting to be better-suited to the world around us.*

growth, conservation, agriculture, resource extraction and recreation. There is growing consensus that this competition is stressing the ability of natural systems to provide the ecological services needed to sustain communities and economies.

Communities are also experiencing the results of growing reliance on immigration to fill jobs, resulting in growing cultural diversity (Lethbridge has the largest Bhutanese community in Canada (Global News 2014) and Spanish is now the second most widely spoken home language (Statistics Canada 2014)). Communities are also facing the emergence of Generation Y, and the shifting generational values that will affect the future of neighbourhoods and workplaces.

At the same time that our communities become more global, the presence and importance of indigenous peoples has grown in the local consciousness. An awareness of indigenous values and issues is especially important in cities as they are home to the majority of indigenous peoples in Canada (Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada 2010).

While these topics are not unique to Lethbridge, they are emerging with newfound intensity, reflected in regional legislation, and through that, community planning.

### **Changing Legislative Realities**

In 2014, the City of Lethbridge was faced with new legislative direction in the form of the South Saskatchewan Regional Plan (SSRP) (Government of Alberta 2014). The SSRP embodies many of the themes discussed above, and requires municipalities to consider them during planning and decision-making.

The SSRP emerges from the need to balance competing economic, environmental, and social outcomes, including a desire to enhance collaboration between indigenous and non-indigenous planners and decision-makers.

Through their exploration of the SSRP and the changing realities around them, Lethbridge's community planners have begun to think about how their work contributes to the resiliency and relevancy of Lethbridge in an ever-changing world.

### **MDP Update**

The City of Lethbridge is required to demonstrate compliance with the SSRP, and will do so by updating its Municipal Development Plan (MDP) in 2019. This will be the first MDP completed under the SSRP, and if projections hold, after reaching a population of 100,000.

This MDP update is different than previous updates. Rather than strictly being about reflecting broad values in broad policy, the update is data-driven and structured around baseline assessments of growth, demographics, the environment, the economy, and historic resources. Data gathered in each area will inform a series of conversations about the continued evolution of Lethbridge.

So how does this work relate back to resiliency and relevancy?

### **Planning for Resiliency**

Resiliency is being fostered in three ways:

#### **Situate Project Work Within Externalities**

Because community planning is a long-term, iterative process, it is important to have conversations about externalities continuously and in a variety of contexts. The project team does this by framing data collection and communications with larger realities in mind.

For example, the case for building relationships with indigenous peoples is presented through social movements, court cases, provincial legislation and reconciliation. Offering multiple entry-points into this and other conversations provides stakeholders with opportunities to connect to topics that may at first appear daunting or abstract.

#### **Data-driven Outcomes**

Baseline data is crucial to understand the impact of externalities. A community cannot create resiliency in the face of climate change, for example, if there is no understanding of baseline ecology or biodiversity. From there, systematic, cross-discipline thinking is needed to envision how externalities may play out.

The project team has done this by initiating baseline data gathering projects and by curating a multi-disciplinary group of staff to assist with analysis.

#### **Build Partnerships Between Staff**

Building on the last point, the project team has brought together staff early on in their careers, and others with institutional knowledge. This ensures that some of those involved in the project are able to shepherd outcomes along for many years to come with knowledge informed by past experience.

The partnerships created between staff support resiliency because they build greater consensus and support for the work needed to create meaningful outcomes (resilient structures, systems and attitudes).

### **Planning for Relevancy**

Relevancy is being fostered in three ways:

#### **Local Values Inform Outcomes**

While baseline data is crucial, it is ultimately local values and priorities that drive implementation. For example, while we may at a general level understand that Generation Y housing preferences are different, the way they manifest will be different in Lethbridge from what we see in the literature and in media reports from other North American cities, for example, their preference to live in dense, central neighbourhoods.

The project team manages this by bringing a diverse set of residents and stakeholders together to inform data collection and analysis. Infusing diverse values ensures data is contemplated in a contextually appropriate way. This is especially important in the context of the SSRP, as it applies to an incredibly diverse area.

### Bring Together New Voices

The stakeholders that are brought together to provide input signals to the public whose voices are valued. As our communities change, new voices need to be actively sought out.

The project team has done this by expanding its conversation. For example, when exploring data about growth and housing, the project team looks beyond developers, builders, and housing agencies, seeking input from residents from across Lethbridge, youth and seniors groups, and agencies working on indigenous and immigrant housing.

Bringing often marginalized groups to the table signals a shift in thinking, but also leads to more interesting, relevant, and collaborative outcomes.

### Change the Conversation

Planners often find it challenging to capture the attention of the average resident. This may be because planners have a difficult time explaining their work, and because residents have a hard time seeing themselves within the outcomes. So why not change the conversation? The project team is doing this in two ways.

First, they are flipping typical MDP engagement on its head. Instead of hosting forums specifically targeted to the MDP update, the project team is conducting shadow MDP engagement at various neutral and targeted events, such as farmers' markets, festivals, and master plan engagements.

In this way, residents get to connect with planners on their own terms and in relation to topics that are of

SOURCE: City of Lethbridge





SOURCE: City of Lethbridge

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greater interest to them, and at precisely the moment when their interest is greatest. The MDP then becomes the thread that links every project into a larger conversation of community evolution.

Even still, it is difficult to appreciate the role of an MDP in guiding future planning and decision-making. Instead of even mentioning the MDP, the project team is taking advantage of the upcoming population milestone. This is the second way they are changing the conversation. It seems that when conversations about policy are removed and engagement instead focuses on the future, and what it means to be a city of 100,000 residents, people have an easier time relating.

### Conclusion

While the work to update Lethbridge's MDP is just beginning, planners have spent time thinking about how their work can support the city's ongoing evolution. As Clarkson (2014) suggests, evolving subjects are constantly shifting and adapting to changing stimuli. Evolution is therefore more about being resilient within a changing world and remaining relevant.

The role of the planner within community evolution includes an awareness of what may lie on the horizon, understanding potential impacts to local systems, structures and attitudes, and ensuring that resiliency is grounded in local reality.

Lethbridge's planning team has structured their work in this way by starting open conversations with colleagues, residents, and stakeholders about how the world is changing, bringing together diverse perspectives to interpret those changes, and ultimately analyzing objective data through the kaleidoscope of a multitude of local realities.

The belief is that this work will lead to stronger, and more resilient and relevant outcomes that truly reflect the city's next iteration, and the community itself. ■

**Perry Stein** is a Community Planner with the City of Lethbridge, and has worked in the planning field since 2011 with urban, rural and First Nation communities. Perry is the 2015 recipient of the APPI Legacy Fund Award, which he used to present this article at the Sustainable City 2016 Conference in Alicante, Spain.

About the Author

# In Memory of: Matthew Claus MCIP, RPP 1980-2016

Matthew (Matt) Claus passed away in Edmonton, near his home of Stony Plain, on April 19, 2016 at the age of 36, after a courageous two year battle with melanoma. His life, faith and work were marked with love for family and community, compassion for others, and a wholehearted commitment to all of those principles guiding these passions.

Born in Sioux Centre, Iowa, he and his two brothers were raised in Campbell River, B.C., where he gained a lifelong love and respect for nature and the outdoors. While attending Illinois' Moody Bible Institute, he met his wife, Janine. Through their ten years of marriage, they became very proud parents of three daughters –Abigail, Rebekah and Charis.

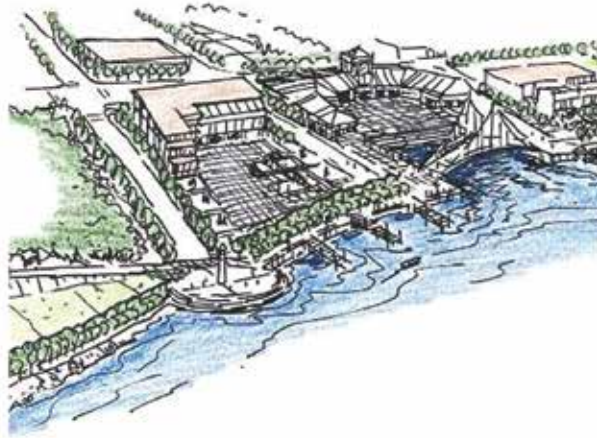
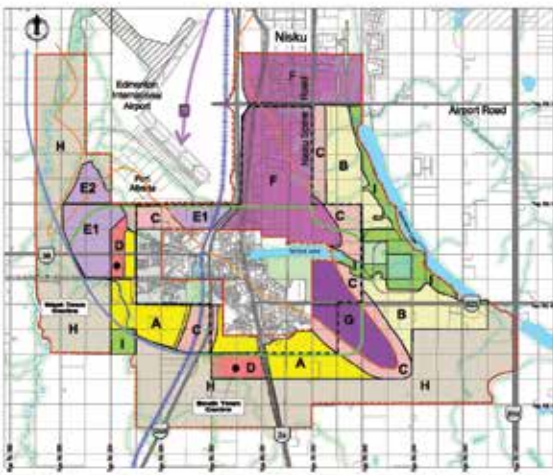
After graduating with a Theology degree, he was unaware of what urban planners did—exactly. Then an administrative opportunity with a private planning firm introduced him to the world of planning and Matt never looked back. Returning to the University of Illinois he completed a Master's degree in Urban Planning in 2008.

After graduation, Matt began his eight years of public service for the people of Stony Plain. He became the Town's Manager of Planning in 2010, and held the position until his passing. He is greatly missed by his Planning team. Matt was a dedicated and highly regarded planner by the Town's Council—and the community—of Stony Plain.

He was a tremendous young planner whose loss to the profession will never be fully realized. Matt's love for others endured to the very end and never was a negative word, or thought, expressed regarding his own circumstance. He was a committed husband, father and colleague. His professional life was guided by Hebrews 11:10.

*"For he was looking forward to the City with foundations, whose architect and builder is God." ■*





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