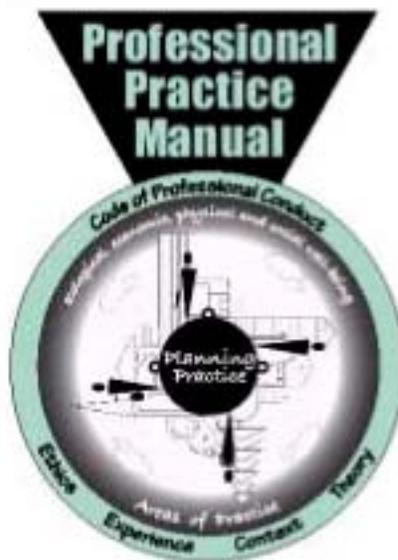


Professional Practice Manual

Canadian Institute of Planners



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March, 2002

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Dedication

This Professional Practice Manual is dedicated to Peter Boothroyd, Mario Carvalho, Len Gertler, Gerald Hodge, Jean Wolfe and others like them for taking the time to contribute to the knowledge of planning practice while mentoring planning students and frontline practitioners.

Credit:

Drawings and graphics by: Curt Shoultz.

Preface

The built-environment design professions¹ are struggling with their roles in today's complex, changing and challenging society and natural environment. As part of that group, planners too are faced with a difficult role, one fraught with insecurity and risk. The risk lies in our desire to satisfy a myriad of wants, balancing those often competing desires against resource availability and the short and long term ecological, economic, physical and social effects of our work. Often we are caught in the middle of debates over which we have little or no control. But others are calling us to assume a leadership role; a role that facilitates dialogue, stimulates debate, generates knowledge, offers alternatives and encourages collaboration.

Maurice Strong, former Director General of the 1992 UN Environment Summit identified, in a keynote address at the joint APA/CIP 1995 Conference in Toronto, the importance of solutions to the identified and confirmed ecological issues facing the world in the mid-90's. In particular, he noted that urban centres provided the most significant opportunities to ameliorate global warming, social disparity, and ecological crises. Strong noted "that the battle for sustainability will clearly be won or lost in urban centres, where the majority of the world's population will live." He went on to identify the role that planners should play in moving to "**centre stage**" (my emphasis) when he stated "planning has become one of the most challenging and most necessary pursuits of the modern era." Strong (1995) set out the requirements:

I am convinced that we are at a crossroads in the human experience in which the scale of the human population and the intensity of its activities have now made us the primary actors in shaping our own evolution. What we do or fail to do in this generation will, in fact, determine our future. And I believe that future will be largely shaped in the next decade or so. Planners must now move to the centre stage.

One might well ask what has happened since that speech? The answer is complicated and could be seen by many to be either gratuitous or too simplistic. But it is clear that the world is significantly different in the year 2002 than it was even seven years earlier. The need to address complicated human issues while witnessing the on-going degradation of the environment and associated global warming may seem to some to be too much to consider. Yet, we have chosen a profession that is expected to contribute to the debate and offer solutions to our current dilemma of increased consumption of land and resources, inefficient urban systems, excessive consumption of fossil fuels, and social and cultural fragmentation.

We are not alone in those expectations and debates. We will need to share, in Maurice Strong's words, "centre stage" with a host of associated interests, professions, politicians and the communities where we live and work. Dr. Strong did not have in mind that planners would work in isolation. But he did believe that planners have something 'special' to offer. It is a role to which we have become increasingly unaccustomed, yet it is one that shaped the beginning of our profession in the early 1900's when Thomas Adams, the first President of the then Town Planning Institute of Canada (TPIC) –CIP's predecessor- assisted in the work of the Commission of Conservation under the direction of Sir Clifford Sifton. Then, like now, society was at a cross-roads. Cities were failing amidst excessive pollution, unhealthy living and working conditions, poor and non-existent sanitary infrastructure, lack of green space, and

¹ See Fisher (2000), Rowe (1996), and Witty (1998).

significant overcrowding. The natural environment was under assault by ‘robber barons’ who pillaged the landscape in search of instant wealth, resulting in scarred landscapes, polluted water and air, and unprecedented waste. Thomas Adams and others, such as his associate Dr. Charles Hodgetts, challenged the status quo and offered alternatives. Adams and his associates were seen to be an important resource for identifying issues, offering solutions and assisting in implementation of healthy cities and identifying wiser use of land and resources².

Now, at the turn of the 21st century, we are called to assist in a similar way. How will we respond? But first we need to better understand who we are.

A brief profile³

We are an eclectic lot! We come to the profession of planning with a mixture of interests and training. Perhaps, because of the breadth of our practice and training, few of us believe that we have a rich heritage that informs our practice. Many of us question our roles and contributions to society. Many of us wonder about the value of our planning education and question its (and our) relevancy. Lots of us are unsure about our long term aspirations in the profession. Should we stick it out? And, if so, for what? Yet, despite our self-doubt many of us face the future with a belief that we can and should make a difference.

94% of us believe that our work contributes to an increased quality of life;

84% of us believe that we can make a substantial difference to social, environmental, economic issues facing Canadian society.

We also want help to get through our periods of doubt, our times of challenge and our moments of despair. This Manual provides some assistance for those events, but it provides much more. It is intended to offer a quick and ready reference for many of the day-to-day situations facing ‘front line planners.’

Purpose of the manual

Years ago, while teaching professional practice, it became apparent to me that planning practice in Canada suffered for lack of a professional planning practice manual. For instance, where could planners readily find out information on how to find employment, how to hire and evaluate consultants, or how to work successfully in inter-disciplinary teams. Out of those considerations came the idea to seek Canadian Institute of Planners (CIP) support to develop a professional practice manual for Canadian planners, a manual that would provide a source on planning practice and support to practitioners and students of planning.

² For nearly 20 years, Thomas Adams worked through the auspices of the Commission of Conservation and the Minister responsible for the Commission, Sir Clifford Sifton.

³ Much of the material covered here and scattered throughout the Manual is based upon Dave Witty’s 1998 Ph.D. dissertation entitled, “Identifying a More Appropriate Role for the Canadian Planning Profession.” As part of his research, he surveyed CIP Members. Unless otherwise noted, reference to CIP member attitudes originates in that work.

This manual is intended to serve planning practitioners and students of planning. It is hoped that the manual will be a useful guide to planning practitioners who face day-to-day requirements and that it will assist in the instruction of professional practice in planning schools.

Obviously, non-CIP members can and should also make use of this manual. But this manual is written with existing and future CIP members in mind. Therefore, it makes reference to the Canadian planning profession as it is represented by CIP. This is not meant to be exclusionary, but it is meant to give focus and recognise that some 5,000 people belong to CIP and that CIP and its affiliates have assumed a leadership role in terms of professional planning in Canada.

Organisation of manual

This Professional Practice Manual is structured to provide hands-on support to practitioners, students and teachers of planning. Throughout, case studies (and associated lessons) identify specific application of ideas and thoughts. The Manual has five parts. Part 1: Introduction explores the background to professional planning practice in Canada. Part 2: Elements of Practice reviews the various areas of planning practice and methods available to planners. Part 3: On the Front Line considers the everyday life of planners and how planners at various stages of their career can respond to those challenges. Part 4: Ethics and Standards reviews the implications of the 'politics of place' upon planning practice and explores the importance of an ethically-based profession. Part 5: Implications and Future Practice provides the author's views of planning practice as it addresses the emerging issues of the 21st century.

1. Introduction

Canadian planning is a dynamic institution. It is a profession that kindles a variety of responses, from that of great support to some responses that approach significant animosity, depending frequently upon the respondent's personal perspective and interests. It is a profession that often seems to elicit responses that parallel the diversity of perspectives found across the country; perspectives that include intense opposition to 'state' interference in private property rights to intense support for community intervention in managing growth and development. Caught in the tangle of this dichotomy, many planners look for assistance.

In the midst of this mix of interests and views, planners –if nothing else- work in an exciting profession dealing with an incredible cross-section of change agents and implications to a host of situations such as resource sector change, rural and small community change, and regional and metropolitan change. Surrounding that climate of change in Canada are the ever-evolving opinions of its citizens. Planners are frequently caught up in the implications and ramifications of change.

While Canadian planning has been criticised from outside (e.g., John Sewell: 1993, Jane Jacobs: 1993 and John Barber: 1995⁴), Canadian planning has also experienced many heated debates from within the profession. Perhaps, the most divisive occurred in 1974? at the Annual CIP Conference in Prince Edward Island when Kent Gerecke and others resigned as CIP members over the issue of the role of the organisation. Gerecke *et al* believed that professional planners, as represented by CIP, had failed to address the core values of planning that should reflect –in their view at least- an interventionist profession advocating with and for communities. Through the 1980's and early 1990's, Kent Gerecke in Canada and John Friedmann in the United States continued to challenge the profession, especially in terms of planners' "discredited methodology" (Gerecke and Reid: 1991). PEI became a watershed event for many in CIP. For those who remained behind, CIP would never be quite the same. The divide was deep. Sir Peter Hall (1988: 340) wrote about that period:

What was new, strange, and seemingly unique about the 1980s was the divorce between the Marxist theoreticians of academe – essentially academic spectators, taking grandstand seats at what they saw as one of capitalism's last games – and the anti-theoretical, anti-strategic, anti-intellectual style of the players on the field down below. The 1950s were never like that; then, the academics were the coaches, down there with the team.

During the 1980 and 1990 debates, CIP retracted, survived, flourished, and re-emerged as a significant professional body. Its members also experienced the on-again and off-again 'roller coaster' nature of the publics' and politicians' acceptance of planning (Gunton: 1985). For a variety of reasons, including the tenuous nature of the support for planning, many planners believe that Canadian planning "is facing or is in a state of crisis" (Witty: 116). Those beliefs continue to challenge the vitality and long term well-being of the profession. Unlike the debates of the '80's, however, when planners were being chastised for abandoning their role as advocates and social mobilisers, today a dialogue revolves around the planner TAMED

⁴ As the urban affairs critic for the Globe and Mail, Barber's comments were especially of note. He wrote that "it is time to retire it" (i.e., planning).

(technical, analytical, multicultural, ecological, design) (Sandercock: 1999) and questions of the “deliberative practitioner” (Forester: 1999). Others have focused upon the profession “not relating with sufficient vigour to the priority issues of our time” (Gertler: 1994). Through those discussions about the role of planners, planners are now being pulled and pushed in a much more healthy way.

In fact, planning and planners are now in vogue⁵. At the 1999 APA National Conference in Seattle, Tom Egan of the New York Times said that “planners are sexy again . . . the long winter of planning is over.” That comment (and Maurice Strong’s call “to the centre stage”) is a far cry from the sharp barbs of Sewell, Jacobs and Barber of the early 90’s. Yet, for all the publications on planning and resultant discourse (and there is much out there), there remains a nagging doubt, a void in the normative research, about the role and substance of planning practice. Too often, conclusions are drawn and theories promoted, largely without an ensuing discourse with the affected practitioners⁶. While many planning theorists are eager to tell practitioners what needs to be done, too few (with the notable exception of John Forester) ever ask the practitioner ‘patient’ to describe their symptoms! (And, by extension, conclude what ails the profession without ever asking the profession for its thoughts.) For the most part, practitioners are left to muse about their experiences. For the moment, this appears to be the best we can do. Although some research now exists concerning what the profession thinks, it is far too scarce for a profession that purports to address issues of the natural and built environments through public dialogue. Hopefully, practitioners and students of planning will see this Professional Practice Manual as one way of addressing that shortfall.

1.1 Defining planning

One of the challenges facing planning is its breadth of interest. Everyone is a planner. People plan their holidays, their spare time, their shopping and their affairs. Some plan investment strategies (e.g., the Certified Investment Planners; yes, another CIP!). But, our type of planning has boundaries, definitions and expectations that differentiate it from the everyday planning that so many do. It is also very different from the temporal based planning of investment planners and convention planners, amongst others. But, as Hall (1992: 1) noted:

Planning . . . is an extremely ambiguous and difficult word to define. Planners of all kinds think that they know what it means: it refers to the work they do. The difficulty is that they do all sorts of different things, and so they mean different things by the word; planning seems to be all things to all men (sic).

For purposes of its membership,

CIP defines planning to mean:

The planning of the scientific, aesthetic, and orderly disposition of land, resources, facilities and services with a view to securing the physical, economic and social efficiency, health and well-being of urban and rural communities.

⁵ Those of you on the front lines may scoff at this notion, but there has been a tidal change that, in my view, will sweep the country as it is sweeping the United States.

⁶ See: Plan Canada May/June 1999, Vol. 39, No. 2

That area of expertise, although not the sole purview of CIP members, suggests that CIP is an organisation with a diverse range of interests.

1.2 So, who are we anyway?

At the heart of the profession is one conclusive fact: homogeneity is absent in the planning profession⁷. The two major practitioner groups are those in the public sector and those in the private sector. Unlike many other related professions, planners are nearly evenly split between the public and private sectors with 1,452 private sector and 1,934 public members of CIP. This manual is largely structured around the public and private sectors and the multiplicity of sub-groups within each.

We call ourselves by many names: planner, consultant, manager, director, policy planner, environmental planner, developer, infrastructure planner, social planner, rural-regional planner, professor, administrator, park planner amongst others. We work for a variety of employers: local government, consulting company, regional government, provincial/territorial government, development industry, university, federal government and non-profit sector. Most of us work in a multi-disciplinary setting and most of us do more than planning. We spend considerable time as administrators and managers⁸. When managing, we are usually managing staff, a variety of programmes and budgets. It appears that we are expected to do much more than plan⁹.

We make use of a number of common tools: public involvement (64% of us), conflict resolution (47%), site planning (44%), facilitation (40%), shared decision making (39%), urban design (33%), financial analysis (31%), graphics (27%), public advocacy (26%), sustainable development techniques (25%), project advocacy (22%), computer analysis (22%), healthy community techniques (20%), environmental/social impact assessment (17%), geographic information systems (17%), computer assisted design (14%), and architectural design (11%) (Figure 1).

⁷ In 1998, CIP identified seven areas of planning practice (environmental, land use, policy, social, sustainable development, transportation and water resource/watershed) and noted there are many more areas of Canadian planning practice. The author suggests other categories could include: economic, urban design, heritage, recreation and park, resource and strategic.

⁸ Witty (1998) found that 61% of respondents spent at least 1/3 of their time as administrators/managers.

⁹ In fact, there appears to be a major trend for planners to move into senior administration positions in consulting as CEO's and local government as CAO's.

Planners make use of many tools

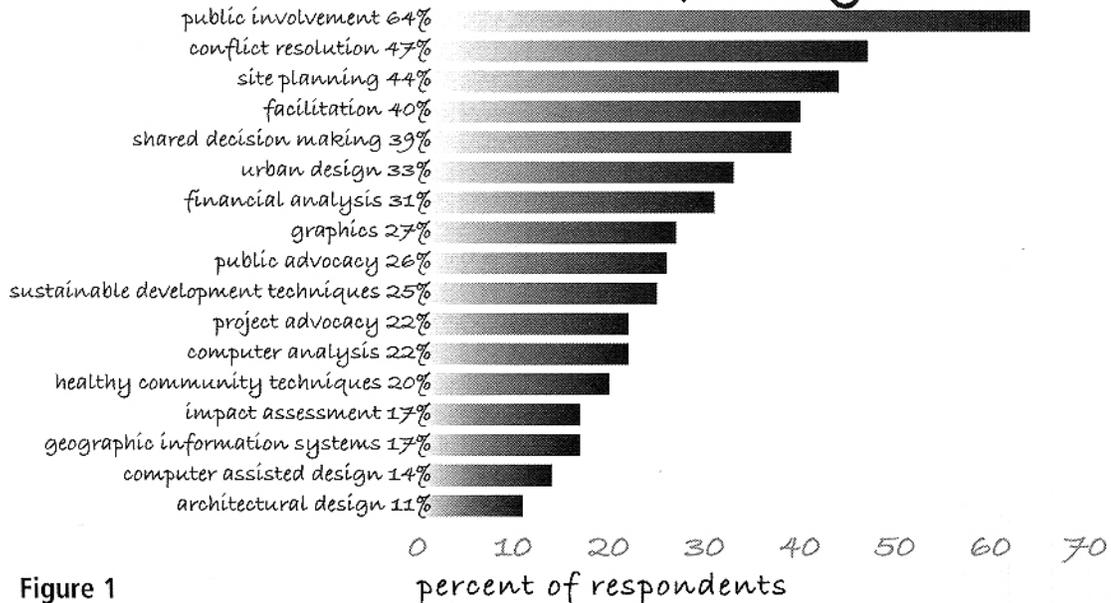


Figure 1

Many of the tools identified above (especially the most commonly used ones: public involvement, conflict resolution, facilitation and shared decision making) are applied by a wide range of individuals and groups, including citizen groups and public facilitators. Since our tool kit seems to be barren of our own set of 'hard' tools, our professional identity may suffer and others may call themselves planners, even if their work is limited to a narrow application of planning practice, such as facilitation or urban design.

What do planners do as planners?

Contrary to some public opinion (c.f., The Globe and Mail, September 9th, 1995), it seems from my 1988 dissertation that few planners write and administer bylaws and regulations. Instead, we prepare policy (40% of us), advise politicians (32%), review development proposals (30%), undertake research (27%), advise senior staff (21%), administer policy (20%), facilitate community involvement (19%), prepare bylaws and regulations (17%), prepare development proposals (14%), administer bylaws and regulations (13%), and conduct public involvement (13%) (Figure 2). Increasingly, we have become specialists with urban, community or regional planning degrees. The rest of us are geography trained or possess one of a number of other related degrees, such as environmental design and management, rural development and planning, urban design and landscape architecture (Figure 3). As might be expected for a profession that is relatively new (at least newly re-emerged since the 1960's), planners who have graduated within the past 15 years are more likely to have a planning degree from a Canadian university than those who have more than 25 years of experience. Many long serving planners have come to the profession from a discipline other than planning.

What planners do as planners

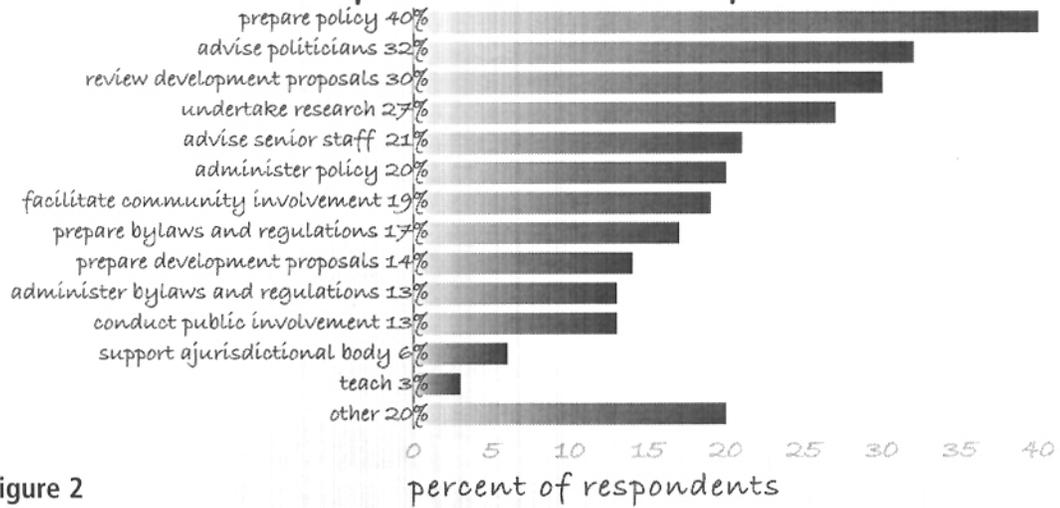


Figure 2

Primary discipline of most recent degree

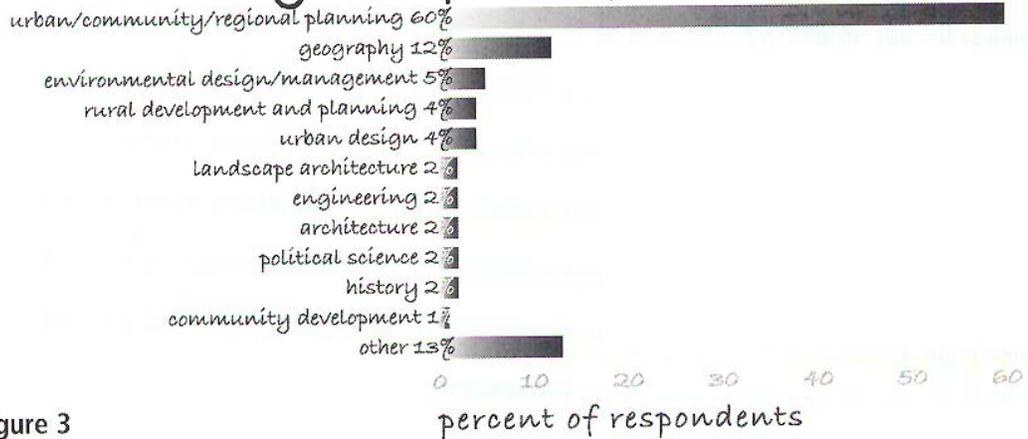


Figure 3

While it appears that planners come to their profession from a few degree programmes, CIP members have a wide range of specialization, the majority of which is in urban-related matters (Figure 4). All of that suggests that we continue to change and emerge as a profession and that we should continue to monitor that evolution to ensure that we have a good grasp of whom we are and where we want to go, individually and collectively.

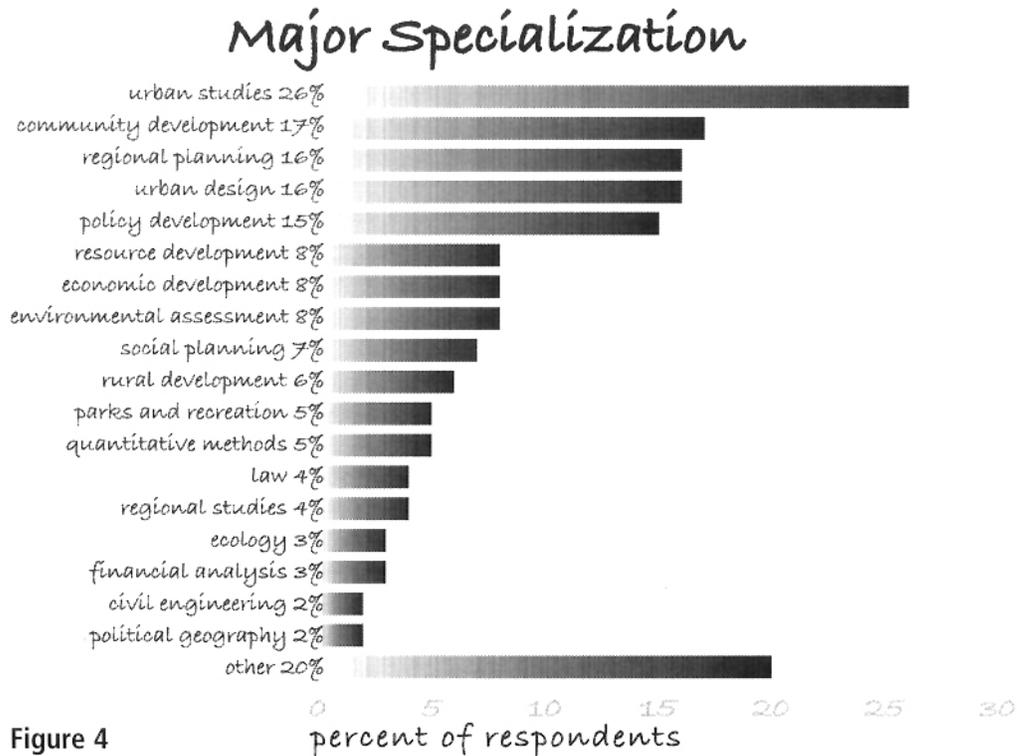


Figure 4

1.3 Future of the Profession

The future of the planning profession remains clouded in the technological revolution and the role of planning in the globalisation of the Canadian economy. While two schools of thought exist (i.e., one holds that planning is continuing to become more irrelevant and the other that it is increasingly important), the school of thought –including Maurice Strong- that suggests planning is re-emerging in scope and importance offers new hope. Those who continue to advocate that planning faces an uncertain future reflect debates that go back to the 1980’s. John Forester (1999) has completed an exhaustive study of the profession, a necessary normative contribution amidst a void of similar work. In it, he finds a future based upon *planner as deliberative practitioner*. Social changes, increased environmental interest, concern for planning issues, such as sprawl and growth management, transportation planning, use of technology in decision-making (e.g., Geographic Information Systems) suggest that planners will have a substantial role to play in the new millennium. That exciting role relates to the planner as an agent of and for change; change to promote and adapt to new ecological, economic, social and physical development imperatives. In my view, there is no better time to be a professional planner!

The question for us is how can we identify an appropriate role and what tools do we need to address that role? But, first we need to reflect upon our history.

1.4 Roots of the Profession

Canadian planning has a rich and diverse history. Some have identified its roots primarily in two other countries; Great Britain for its interventionist land use planning focus and the United States for its focus upon bylaws and ‘rules and regulations’, such as zoning (see: Hodge 1991). But, as Hodge has noted, Canadian planning has its’ own rich history. While it has paralleled events in, and learned from, Great Britain and the United States and many of its earliest planners (up to the 1960’s) were from the United Kingdom and much of its source of planning literature is now from the United States, Canadian planners have established a rich and acknowledged repertoire of practice and literature, in their own right.

A dual heritage



1.4.1 The early years

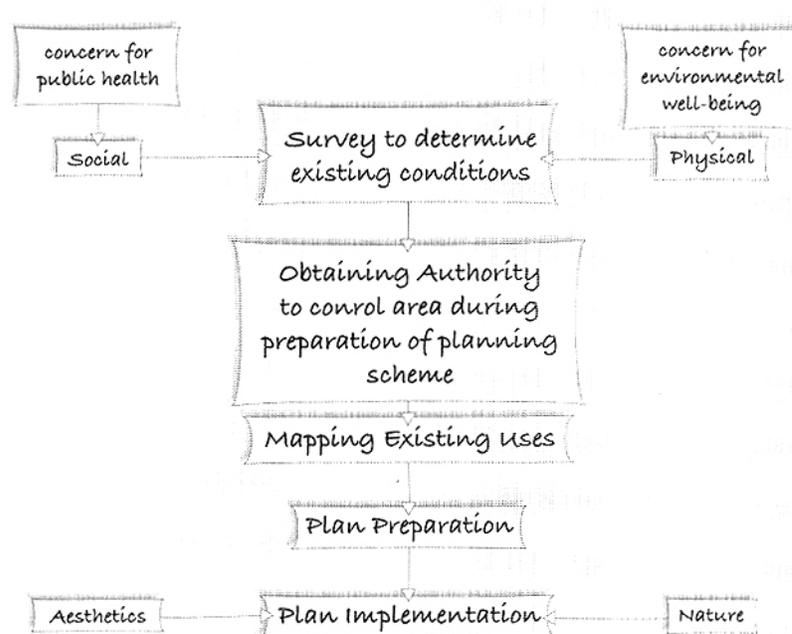
At the turn of the 20th century, Canadian planning took root in the work of the Commission of Conservation. That period was rich in comprehensive, intervention planning addressing issues of urban squalor and disease, and the detrimental effects of resource development upon the natural environment. In particular, The Commission of Conservation under the leadership of Sir Clifford Sifton, Minister of the Interior in Laurier’s government, and the planning expertise of Thomas Adams and the Committee of Health, under the advice of Dr. Charles Hodgetts, provided direction and sustenance for the evolution of modern day community planning. The Commission and those men left a legacy that remains to this day as a uniquely Canadian initiative.

Dr. Hodgetts was appointed Advisor on Public Health to the Commission of Conservation in 1909. He advocated support and recognition for the need to provide better housing and sanitary conditions for rapidly expanding urban centres. Through Hodgetts, Thomas Adams, student of Sir Patrick Geddes, whom some have called the father of modern day planning, was recruited to come to Canada from the United Kingdom to assist in establishing a planning function and associated legislation.

Except for the work of a few urban historians, the important role played by Thomas Adams has largely been lost upon students of Canadian planning. Thomas Adams had a profound affect upon our profession. The British Town Planning Review lamented the loss of Adams to British planning when it said, “no planner, or more correctly, Regional-planner, has shown such a philosophical grasp of the whole situation and its many ramifications” (Town Planning Review

1916: 271). It went so far as to state that, “we cannot help feeling a certain resentment towards Canada for having robbed us of the man who is justly looked up to as the head of the profession in this country.” Adams was successful in his career partly because he was pragmatic. As a proponent of the Garden City Movement and Secretary of the First Garden City Company of Letchworth, England, he was able to bring new planning concepts to Canada, some of which took hold in the Company Towns of Northern Ontario. In his writing, such as Rural Planning and Development (1917), Adams stressed the importance of balancing social and environmental quality with economic gain. To Adams (1917: 1-2), “the question is not whether we grow but how we will grow . . . National prosperity depends on the character, stability, freedom and efficiency of the human resources of a nation, rather than on the amount of its exports or the gold it may have to its credit.”

During the time that the Town Planning Act was being examined by Adams, the Committee of Health, through the Town Planning Branch, suggested that basic steps should be undertaken at the municipal level to ensure that pending legislation and proposals would be functional. These steps included: (1) survey to determine existing sociological and physical conditions, (2) obtaining authority to control the area during preparation of a scheme, and (3) mapping existing land uses. At the same time the Committee stressed the need for municipalities to consider nature and aesthetics as a basic component of successful town planning. That broad perspective of planning was a chief reflection of Thomas Adams’ philosophy.



Commission of Conservation Municipal Planning steps -circa 1910

More recently, in the late 1980’s and early 1990’s, Canadian planning returned to its early 20th century roots when CIP embraced and provided significant leadership in the modern public health movement. During the late 1980’s, Canada was considered a world leader in the Healthy Cities movement. CIP hosted the Canadian Healthy Community Project (CHCP), in association with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities and Canadian Public Health Association. CIP’s

offices headquartered the CHCP and provided the venue for the dissemination of CHCP's programme¹⁰. This was a collaborative initiative in which Canadian planners played an active role. That role was recognised by the World Health Organisation whose European members praised CIP's work in setting an example for European Healthy Cities. It was fitting that the 20th century would close out with planners actively promoting health in the city, when much of the impetus for the work of the Commission of Conservation sprang from the efforts of Dr. Charles Hodgetts and the Committee of Health.

1.4.2 Collapse

By the end of the second decade of the 20th century, events were unfolding that would tear apart the Commission of Conservation, its work and its mandate. With the demise of the Commission, resignation of Clifford Sifton as its Chair, and movement of Thomas Adams to New York City (where he completed the famous Regional Plan for New York City), advocacy for sound planning practice waned. During this period, TPIC folded in 1932¹¹. But for a few exceptions, such as Bartholmew's City of Vancouver Plan, local governments focused largely upon zoning matters during the 1920's and 1930's. The previous decade's concern by planners for integrated approaches to problem solving was replaced by a 'blue print planning' which embedded a focus upon functionalism, including the continued provision of services and associated site planning. During that period, planning was abandoned in many communities and 'boosterism' formed much of the central core of local politics. Planners, if they existed, were expected to be supportive of the 'booster' agenda. As a result, a barren Canadian planning landscape would not blossom until after the Second World War.

1.4.3 Renewal

Except for the work of the Commission of Conservation and, in the absence of a strong planning tradition during much of the first half of the 20th century, Canadian planning appears to have struggled to find a suitable identity. During the 1960's 'blueprint' planning, which had dominated planning practice between the 1920's and 1960's, began to give way to a more comprehensive approach. Rural, regional, resource and community planning began to be revived in practice and in newly emerging or modified planning school curricula. Canadian planning has been shaped significantly by those events. The transition from functional planning to comprehensive planning was not without its problems. During the early 1960's some planners, architects, developers, politicians and bureaucrats made horrific decisions that decimated thriving –albeit poor- neighbourhoods and replaced them with new sleek high rises. Those high rises provided significant fodder for Jane Jacobs' anti-planner writing. Despite those setbacks, Canadian planning thrived. It has become an important profession; one that is supported by a broad range of legislation and associated expectation. But expectations have varied; some have sought to use planning to restrict growth and development, others to use planning to promote growth and development, and still others to use planning to identify ways and means of accomplishing managed growth. Frequently, the planner has been caught in the middle of those planning debates.

During the past 20 years, while the professions, including planning, have undergone considerable growth, they have also undergone increased scrutiny (Saul: 1993, 1998). At issue

¹⁰ These activities were funded by external sources and included an administrative fee for CIP operation costs.

¹¹ It was resurrected in 1952 and later changed its name to the Canadian Institute of Planners.

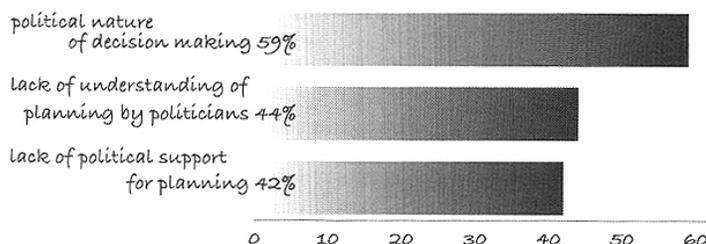
is the relevance of the professions. Planners have been caught between the expectations of society and the realities of community governance. Planners have also been affected by their role as regulators in an environment where deregulation, privatisation, cost-recovery, shrinking governments and public/private partnerships are challenging the very nature of our communities and methods of governance. Planners are increasingly trapped between development and anti-development forces. All of this coming from within their practice, while planning theorists were criticising the methodological foundations (or lack thereof) of the profession. Schon (1989: 206) described that situation as one in which planners moved over time from “visibility, power and professional status” through to a “centralist planner” model where “there is a working consensus about the context of the public interest” to an “intermediary role” which “encompasses a diversity of interests, regulatory systems, and structures.” Schon identified that intermediary role as one in which conflict could be expected at its very centre.

Modern Canadian planning is very much a challenging profession. It often faces conflicts between advocates for change and advocates for the status-quo. But, it is that challenge and the need to respond to increasing concerns about unmanaged growth that places planning in the position of being an important profession for the new millennium. In Strong’s words, “planners must now move to the centre stage.”

1.5 The Politics of Place

If planners have one fundamental defining characteristic, it is this: planners work in a political culture where they frequently address allocation issues and interface on a regular basis with elected officials, their representatives, interest groups and citizens. Canadian planners recognise that unique professional characteristic and are sensitive to it. Fifty percent of all respondents to my survey agreed that “planners work in an overly political environment,” 57% agreed that “planning is often compromised by the politics of place,” and 72% agreed that “more and more planning is facing conflicts of competing interests.” Sixty nine percent believe that the profession is facing or is in a state of crisis. Of those who believe that it is in a state of crisis, 59% believe that the crisis is caused by the political nature of planning (Figure 5). It appears that it is not a lack of tools or methods that hinder planners in their work. Rather, planners believe that it is the political nature of their work that influences their effectiveness. Therefore, if planning is in a crisis, it seems that the crisis is caused by factors that lie largely outside of the direct control of practising planners. Planning theorists will need to work with practitioners to rethink planning practice in relation to the politics of place by providing planners with more ways to help them manage the *context* of planning.

Influence of Politics on Planning



1.6 The Profession: CIP

CIP has grown significantly over the past 20 years from approximately 2090 members in 1980 to over 5,000 in 2002. In 2001 CIP membership was as follows: Full Members – 2,604; Fellows – 40; Provisional Member – 1,579; Student Member – 599; Retired -113; Public Associates/Public Associate Students – 33; Non-practising – 36. CIP is a federation of Provincial affiliates -seven in all- representing all of the provinces and territories. National Council composed of the member affiliates, elected President and Vice-President and Student Representative directs the affairs of the Institute through an office and staff in Ottawa¹². Founded in 1919 -Thomas Adams was the first President- CIP provides a number of services and plays a number of roles for practising planners. For instance, CIP:

- fosters debate on current planning issues amongst members;
- promotes sound planning practice;
- takes stands on public issues;
- sets standards for professional membership and conducts and monitors the quality of planning education.

The production of this Professional Practice Manual has been supported by CIP.

1.7 A myriad of interests and agenda

No one can claim that planners lack for an interesting place in society. Our role and the expectation of us by others can be overwhelming at times. We do not have a collective mandate. We often lack the means to implement our work. Much of what we do is achieved through interest definition, compromise and, sometimes, deal making, the art of *quid pro quo*. Our authority to act is often at the mercy of other more senior jurisdictions. The courts appear to delight in using our practice to set new precedents; to create a moving target of sorts for our end work.

Canadian planning is also a diverse field. Its members practice in a variety of sub-fields, locations, organisations and situations. Planners have a variety of client interests, depending upon their type of practice and location.

1.7.1 Introduction to Private and Public Practice

The vast majority of Canadian planners are employed in the public and private sectors (e.g., there are 1,452 private sector and 1,934 public members of CIP). Both public and private sector planners receive similar training. This may be because the two sub-groups are very similar and do not require separate educational consideration. Or, it may be because planning schools have not studied the public and private sectors to identify similarities and differences¹³. The author's own experience and research suggests that there are similarities and differences that warrant discussion. What are some key areas of similarity and difference?

¹² At time of writing CIP the Association of Canadian University Planning Programs and representative of the College of Fellows also sit on National Council as non-voting members.

¹³ The failure of many planning theorists to contribute to normative planning theory has been identified by others (see: Forester in Rodwin, 2000). In Canada, Filion (1997) has contributed to the discussion by examining how the roles of the consulting planner and local government planner have helped to shape the profession.

In relation to the views of consulting planners and local government planners about the influences of politics upon planning, Witty (1998) discovered that local government planners and consulting planners tended to hold differing views. For instance:

- ✓ local government planners (34%) were almost twice as likely as consulting planners (19%) to believe that politicians expect unreasonable solutions from planners;
- ✓ local government planners (38%) were twice as likely as consulting planners (19%) to believe that lack of understanding of planning by politicians is responsible for the crisis in planning; and
- ✓ 83% of local government planners compared to 67% of consulting planners believe that planning is often compromised by the ‘politics of place’.

But, while consulting planners are less concerned about the ‘politics of place’, consulting planners (36%) are less likely than local government planners (52%) to believe that they can influence ‘the dynamics of power’.

In the matter of what they think *others* think about their work, local government planners and consulting planners appear to have the same view that decision-makers and the public respect their work. But it is the degree of support for their work that varies. Consulting planners displayed a higher confidence. For instance, 96% of consulting planners (c.f., 79% of local government planners) feel that decision-makers have a high respect for their work. In fact, 21% of local government planners (c.f., 4% consulting planners) disagree strongly that decision-makers respect their work. Some local government planners also appear to have a serious concern for their relationship with the public when 19% indicate that they feel that the public does not respect their work (c.f., consulting planners at 7%).

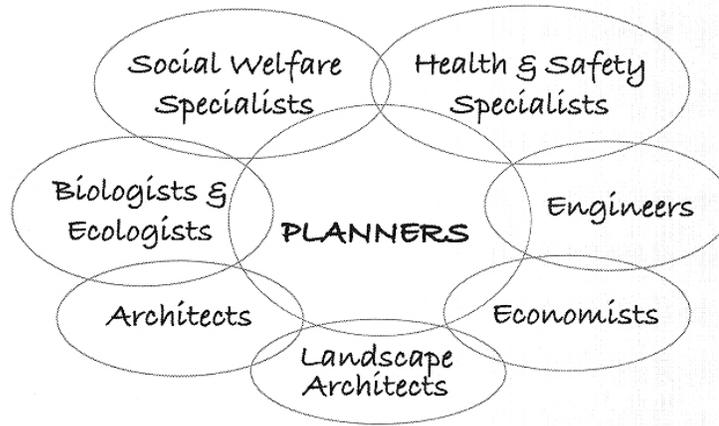
On other points of comparison, consulting planners and local government planners share common values. For instance both groups agree, 52% and 53% respectively, that planners should be more proactive in protecting community values. Likewise, on matters of selected planning theory (Forester, Friedmann and Schon), consulting planners and local government planners share similar views. But in one area there is a telling difference. In response to the question, “I believe I can make a difference to social, environmental, economic issues facing Canadian society,” more consulting planners (88%) compared to local government planners (60%) agree with that statement. The findings point to a potential major difference in how consulting planners and local government planners see themselves in relation to the politics of place, while pointing to considerable similarity in the values upon which both groups base their practice.

1.7.2 Collaboration

By its very nature, planning is prone to have a collaborative structure;

- Collaboration with the interests, usually including the public;
- Collaboration with decision-makers;
- Collaboration with colleagues; and
- Collaboration with other disciplines.

From the beginning of the modern planning profession in Canada at the turn of the 20th century, planners began to collaborate with others, most notably public health officers and engineers to identify and deliver potable water and sanitary servicing. Planners display a significant strength in their willingness to work with others. Who are these other players?



Planners collaborate with a variety of other disciplines, depending upon the area of planning. For instance, resource and park planners often collaborate with biologists, foresters and environmental specialists. Urban planners frequently associate with engineers, architects and landscape architects. Rural planners often affiliate with agronomists and stormwater engineers. Those associations are functional as well as beneficial in a broader sense. They provide benefit by expanding the potentials and providing a creative environment for problem solving. Planners should explore the edges of their practice by promoting discipline integration and facilitating inter-disciplinary thinking. Through an inter-disciplinary practice, planners will better serve their clientele by bringing holistic thinking to their work. Besides, it is fun!

In summary, planning practice has a rich history. Planning practice is both challenging and rewarding for those who are prepared to invest of themselves and their knowledge. It can be frustrating. It can be intimidating. But, most importantly it can be richly fulfilling!

2. Elements of Practice

Our work as planners embodies much of what we call Quality of Life, whether we work as local government planners, parks and recreation planners, transportation planners or as economic development planners. All of us share one common attribute: we are working to enhance quality of life. We approach that task *with vision and passion*. Vision provides us with the ability to articulate a preferred future and the requirements ‘to get there’. We are trained to understand and define the public interest. We examine our communities and regions to better understand how they function and how they can journey toward enhanced quality of life.

Our passion relates to our commitment to address those quality of life issues with vigour, compassion and energy. Our passion may ebb and flow in the face of challenge, but our commitment holds true. Our passion empowers us to excel. We are defined –as individuals and professionals- through our vision and passion.

We have a clear choice in our approach to our practice. We may see it as just a job, we may see it as work or we may see it as a vocation and professional practice that contributes to the well-being of society and the natural environment.

Our career in planning may be allowed to consume us or may be something we do between 9 and 5. Or, it may be a central part of lives, but in a balanced healthy dynamic way. Many planners approach their practice with a commitment to strive for excellence, to provide quality reasoned and thoughtful advice, to listen carefully to all interests, to advocate for the betterment of society and the natural environment, and to promote the profession as a unique and important contributor to the issues of the day. Others feel less committed for a variety of reasons, some of which have to do with the nature of their employment, their mandate, the cynicism of society around issues of the politics of place, and interests that divert their energies elsewhere.

We are all different. We all set individual goals. We have our own unique expectations and wants. But, at the end of the day, we have a clear choice: we can determine if what we do is a job or a professional practice. In either case there are associated moral and ethical dimensions. But, the latter, professional practice, has within it a textured weaving of passion, vitality and energy that creates a rich tapestry of experience and commitment that extends beyond that of ‘just a job’ to that of ‘a life’s work’. It is a path on life’s journey that each will need to choose, some of us will choose consciously and some of us will choose unconsciously. Some of us will discover the pathway early on (perhaps through a mentor or a major career decision) while others will discover their pathway shifts and takes form over time. But, for all of us there will be choices to make. Make no mistake, practice will shape us and we will shape our practice. It will evolve as we will evolve, it will change as we will change and it will mature as we mature. Our choice is to be a passenger or to be at the steering wheel as we journey along!

Planners have been faced constantly with such choices as practice responds to ecological, economic, physical and social issues and trends. During the 1970s and 1980s, planners responded to growing demands for increased environmental and social sensitivity in planning matters by developing enhanced biophysical analysis techniques and more responsive

community participation skills and processes and associated social planning skills. During the 1990's and into the millennium, planners are increasing their urban design skills as communities move to revitalise their built and natural environments. Planners will also need to develop increased awareness concerning public and private finance as communities explore new cost-effective ways of delivering services and amenities.

Planners need to keep a stock of varied 'hats' in the practice closet, donning one hat in place of another as trends and needs change. The challenge for many of us is to know what 'hat' to wear at varying times and when to look to others to wear their 'specialist hat'. If we are not careful, we may don a 'hat' that just doesn't fit, covering our ability to see and hear clearly. In such instances, we need to react quickly, recognise our shortcomings and address them immediately. We also need to recognise that we must constantly improve our skills through practice or continuing education. Our work requires it and society deserves it.

Some will argue that our responses have not been sufficient to address the myriad of environmental, economic, developmental and societal issues. While there will always be room for improvement, efforts to advance planning processes and products deserve support. It all becomes a matter of the appropriateness and relevance of practice as it responds to new needs and emerging issues. Practice is not static. Planning tools and techniques are fluid. Environmental, economic, physical and social issues evolve. Practitioners must continue to hone their skills, expand their tool kit and enrich their repertoire of responses. This Chapter will explore those considerations.

2.1 Planning as Interdisciplinary Practice

Planning has moved from a clearly defined narrowly contained profession to a broad-based multi-interest practice whose members are becoming increasingly comfortable sitting and working with a cross-section of other professionals and interests. Long gone are the days of the consummate planner who could be all things to all people. Issues of subject complexity, professional liability and maturation of other (sometimes -and increasingly- competing) professions have created a more humble planner practitioner. The practitioner has two choices: (1) hold ground and attempt to be all things to all people; or (2) develop associations with other disciplines. The latter seems to be a much more practical means of addressing the complexity of everyday life. That is for the better; for the profession of planning, for the public good, for client good and for community well-being.

But being interdisciplinary in name is not the same as being interdisciplinary in structure and practice. Interdisciplinary offices are those that fully integrate their breadth of expertise in collaborative processes in which information is shared, reflected upon in a team environment and ideas and solutions generated in a collegial, respectful and integrated fashion. Multi-disciplinary practice and structure relates to a mix of disciplines that may work together (or be located in the same office) but in a compartmentalised way. They may *share* information, but seldom *create* information in a collaborative manner. Inter-disciplinary practice is increasingly a more common form of practice in the public sector, but remains a challenge for many private sector offices, especially those that have a broad mix of skills and a focus on the 'bottomline'. Planning and landscape architecture practice-based firms are very often dynamic interdisciplinary practices that collaborate in a seamless pattern. Larger multi-disciplinary

engineering-based firms seem to struggle to move to the higher stage of interdisciplinary collaboration. As private practice firms and local government offices get bigger, the challenge to create an interdisciplinary environment, in response to the integrated complexity of issues, will increase. Interdisciplinary culture is stimulated, promoted, rewarded and managed through effective leadership and recognition. It will not, cannot, happen on its own. This is especially so when one considers the lack of interdisciplinary environments in many universities where the emphasis is traditionally upon individual professions. Often students are not exposed to interdisciplinary projects, studios and classes. On many campuses, interdisciplinary training is virtually non-existent, especially between the planning and physical design professions and other related professions such as engineering¹⁴.

Despite the lack of formal interdisciplinary training, there are a number of natural affiliations and associations that have evolved over time. Planners have frequently teamed with similar professions such as architects, biologists, economists, engineers and landscape architects. Such affiliations vary depending upon the planner's role and area of practice. But, there is a clustering that occurs within the professions and areas of practice. Experiences around interdisciplinary practice vary with the particular situation, interests of the parties and context of practice. Some planners will praise interdisciplinary practice (the author is one) while others will see it as a challenging method that encumbers processes and neutralises issue specific responses. But the long-term well-being of planning very likely depends upon our willingness and ability to work (and frequently lead) in an interdisciplinary environment. Environmental, economic, physical and social issues are usually too complex to be resolved through single discipline methodology. Planners have come to learn that teaming with other specialists and interests has become a proven means of addressing the arena of complexity that embraces so much of our work.

Planners may lead interdisciplinary teams or be part of a team that is led by another discipline or specialist. The varying roles and needs of the assignment provide an interesting fluidness to practice, creating varied points of intersection with issues, other disciplines and other planners. That variety of work, especially in an interdisciplinary environment, is often some of the most interesting and innovative work that we do. As we move through our careers, we may experience differing interdisciplinary environments, some of which will be exhilarating and others which will be confining and limiting. Each of us needs to determine our preferred role and seek opportunities to employ our skill set with others to achieve common goals¹⁵.

2.1.1 Public Sector Experience

The public sector planner is often required to team with other disciplines (usually engineers and landscape architects) to address issues of community interest. In many public offices, planners may report to engineers or engineers may report to planners. Where collaborative processes are required, such as neighbourhood plans and community plans, public sector planners and engineers are often required to work together. Unfortunately, those collaborative efforts sometimes dissolve into challenging 'turf wars' in which each of the professions feels

¹⁴ Our Faculty of Architecture is a rare exception in which architects, city planners, interior designers and landscape architects collaborate to deliver an environmental design program, share in studio work and collaborate with engineers on design and research issues.

¹⁵ For newly graduated planners who are seeking a diversity of experience to qualify for CIP membership, care should be taken to ensure that the potential to compile a log book, that meets the range of experience needed to meet membership standards, is available.

compelled to defend its area of practice, its mandate, budget and influence upon decision-makers. It is often because of that potential friction that public sector offices place either an engineer or a planner in charge of a combined engineering and planning office structure. But, for the most part, there appears to be a reasonable relationship and support for positive engineering and planning collaboration in most public sector offices.

Within non-municipal public sector planning offices, interdisciplinary collaboration often takes on a different form. In provincial government planning offices, municipal affairs planners frequently work with local government specialists (many of whom started as planners), environmental planners often associate with biologists and speciality engineers (geotechnical, stormwater), park planners and resource planners frequently work with engineers, foresters, wildlife biologists and landscape architects, and transportation planners usually affiliate with highway and design engineers. Federal government planners may also experience similar working partnerships.

Public sector planners are now developing additional relationships with other professionals, such as finance specialists. Those emerging relationships are reflective of the growing interest of governments to explore the costs of implementation and alternative financing for development projects and to reduce costs to the taxpayer. Planners are also increasingly becoming involved in P³ (public private partnerships). Trends suggest that such initiatives will continue to require adaptation of traditional planning practice.

The degree of interdisciplinary public sector collaboration will vary depending upon the size and mandate of the particular public sector situation. In small communities, the planner will very likely reflect the old 'all things to all people' image, providing planning, zoning and building advice. They are expected to wear many different hats.

In larger urban settings, planners tend to be specialists who collaborate with other professionals by responding to specific situations. In the latter setting, teams are frequently formed across the specialist planning lines and with other disciplines. In the small community, the team is often composed of the planner and those from whom she may seek support such as consultants who complement and round out her skill set.

2.1.2 Private Sector Experience

Unlike public sector planners (especially in large communities), many private sector planners do not work in an interdisciplinary environment on a daily basis, but tend to associate with other disciplines on specific assignments -the interdisciplinary team changing shape and composition on a project-by-project basis. Some very successful firms have combined planners with other compatible disciplines, particularly planning and landscape architecture or engineering and planning. Without over generalising (and that can easily be the case), the former are often more design oriented and the latter more 'traditional' in the scope of their work. But, each firm will develop its own interdisciplinary style, either as it approaches interdisciplinary practice from a more narrow planning orientation or as a large integrated company within which a variety of professions (including planners) have come to combine their professional resources.

For those who seek a career in the private sector, there are very clear choices that can be made. One can choose to specialise (e.g., the landscape architect/planner focus on design and land use) or to generalise (e.g., the engineering focus on traditional planning practice) within an interdisciplinary setting. While not always the case, the type of disciplinary focus of the firm will very likely determine the focus of planning practice within that particular setting. Planners new to the field would be well advised to carefully analyse the particular disciplinary focus and strengths of a firm before committing to it. Otherwise, the planning practitioner may find that her/his role and interests are constrained by the particular concentration of the firm.

In many situations, private practice planners may develop informal or formal ‘alliances’ with complementary disciplines, especially architects, economists, engineers, and landscape architects. Those alliances may take the shape of formal agreements that require that each of the firms work together on projects that are in need of the group’s particular skill set. Or, the alliance may be simply a common understanding that the firms will consultate with each other on certain types of projects with no restrictions placed upon potential working relationships. The latter is very loose and is meant to stimulate dialogue without impeding interdisciplinary team formation with other groups outside of the association. In cases where formal relationships are developed, there is an expectation that the formal group will market itself as a single entity and that, except in rare situations, the member firms will collaborate.

The advantages of a formal association include an ability to respond to proposals quickly (i.e., the teams do not need ‘to shop around’ each time to create an ideal team), share promotion expenses and provide breadth of exposure for all. The disadvantages include a limitation on offering services to other firms who may desire the expertise of one of the association firms while being in competition with other members of the association. For small firms, it is often an advantage to keep one’s options open and seek to form loose associations or comfortable working relationships without the formality of the other model. Many formal associations have come and gone while the informal loose coalitions continue to evolve and adapt while having the flexibility to develop new relationships.

2.1.3 Future of Interdisciplinary Work

As planners, we can expect that interdisciplinary work will only grow in importance as economic, environmental, physical design and social issues become more complex. Our ability to ‘speak several disciplinary languages’, to ‘see the big picture’, to facilitate and mediate, and to write, often places us in the role as prime contender for interdisciplinary advocate and leader. Our role will continue to emerge as that of a team member or leader. We will not always be in a position to determine that role, but will often need to respond to others. Over time, as we work in interdisciplinary situations, we may come to hone our skills and be seen to be natural interdisciplinary team leaders. But, we will need to bide our time.

Some planners will shy away from interdisciplinary work because they are uncomfortable in such situations or because they have focused upon developing a narrower skill set. In either circumstance, the planner needs to make a conscious decision to be willing to explore future interdisciplinary opportunities.

2.2 Scales of Planning

Like many other professions, we are able to practice at a variety of scales: local, regional, provincial, national, international. We may work in those varied geographic settings as public sector employees, as NGO employees or as consultants. While some of us are comfortable working in a cross-section of those scales, most of us tend to focus upon one or two.

Unlike Areas of Practice (See: Section 2.3), scales of planning seem to be more intimidating. Planners do not commonly move from the local to the provincial or national scale or vice versa. This may be because of the type of planning that is done in each. It may also be because the networks one develops at one level are more detailed (and supportive in terms of new job opportunities) than those developed at another (where contact may be sporadic). Planners do move frequently between local and regional scales where their networks often intermesh, but it is unusual for a planner to move between a local government setting to a national role. This implies that our choice of scale could have long term implications upon our future roles and geographic location.

2.3 Areas of Practice

We have an incredible breadth to our profession. Unlike many other professions, we are able to move between a variety of roles and labels without rigorous professional qualifications. For instance, a planner specialising in zoning matters may move into an economic development portfolio through on-the-job exposure or developing new interests in employment-related land use matters. That ability to change direction and enter new specialities in planning practice brings with it significant obligations to oneself, community and client. We need to know when we are entering uncharted water and when we need to decline or defer to others or enhance our skill set to ensure that we meet our ethical obligations to our communities, clients and employers. Some of us prefer to remain for most or all of our career in one area of practice; perhaps an area of practice for which we were trained at university. Others will build on the skill sets and tools acquired in practice, academia or through continuing education and venture into related areas of practice. For some, especially those in public practice, the move out of planning into administrative positions seems to be a common trend, even though many of those who experience that evolution do not have formal managerial training. It seems for them and for those who are able to continue to move into new areas of practice that the planning profession offers a set of transferable skills that assist each group as it evolves and adapts to new needs and challenges.

Some of us prefer to hone a particular set of skills while remaining in one area of practice. Others will prefer to continue to evolve. No one approach is better than the other, except as that approach fits the character, career plan and skills of the individual planner. For those who intend to remain committed to one area of practice, there will continue to be an expectation by the employer that that planner will continue to enhance their skill set and knowledge base within their chosen area of practice. Effective planning does not countenance coasting!

There are a number of areas of practice in planning, including:

➤ Community planning	➤ Economic development
➤ Environmental planning	➤ Park and recreation planning
➤ Regional planning	➤ Social planning
➤ Tourism planning	➤ Transportation planning
➤ Urban design	➤ Urban planning

There are also many subsets within the above, including:

➤ Strategic planner	➤ Zoning officer
➤ GIS specialist	➤ Development officer
➤ Neighbourhood planner	➤ Mediator
➤ Facilitator	➤ Site planner

Case Study #1: A Real life experience

He started out as a park planner, entered consulting where he completed a wide range of projects, including community plans (rural, small town and First Nation), park planning work and tourism studies. After a brief sojourn to the federal government as a Chief Park Planner, he returned to private practice and over the years moved from community planning, negotiation and facilitation to urban planning and design. During those years he worked beside landscape architects who passed on their design knowledge. Through that transfer of knowledge and increased reading in other areas of practice he moved away from his original area of practice (park planning) into community planning and from there into urban planning and design.

The central tool kit and planning knowledge acquired during undergraduate geography and graduate planning degrees, permitted this planner to adopt, refine and explore new areas of practice. Working and teaching with other disciplines, especially landscape architects and architects, facilitated that transition.

Case Study#2: On Possessing a Varied Skill Set

He graduated with a BA in Landscape Architecture and an Urban Design Masters from a highly regarded American University. Entering consulting in the mid-west US and teaching part-time, he practised landscape architecture, urban planning and urban design. He returned to Canada to join a large city staff as a Senior Landscape Architect and then as Senior Planner. During his employment with the city he worked on a number of large award winning projects, many of which were interdisciplinary in scope. He then left the city to go on his own in the consulting world, specialising in facilitation, urban design, urban planning and site planning.

In this instance, the planner has evolved from a purely design orientation to a broad-based planner with excellent design skills. His training provided him with the flexibility while his practice gave him experience in a variety of project types and associated application of skills and tools acquired 'on-the-job'.

Lessons:

1. *One should always be open to learning from our daily experiences or continuing education, ready to adapt or respond to new opportunities.*
2. *Practice provides important experience and should facilitate continual professional growth.*
3. *Titles and degrees should not hamper our professional growth but facilitate our evolution.*

How can planners ensure that they are able to remain relevant, adapt to new trends and move forward within their profession?

- ***Begin at the beginning!*** Pay careful attention to your education and the types of skill sets offered. Recognise that you will very likely change your areas of practice several times during your career. Like the case studies above, you can move between areas of practice with confidence if:
 1. your basic skill set (i.e., processes, methods, theory) has the essential elements to become a solid planner in any area of practice (more on that later);
 2. you have acquired a variety of core competencies in two or more disciplines; and/or
 3. you have upgraded your skill set through work experience and/or continuing education. Anecdotal evidence suggests that many planners have adapted to new areas of practice successfully because they have been resilient and open to learning from others, have pursued continuing education and/or have continued to read and explore new methods and areas of practice. There is no one way to ensure ability to move into new areas of practice except through career long diligence and effort.
- ***Never stop learning!*** We must remain open to on-going learning, either through our association with others who have experience to share or through continuing education in the form of conferences, courses, reading or meetings. Each new project offers usually some potential to learn new ‘tricks of the trade’, to explore new methods or new outcomes. Approach each project with that thought in mind.
- ***Constantly challenge yourself.*** To remain fresh and approach your work with vigour and rigour is an important part of continuing to evolve. Examine each new assignment in a fresh way and avoid allowing stale solutions to enter your work. Proposed solutions may be similar to other previous solutions, but seldom should they be the same. Challenge yourself and your associates ‘to think out side the box’. Such an approach will inevitably lead you to new ideas and an expanded career.
- ***Each project is an important project!*** If we approach each project with enthusiasm and a willingness to learn, we will be the better for it. From those experiences and attitude (and attitude is a key aspect of the potential success of our approach) we can remain open to new ideas.
- ***Never stop asking questions!*** Work on this axiom: ask questions and lots of them, even some that may appear ‘dumb’ to the recipient. For instance, I continue to ask lots of questions of clients and co-workers, often qualifying my questions with “I am about to ask you lots of questions and some of the answers will seem pretty obvious to you, but I

would sooner ask a question with what appears to be an obvious answer to you rather than miss a potentially important point . . . so bear with me.” You know, they usually say something like: “Don’t worry, I’m glad you are interested.” So, ask lots of questions and keep on learning!

- ***Read and read some more!*** There is a wealth of planning material out there. There are numerous publications that explore new trends. Newspapers, especially the national weekend versions, often contain interesting and illuminating trends and lifestyle material. *Plan Canada*, *Urbanite*, *Landscape Architecture* (from the American Association of Landscape Architects) and the American Planning Association’s *Planning* and *Journal of the American Planning Association* are important sources of new information. CMHC publications also provide useful insights. In addition, identify other sources for your area of practice, such as the United States Forest Service reports if you are a park planner. Each area of practice will have particular sources of important trend information, but each of us needs to be diligent to seek it out.
- ***Build a reference library!*** Often, when we leave school and take our meagre collection of professional books with us, we fail to see those books as the beginning of our library. Too many of us fail to build on those sources. We should be constantly seeking out new sources, reading new texts and related books and placing them in our own library. Those texts and books will become your source material, providing examples and ideas that would otherwise be long forgotten. In your reference library, create subject matter files in which interesting newspaper articles, other clippings, and conference handouts are placed. If you are really organised, you might consider indexing that material. All of this is simply investing in your career!
- ***Create and keep Idea Books!*** Use notebooks to write down interesting ideas gleaned during conferences and presentations. Keep an Idea Book handy for your ideas and musings. Use it to have some fun and to develop thoughts and concepts that you may let sit for another day to ponder and develop!
- ***Create Project Books!*** Instead of writing your project notes on loose leaf paper that gets lost and/or discarded, keep a yearly record of projects, in which meeting notes, ideas, key thoughts are retained as a personal archive. Too often, we end up after years of practice forgetting the nuances of our work and lacking a record of our evolution as planners.
- ***Retain copies of your work!*** Make sure you retain slides or hard copies of your professional work and build a library containing that work. In many ways, your work identifies who you are. Past examples of work are a memory of many years of effort and thought and they can sometimes be an inspiration for new projects.
- ***Keep a slide library (or, if you are starting out, a CD ROM of images).*** A slide/CD ROM library of projects and examples of areas of practice by others can be a useful way of providing examples for future reference. Such images can also be used to show clients, communities and decision-makers how others have created interesting

solutions. Images of resource projects, urban design examples, park projects, and development can be used by various areas of practice.

- **Monitor your interests.** A simple rule is this: if something intrigues you then make a mental note of it, jot it down in your idea book or take an image of it, whether it is in your area of practice or not (in fact, if something does intrigue you and it is outside your 'normal' area of practice, that may be a clue that you –like so many other planners- are developing a new interest). Let your eye help to identify those new potential interests in new areas of practice!
- **Stay on top of Best Practices.** There are a number of best practices sources including publications (especially the Research Reports) of CMHC (www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca) that are readily available for review and application. Our clients and employers expect us to be in tune with emerging practice. Examine APA's Planning Series and list of publications and purchase those that interest you. Remember that others have usually faced similar challenges and issues and may have transferable solutions that you can use as you enter a new area of practice.

All of this is not to suggest that we should 'willy-nilly' enter new areas of practice because we happen to be interested or because we are being asked to do some new work in an area with which we are unaccustomed. We must be diligent in our growth *into* new areas of practice. We must resolve to educate ourselves first, perhaps by working with a mentor or colleague who is experienced in that area. Or, perhaps we attend a course that addresses that subject matter. Whatever means we employ to broaden our areas of practice, we must be true to ourselves, our clients and our communities; ensuring that we recognise when we need to defer to others who are more competent in a particular area of practice. Perhaps, we defer over the short term and develop the appropriate skill set over the long term so that we can properly work in a new area of practice. Whatever we decide we should recognise that we will very likely continue to evolve as professional planners. That is one of our exciting realities and one that keeps many of us fresh for the next foray into the world of the politics of place!

2.4 Roles and Expectations

Planners are often caught in the stormy seas of the politics of place. Many citizens [and some planning theorists, such as Leonie Sandercock (1999)] believe that the planner should be an advocate on behalf of the citizenry. Many politicians believe that planners should find ways of implementing their ideas, for they have been elected by the people 'to get things done'. Many clients believe that, since they are paying the bills, the planner should advocate their needs without question. These 'push-pulls' can create many challenges for the practitioner, some of which the planner may take home with him or her to try and sort how to respond, and some of which may cause the planner to rethink their area of practice or place of employment. Others may cause the planner to 'dig in their heels' and challenge those who are doing the 'pushing'. Sometimes by 'digging in their heels' the planner is inviting retribution either through loss of employment or organisational shunning. Sometimes by 'digging in their heels' the planner is taking the high road and is providing the best and most appropriate advice possible. Unfortunately, too often, the planner may pay a price for such action.

The difficulty facing many planners –and a difficulty too often ignored by theorists- is that they are human; they usually have mortgages, debt and often a family to consider. Their challenge to those who are ‘pushing’ must be muted sometimes because of their circumstance of every day life. This issue is a complex one, full of special situations and circumstances. Each of us will have to carefully evaluate the situation, determine the most appropriate course of action and respond accordingly. Certainly, on matters of ethics, public safety and illegality there is not much choice. The planner must not waver. The planner must take the high road and seek justice in its fullest sense. That may mean setting the public record straight, resigning or dealing with the person involved in a face-to-face meeting. But, such actions are difficult and may have serious consequences for one’s career. Planners often need help to address such issues. A supportive mentor may be able to provide sound advice. Or a strong professional organisation such as CIP and its local affiliates, can go a long way to insulate the professional from undue pressures. Peer support can also be a major assistance.

Planners are vulnerable to pressure. They are asked frequently to comment on controversial issues, many of which have divided community and political support. By advising one course of action over another, planners can be caught in the cross-hairs of local politics. They can be easily exposed to public scorn, particularly in situations of NIMBY. This is an especially challenging situation for local government planners who are quite often in the middle of debates between their political masters, the public, their senior administrators and the private sector. While a tough skin is a common trait to long surviving planners, there are instances when others will cross the line and make public statements that insinuate that the planner is immoral, incompetent or untrustworthy. The planner must make a decision to bear the personal pain or decide to resign. In other situations where the planner’s recommendation has been rejected in favour of an option that the planner feels is immoral, invalid or simply downright wrong, the planner is again faced with the issue of ‘now what?’ For those who have worked in the ‘trenches’, resigning is too often tossed out as an option by academics and others as the penultimate choice. But such a decision is easier said than done, especially for single parent planners who face significant bank obligations. Consultants may be in the middle of such situations as well, but they can choose to decline to work in that local government or for a particular client in the future. How can planners avoid or minimise such circumstances?

2.4.1 Dealing with difficult situations

We are often placed in challenging and difficult circumstances. How can we manage when faced with difficult situations?

- ***Build coalitions of interest.*** Planners need to recognise that, while they are professionals with specific roles, expectations and responsibilities, they should network within their communities to build relationships with supportive politicians, citizens and interest groups. Such relationships should not be based on the notion of developing a friendship (although that may evolve over time) but upon mutual common interest in enhancing the quality of life of the community. By providing timely requested information, attending meetings and/or readily assisting in matters that fall within the purview of the planner’s role, the planner can develop a relationship of respect. Out of respect, trust may evolve and become a cornerstone for the development of a long term mutually supportive relationship that betters the community.

- ***Remain professional.*** The world of planning is often fraught with emotion. Heated Council meetings, public meetings or Committee meetings can result in angry charges and retorts. As professionals we must avoid joining in except to offer sage advice. Displays of anger by a planner seldom evoke sympathy from employers or the public. Usually it is better to simply ‘hold one’s tongue’ and wait for the heat of the moment to subside. But there are times, when a line has been crossed, and the planner must show emotion. There are no pre-set situations that one can call upon to determine when it is appropriate to denounce accusations. Each of us will have different thresholds. For me, it is any suggestion of ethical compromise.
- ***Retain objectivity.*** We are challenged in our work often by the various characters with whom we are forced to associate. There are some people, whether members of the public, clients or politicians, who can be wonderful to work with or simply a pain. The former bring us needed support and reassurance. The latter can make us cringe as we enter a meeting. We must be vigilant and ensure that our professional conduct, attitudes, opinions and recommendations are not clouded by the personalities of the people with whom we are involved. When people are exceptionally ‘nice’ to us, it may be difficult to say ‘no’. When people are really belligerent, it may be difficult to say ‘yes’. We must be guided by what is professionally correct, rather than by the personalities involved. This is easier said than done, but we must constantly be monitoring our work and approaches to people to ensure that administrative fairness rules the day.
- ***Stay on top of events.*** Most of us should never be caught by surprise at a particularly negative reaction to a recommendation or issue. If we are really plugged into our work and community, we should have a good sense of public sentiment. We should always be trying to stay on top of community feelings and political will. By doing so, we can anticipate potential problems and be prepared for them. Networking with fellow staff and others in the community can assist in remaining in touch with the community and political ‘pulse’.
- ***Bide your time.*** Remember that people can change their views over time and that many community members and politicians come to conclusions or preconceived ideas quickly based upon impressions or their historical view of events. Through persistent patience, planners can inform the public and decision-makers who, in turn, can come to see that there may be different ways of achieving common goals. Planners must remember that they are often educating others about new trends and ideas. Experience shows that, over time, most citizens and politicians will be open to new ideas and change if the ideas are presented in a way that does not threaten the citizens and politicians, gives them ample time to digest the information and come to understand the trend and ideas, and offers them a voice in the decision. That means that the planner must be patient and willing to take the time to educate, listen and modify. Time can be a planner’s best friend.
- ***Be a listener.*** If the public and politicians believe that you are really listening, they will very likely stop ‘yelling’ to catch your attention and begin to converse with you. As planners we need to create the right environment so that those with whom we work see us as receptive listeners, willing to hear out the issues before offering advice.

- **Take the high ground.** It is easy to bend to the anger one sees in many public hearings or meetings. The challenge is to take the high ground and refuse to become consumed by rancour. As professionals we must remain detached from the heat of the moment – although inside we may be boiling! - and try and determine the underlying reasons for the anger. People say things in the heat of the moment –sometimes very personal things- that they would not normally say. If those types of comments are made about you, you need to decide on the spot the following:
 1. Who made the comments? Are they well known in the community for irrational comments? Does their word have meaning in the scheme of things?
 2. Did they make the comments to intimidate you? (see: Case Study # 2).
 3. Is their comment personally denigrating? Have they slandered you?
 4. Will their comments have long term negative impact on the community, client or you?
 5. Will they detrimentally affect the outcome of a public good and harm others or important community attributes?

If you answered ‘yes’ to any of the above, then you must act on the spot. How?

1. Non-official meeting: you could call upon the chair or person in charge to direct the person to cease with such comments or you will leave the meeting (see Case Study # 2).
2. Official meeting: you look at the chair or pass a note to the chair seeking the chair’s intercession on your behalf. (Note: a good working relationship with the chair or other members of the committee/council will go a long way in ensuring that such events are controlled from the chair).
3. If the person is well know as a ‘trouble maker’ who frequently makes outlandish comments, you may wish to simply ignore the entire comment and leave it to the chair to comment or the group to recognise the comments for what they are: typical uninformed innuendoes. Note: this is often part of the price of the job!
4. If the comments will have long term negative impact or detrimentally affect the community, you should respond in a reasoned way. By not responding you are potentially giving substance to the uninformed views. If you have developed supporting networks in the community you will likely be buttressed as you do respond.
5. You should also ‘track’ the comments to see if the press picks them up or if they begin to develop a life of their own in the rumour mills of the community. If the comments appear to gain unworthy validity, you will need to consider an approach to address them, including research, materials and presentations to ‘clear the air’ and point out the fallacy in the comments made.

Case Study #2: Playing mind games

It happened in a most unusual place: the kitchen and living room of an orchardist. The meeting was held to review community members concerns about a proposed large development. The planner had been retained to adjudicate the growing community dispute. As the planner entered the kitchen, a few minutes early for the meeting, he was presented with coffee and pie until the others arrived. Sitting at the kitchen table was a distinguished looking older gentleman who proceeded to try and stare down the planner with incredibly piercing eyes. The planner could see this rather menacing gaze out of the corner of his eye. The planner felt he had one of two choices: he could try and ignore this strange behaviour or stare back. His decision was made based upon information he had gathered prior to coming.

There was a well-known retired psychiatrist who lived in the community, who was active in local politics and who was involved in a well-publicised malpractice suit. The planner realised that before him was the noted psychiatrist! The planner decided that, if he was to remain neutral and maintain credibility as an independent adjudicator, he would need to return the gaze. The psychiatrist looked away. During the subsequent meeting, the psychiatrist leaned forward in what the planner knew to be an aggressive posture and began to question the ethics of the planner. It was obvious that the psychiatrist was the de-facto leader of this interest group as the other attendees sat in silence. The planner again had two choices: sit and take the abuse or challenge the speaker. The planner opted for the latter and cut the speaker off. The planner looked around the room of 20 people and said if the group wanted to have input into the process they could decide to have a pleasant and polite meeting in which the planner would listen carefully or they would be sitting amongst themselves because the planner was about to leave. The decision was theirs. Those attending looked at each other and agreed that the meeting should continue in a more pleasant tone at which the psychiatrist sat back and refrained from any other verbal abuse of the planner.

Lessons:

- 1. Principled planning will go a long way to convince others of your right to be respected.*
- 2. There are times when you must take a stand, if not for yourself, then for the community's right to be heard.*
- 3. It is often helpful to scope out potential problem players.*

2.4.2 Building supporting relationships

There are situations where planners develop close respected working relationships with the community and its elected representatives. In effect, they form coalitions of interest to achieve common goals. Those can be exciting wonderful experiences for the planner and citizen and politician alike. Such planners are to be envied, but their special relationship did not just simply happen. The planners in such situations worked hard to create the right atmosphere of trust. How did they do it?

- ***Identify and promote coalitions of common interest.*** This moves beyond coalitions of interest above to a more proactive development of relationships with politicians and other staff members. Those relationships are built to implement specific community mandated goals that, as a team, you and a politician or politicians (and others e.g., university staff,

community members, influential developers etc.) believe are essential to the success of the community vision (note: such relationships must be rooted in community identified goals) (See: Case Study # 3).

- ***Develop and maintain credibility.*** Respect and trust will go a long way in ensuring that, as a planner, you are able to work effectively in the community or with clients. If the community trusts you to make the right recommendations, your life will be much easier and goals will be achieved. Remember, we are only as good as our last project or recommendation. We must consistently provide the highest quality advice. Short circuited and ill researched answers can spell future trouble. If not sure of an answer or if a proposal or recommendation is questionable . . . say so. Admit lack of knowledge rather than attempt to ‘bluff’ your way through. Honesty is the best policy! People will usually accept your lack of knowledge or inability to give a quick answer, if you are honest with them.
- ***Avoid bureaucratic practice.*** While it is acceptable to say you don’t have the answer at the moment, it is not acceptable to constantly avoid giving responses for lack of complete information. There are many times when we can provide an answer in the absence of 100 percent of the facts. If we choose to ensure that we have considered every last aspect of the question, we may have done a disservice to the issue or question and the community because the answer was needed sooner rather than later. This does not mean that the planner should short circuit rigorous analysis and debate on all matters, but it does mean that the planner should examine each situation and determine, using good judgement and application of administrative fairness, the appropriate response for each instance. Excessive analysis and debate on some matters is simply not warranted. The planner should take direction from the client, politicians or senior staff and weigh the requirements. Falling back upon a bureaucratic approach will not garner support over the long term.
- ***Promote successful projects.*** There is nothing like recognition from others to develop credibility. If you have completed a project that you know is a roaring success, then promote it by: (1) submitting it for an award (CIP, affiliate, CSLA etc.); (2) contacting the press and suggesting a story (better yet have a politician contact the press); and (3) presenting it to a conference where you hope others will take note and make inquiries of your employer.
- ***Develop a positive attitude.*** Attitude can sometimes be everything. Attitude creates an atmosphere that projects confidence, success and willingness (even eagerness) of others to be around you, work with you and listen to you. By being positive about your work, you will more likely instil confidence in others of your recommendations and projects. This should not be construed to be manipulating others but is about how you present yourself. In situations where you find it difficult to have a positive attitude, then, it is probably time to move on to where you will be appreciated and where you can enjoy your work and have a good attitude!
- ***Aim for high quality work.*** We are judged and defined by what we do, not just what we say. We must ensure that our work reflects the highest standards. Shortcuts create immediate relief but long term pain. Our work is largely who we are (outside of our personal lives). We should always aim high, provide the best quality product, report or

information possible within the recognised constraints of budgets, time and mandate. If we continually excel at what we do, we will come to be trusted and respected. Through trust and respect we can have positive affect upon our communities and its decision-makers.

- **Sow ideas.** Planners need to develop methods for sowing ideas and waiting for them to germinate (now and again through proactive ‘idea advocacy’). Sometimes planners will be given credit for a new idea that has had a significant positive effect and some times others will recreate history and take the credit. But, it really doesn’t matter in the scheme to things if ‘good has been achieved’. So, don’t ‘own’ ideas, rather ‘sow’ ideas and see what happens. At the end of the day, those in the know will know!

Case Study #3: A Proven Team

One works as a Director of Planning for a city core and one is a well known local politician of a large urban centre. They both believed in the city’s goal of downtown renewal, increased residential living in the downtown and creation of new neighbourhoods on brownfield sites in the core. Their common vision, as articulated in the city’s long term plan, has become a reality. The city is a showcase for many other North American planners, politicians and developers. By combining forces, the planner and politician were able to persuade others of their vision. The end result is an award winning downtown, a place where people come to live, work and recreate.

They have jointly advocated their vision to the public, the media and to other planners and politicians. This is a team that works well and has results to show for their common efforts. But they recognise the importance of an inclusive process, their need to retain a professional relationship and the need to work with a cross –section of interests.

Lesson:

1. *Vision requires commitment from a variety of areas, especially politicians. The teaming of planners and politicians to achieve controversial but visionary goals has worked wonders in many large and small communities. It is a powerful tool, especially for social and physical development reform. The trick is to ensure that the ‘team’ does not disenfranchise the community as it defines and implements the community vision.*

2.4.3 Responding under pressure

Expectations of us can vary. Some hold that planning is interference in their daily lives and right to do what they want on their private property. Others believe that planners can make a major difference in the life of communities through ‘planning-like decrees’. Both views are unrealistic. Planners’ work is framed largely by legislation and regulations often developed and adopted by others. We respond to society’s rules. We are managed directly or indirectly by elected decision-makers (this is the case for private and public planners). We don’t always have a lot of flexibility. Our innovation comes through the processes we use and the recommendations we make (as they are framed by ‘the rules of the game’). Since community members and decision-makers seem to have so many varied expectations of us, we must ensure that our ‘client groups’ understand what we are doing and why. Too often, we tend to jump into a project or answer a question without properly framing the assignment or question to ensure that we have it right before we begin.

How can we better frame our responses?

- ***Identify the requirement.*** It is critical that we identify clearly what it is that we are about to answer. This can be done verbally on the spot during the course of a meeting or by way of a memorandum or project brief, depending upon the scale of the project. Work on the following axiom: **never assume anything!**
- ***Talk with those affected.*** This may not always be possible because of shortage of time or because there is simply too much rancour. But where and when possible, try and talk with those affected. By taking the time to seek out those affected, the planner is providing a venue to get the facts while affording those affected a chance to have their say. In some situations, politicians may see this as their job, but if the planner is to make a recommendation, it is key to have as much information as possible, and that includes the views of those affected.
- ***Develop a Workplan.*** Workplans are an important means of setting out what needs to be done, by whom and when. The smallest assignment can effectively make use of a workplan (in that case often a few thoughts in one's mind!). The key about a workplan is this: it identifies what needs to be done. For major assignments, a workplan provides client/decision-maker and the public, where necessary, with knowledge of what is to be done before it is done. For major assignments, those affected should be involved in the workplan to ensure that their interests and needs are identified well in advance of undertaking the required work. Experience shows that such dialogue goes a long way to avoiding missed issues later on (see: Section 2.6.1.4).

Planners and communities work and live in a changing environment. New trends and expectations challenge planners. Planners are on the forefront of change, recommending processes and methods to deal with change which often comes from forces external to the community. There are changes to legislation that may affect citizens and developers. While legislation may be developed by a senior distant level of government, it is often up to the local government (i.e., usually the planner) to interpret and implement the new legislation. The implications of such legislative change can be overwhelming for some communities. For instance, recent changes to the Fish Protection Act of British Columbia will 'take' increased setbacks from streams (and ditches) and restrict landowners from encroaching upon the setbacks. For communities located in steep hillsides with numerous streams, this means that previously developable land is no longer available. Cases have been documented where landowners have seen the appraised value of their property decrease by 50%. Planners in several of these significantly affected communities have been faced with over the counter criticism from irate landowners and local developers¹⁶.

Other changes involve the normal changes to technology and associated expectations that they place upon the planner, such as need to provide higher quality presentations (e.g., Powerpoint) and the expectation of faster responses (e.g., E-mail, internet, faxes, CAD). Still others relate to changing roles of the planner including increased facilitation, innovative public input and design skills. To remain relevant, the planner must continue to adapt, learn and apply new

¹⁶ This is not to say that the legislation is inappropriate but that the planner often is held accountable for rules made by others.

knowledge. While that constant need to adapt and change may seem intimidating, it can also be viewed as exhilarating and an exciting part of our practice.

For public sector planners determining who is the client is relatively straightforward. The client is the community as represented through the elected representatives of the community (either local, regional, provincial or federal). The public sector planner may be directed to work with a specific client group within the community. But the client remains the community at large. This is frequently a potentially challenging role for consultants and one that continues to present interesting working relationships. The private sector planner must understand the role of who controls the purse strings from the role of who directs the project. Intimidation of the planner by the controller of the funding should not be tolerated. Careful attention to defining roles and expectations (through a solid workplan) will go a long way to alleviate that potential problem.

2.5 Identifying Appropriate Methods

Practitioners have been challenged constantly to identify appropriate methods that facilitate community participation in the decisions affecting community quality of life. During the early years of planning practice in Canada, practitioners were challenging each other to develop and apply effective methods for addressing the inequities in cities such as sewer and water, housing and land use, and in rural and resource communities methods such as conservation and husbandry of resources and land. Over time, the advocates for 'better' practice became more and more university based, until the 1980's when Marxist planning theories dominated the planning critique and many practitioners sought their solutions. It was during that period that a significant divide began to split theory and practice (see: Sir Peter Hall's Cities of Tomorrow). More recently, others have challenged planners to develop appropriate techniques and processes to address the issues of today (see: Leonie Sandercock's Towards Cosmopolis).

Canadian planners agree that they need to rethink their approaches. When I asked if "the future of planning rests in identifying appropriate new concepts of planning action," 37% of respondents agreed strongly and 36% agreed somewhat. Only 18% did not agree (9% did not respond). But the profession as a whole is unsure how and what to do. During the mid 1990's Len Gertler (1994) challenged CIP to explore "a new development model for Canada." But, CIP declined his suggestion. Calls for new approaches are not new. What is new to the debate is the fact that a majority of the profession support the need to "identify appropriate new concepts of planning action." The question is how do we move in that direction?

2.5.1 Approaches

- ***Linking theory to action.*** At the core of any profession is its theoretical underpinning. The weaker the theoretical underpinning the weaker the profession's sense of purpose and foundation. Founding principles are critical to professional well-being and sense of continuity. In the case of many professions, critical analysis has created significant self-doubt (see: John Ralston Saul's Voltaire's Bastards). While most professions have been painted with the same brush by writers, such as Saul, planners seem to be particularly affected, perhaps because many of their own theorists have been their chief critics (Gerecke, Friedmann, Sandercock). It is time for practitioners and theorists to work

together to develop mutually respected approaches to the issues surrounding the profession's work. Recent anecdotal evidence suggests that CIP affiliates and university planning programmes are increasingly co-operating to review programmes, needs, and increase practitioner involvement in courses and instruction. This is a healthy sign and a vast improvement over the tension of the 1980's.

- ***Practice informs theory and theory informs practice.*** Similar to the preceding point, but a fundamental acknowledgement of the fact that planning *is* a profession! There must be a fundamental shift in the thinking of practitioners and planning academics. That shift must move to one in which practitioners acknowledge the important role that the academy can play in shaping practice *and* in which academics recognise that practice informs theory. The two (academia and practice) must rely on each other for the comprehensive understanding of our profession.
- ***The art of listening.*** Planners must continue to hone their listening skills, to ensure that they are open to new ideas, that they 'hear' the message, and that they welcome discourse. Practitioners are often the communication connection between community and decision-makers. Determining an appropriate role in that situation so that planners do not appear to be subverting the role of politicians or do not seem to be conveying answers to the public that is not within their purview is critical to maintaining credibility. The key here is *listening* rather than *answering*. Objectivity should be the guiding watchword.
- ***Maintaining credibility.*** As a profession, our credibility sometimes suffers because of decisions made in the past. For instance, many planners were vocal advocates for the 1950's to 1980's notion of exclusionary zoning. Many planners promoted land use exclusion in an attempt to separate some land uses (heavy industry) from other land uses (residential). That may have been appropriate at the time (e.g., lead pollution that has contaminated many industrial sites), but is largely unnecessary today (e.g. 'clean' industry, high tech industry). Today, that exclusionary approach has been criticised by non-planners such as Andres Duany and by members of the public. Planners are now advocating inclusionary mixed use land use planning. But some see that advocacy as a contradiction from an historic perspective. We need to simply admit that we probably have carried the rule of restrictive zoning too far and that we have learned to adapt to new trends and needs.
- ***Exploring new ideas.*** To ensure that we retain credibility in the eyes of the public and politicians, we need to be much more proactive in exploring new methods and documenting results. We are very poor at analysing the results of our work. By leaving the field of new concepts and trends to others such as Duany, we have lost important ground that Thomas Adams and others staked out for us to inherit. While some will argue that we don't need to be concerned about such matters, we must recognise that, as a profession, we have an obligation not only to ourselves but to others to remain on top of our practice. We must have credibility if we are to contribute to meaningful debate.
- ***Fine tuning and re-tuning.*** It is simply not good enough for us to gain our required education and membership into CIP and sit back and approach our work like it is a job. We must invest in our profession and ourselves and through such investment recognise that we are investing in much more, including the environment and our communities and our areas

of practice. We can stay ‘sharp’ by taking courses, attending conferences, subscribing to professional publications and participating in professional affairs, such as sitting on committees or volunteering in other capacities with CIP or its affiliates. Through on-going dialogue with our peers we can ensure that we continue to fine tune our practice.

- ***Mutual learning.*** Although we have received special training and, for those who are members of CIP, special membership admission, we must always be open to learning, especially from community members who often best know their community. There is a variety of techniques that exist that facilitate a community’s ability to identify its knowledge of itself, such as community mapping, SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, threats) processes and storytelling. Community processes that advocate mutual learning can be exhilarating for the planner and the community.
- ***Planner as facilitator.*** We have come to develop facilitation skills as much through default as through purposeful action. Our ability to process information from a variety of sources and our frequent role in front of others, whether it be Cabinet, Council or Committee meetings, has equipped us to naturally ‘fall into’ that role. Planners are well advised to continue to develop and refine those skills so that they are able to continue to facilitate complex processes. Unless planners maintain and enhance their facilitation skill set, others will replace them, such as the large number of public involvement specialists that exist in the consulting industry.
- ***Building agreement.*** Seeking agreement is a product of facilitation and *intimate knowledge of the principles* involved. The latter provides the role for the planner to apply facilitation skills within a process that addresses planning related issues. Planners have a unique combination of process skills and substantive skills that, when they are brought together, create a special role for the planner. By combining those two skill sets, the planner can contribute to building agreement by not only facilitating but also analysing and suggesting.
- ***Managing conflict.*** The planner often feels caught in processes that are confrontational. The very nature of public hearings and a recent trend for those who oppose an issue, to wait until that issue is before a public hearing, has increased the potential for confrontation. Planners need to develop processes that reduce the potential for confrontation, at public hearings and any other venue, by ensuring that all sides of an issue feel that they have had an equal opportunity to voice their concerns. In addition, through dialogue and discussion, it is often possible to educate those who may feel initially opposed to an idea and conversely it is possible for those who oppose an idea to educate those promoting the idea, including the planner. This is never an easy task and it does not ensure that more rational dialogue will occur. But the planner must attempt to manage conflict so that the merit of debate –rather than emotion- is the central element for decision-making. Finding the higher ground in analysing issues is a goal worthy of much energy (See: Case Study #4).
- ***Encouraging debate.*** Too often, we may be tempted to try and stifle debate rather than encourage it. Managing conflict is not about limiting debate but encouraging debate that contributes to the overall discourse. Non-conformism in the public place is an important element to sound decision-making (see: Saul 1995: 194). As Saul notes, “the examined life makes a virtue of uncertainty. It celebrates doubt.” We are often moved to limit uncertainty

because we seek certainty through the products of our work! Is this an incongruous notion? Are we saddled with a profession that seeks certainty at the expense of debate? We must not! We must encourage debate and seek to address differences of opinion in processes that are open, accountable and expressive of the cross-section of community views. Too often, varied views have been cloistered within like-minded opinion camps. Our job is to encourage their public exposure amidst differing views so that all idea cloisters can hear from each other, be informed and imagine a future that may be different from that which they believe to be only in their interest or their realm of perceived possibility.

- ***Rational comprehensiveness.*** There has been much debate about the planner as a rational and comprehensive player in civic affairs. Many theorists have argued (and to some extent, rightly so) that the planning process is too fluid and dynamic to be seen as simply rational and comprehensive. The rational comprehensive planner, it is argued, was a creature of the early 1900's to the 1980's. But there is a role for rational comprehensiveness as part of a more complex process that recognises that the planner TAMED (technical, analytical, multicultural, ecological, design) (Sandercock: 1999) and the “deliberative practitioner” (Forester: 1999) requires a rational framework within which the practice of planning must occur. The alternative of irrationality does not allow for incorporation of public and other input in a manner that is accountable and considered. Without comprehensiveness, there is a possibility of ‘hit and miss’ planning. Comprehensiveness provides the increased likelihood of considering the full range of implications in decision-making. The planner as a rational and comprehensive practitioner is not about limiting input. It is about encouraging and stimulating input that leads to better informed decisions that have fuller understanding. Rational comprehensiveness, as one important element when combined with Sandercock's planner TAMED and Forester's “deliberative practitioner”, offers a future direction that can be understood and be seen to link to a broad range of considerations.
- ***Scenario building.*** Scenario building has taken on an important role in recent years (see: Planning, November 2001). Planners are learning from others, such as Schools of Management, who have developed interesting analytical and process methods for complex situations. Development of scenarios offers an alternative to traditional planning approaches and provides an opportunity to explore implications to interests and issues in interesting new ways (Figure 6).

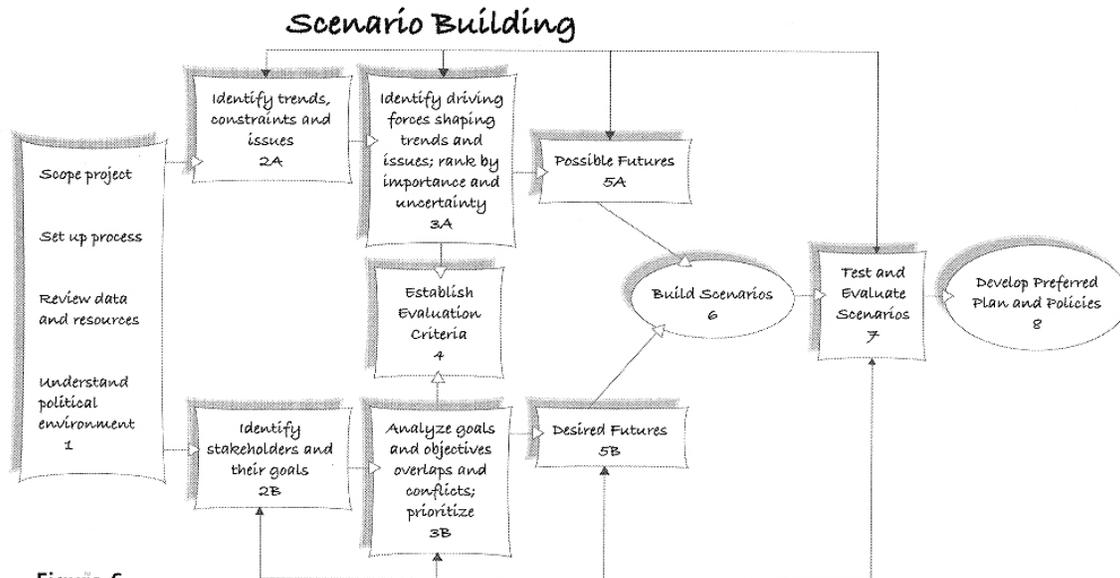


Figure 6

Boxes 2A through 5A parallel the scenario-building steps of the private sector model, and produce a range of possible futures. Boxes 2B through 5B analyze the different goals and objectives of stake holders, showing a range of desired futures. Conflicts within and between stakeholders goals and objectives should be explicitly acknowledged, and can become building blocks for different scenarios. *source: Planning, November 2001*

- **Reasoned Flexibility.** While planning benefits from rational comprehensiveness, it also benefits from flexibility. Planning looks to the future, a future that becomes less focused as one looks further into the distance. Information today may change tomorrow. This is especially so in the information age where technology continues to generate new ways of analysing information. The rigidity of zoning has created dilemmas for many planners who see the need to reconsider how we approach land use. Mixed use neighbourhoods are now an important planning principle in many communities. Inflexible exclusionary zoning flies in the face of such ideas. More and more, community plans and zoning plans are in a serious conflict because the zoning document places narrow limits on land use. But too much flexibility suggests that there are no rules and each development consideration is decided on the merits of the case. There needs to be reasoned flexibility while ensuring that the key factors affecting a community’s quality of life are respected and enhanced.
- **Importance of process clarity (administrative fairness).** Planning must have clarity and be seen to have clarity; clarity of purpose, process and results. There are many tools to ensure clarity and administrative fairness. Planners must be vigilant to ensure that all participants believe that the process is clear, open, and respectful. Over the years a number of alternative methods, such as shared decision making, have proven to be useful to ensure process clarity. A few are described below. The degree to which all or a combination of the following examples might be applied will very much depend upon the particular planning task, scale of the task and degree of expected community interest.

Case Study #4: A voice of self-interest

It was a community where growth had been substantial and the character of the community was under threat of significant change. The community had adopted a comprehensive consultation process that had provided significant opportunity for input and consultation. But, one large landowner had refused to come to any meetings, charrettes or open houses (separate meetings were held with him and his son). When he did appear at the final presentation of the Official Community Plan, he came prepared to stone-wall and object on all and any grounds (sound familiar?). He proceeded to dominate all discussion and interrupt other speakers. But, unlike other meetings where he had generally intimidated others, including planners, he faced a consultant would not tolerate rudeness, who set out the process for input clearly before the meeting started (and sought agreement on the 'ground rules' from those attending at the start of the meeting). During the presentation, the vocal land owner tried to disrupt the meeting by claiming that there had not been sufficient consultation and that the plan did not represent the community. While that argument had played to the previously divided community in the past, it failed this time because the process had involved all interests and had broad community support from all sectors of the community. As well, the attendees had set the meeting ground rules and the disgruntled landowner was deemed by all to be out of order. Under pressure from his fellow citizens (including those he respected), he acquiesced and began to contribute to the meeting in a positive way. It was all a pleasant surprise to everyone in attendance!

Lessons:

It is important to establish processes that provide for a cross-section of perspectives so that the participants to the process are able to manage the process because they see it as fair and receptive to a cross-section of ideas.

- 2. Self-regulated public processes are fairer and more able to sustain debate.*
- 3. It is important to differentiate between self-interest and non-conformism. Non-conformism and uncertainty contribute to healthy debate. Self-interest is simply that.*

2.5.1.1 Processes

The following processes and tools have proven useful to the author. There are a number of books on the market that will also assist, such as Nick Wates, [The Community Planning Handbook](#) (2000).

- ***Formation of a Steering Committee*** composed of the various interests, as defined by those who are knowledgeable about the community, can provide a very useful basis for process discussion and process management. Depending upon the issue, the composition of the Steering Committee could be determined by an 'independent advisory group,' itself representing a cross section of highly respected citizens or by a Committee of Council or senior staff (less ideal). The Steering Committee's mandate must be clearly defined to avoid the Committee members assuming roles and responsibilities outside of their mandate (e.g., experience indicates that, in the absence of a clear mandate, a Steering Committee can develop a 'life of its own' and assume roles normally associated with the elected authority to which it is often expected to report).

- **Shared decision making** is about involving the breadth of interests (including Sauls’ non-conformists [1995]) to insure that there is an agreement on the process to be used to arrive at a decision. This ‘beginning at the beginning’ provides input to the process *before* the process begins. It requires spending time and energy upfront on a process that leads to a process! Experience confirms that shared decision-making should begin at the process definition stage so that the inevitable cross-section of interests has a say in how citizens expect to offer comment (including non-conformist comment).
- **Maintaining a record of decisions** made during a process is critical, as is conveying those decisions to those involved. Tracking issues is another key aspect of process clarity. By developing and maintaining an Issue Matrix in which all issues raised are tracked according to: issue addressed [green dot] (note: identify how and where); issue still being considered [yellow dot]; and issue not considered further [red dot] (note: identify why not further considered), the participants are able to see how issues are addressed over the life of the process. Participants, often as much as anything, want clarity in how their ideas or concerns have been addressed.

Decision Record (example)

ISSUES	Yes	No	Maybe	Rationale
Support downtown revite	✓	—	—	Broad support legal requirement requires senior govt cooperation common practice
Limit low cost housing	—	✓	—	
Reduce reliance on private vehicles	—	—	✓	
Establish design controls for commercial uses	✓	—	—	

- **Maintaining continuity of process** provides clarity for those who have continued to participate and for those who are just now participating. At any information sharing stage or point in the process, it is important to continue to build upon the previous products and findings of the process. Participants need to see clearly how the process has moved forward and why certain decisions have been made. This does not mean that every piece of information that was developed needs to be shared again, but it does suggest that key pieces of information and key decision points need to be identified at each stage of the process so that participants see a ‘rational’ process that builds upon logical steps.
- **Ensuring openness** through a number of techniques and processes as described throughout this document provides a sense of fair play and meaningful input. By involving those affected, the planner is often able to pass-off portions of the public process, such as Steering Committee members explaining the ‘preferred’ option.
- **Ensuring those who want and need to be involved are involved** requires that careful consideration be given to methods for alerting interests to the process and to methods that facilitate participation. Useful methods have included: identifying the geographic area of effect, identifying the age effect; identifying the socio-economic effect; and identifying the socio-cultural effect. By identifying those potentially affected –at least those with a concern- it is possible to determine processes that permit inclusiveness, such as use of

special local newspapers and radio stations or programmes (geographic or ethnic), use of particular venues that are seen to be neutral territory or community supported facilities, use of appropriate aboriginal or foreign languages, identification of appropriate times for community input (i.e., not just evening meetings), provision of child care, etc.

2.5.1.1.1 A Bag of Tools

Experience has identified a number of alternative methods for developing an information base and solidifying community involvement. A few favourite ones are discussed below. Each of us has our own repertoire of tools in our tool kit¹⁷ of planning methods. The following tools are ones that have worked for me. I hope they help you!

- **Community mapping.** Community mapping can be used at many scales (regional, community, area or local), for many types of planning projects (community, park and resource), different age groups and many different locations (small and large meetings, kitchen table to school gymnasium). Participants are asked to identify on base maps the places they like and cherish (green pen) and places for which they have concerns (red pen). This technique has proven to be a useful way for participants of all ages to interact between age groups or within age groups. It also provides invaluable information for planners to better understand issues.

Case Study #5: Community Mapping

A community had become an international tourist destination and was experiencing major change. During a Community Plan review, community mapping was used to identify community member issues and concerns and places of importance. Community mapping was used in a community workshop involving 15 tables of 5 to 6 people each, as well as two other sessions; one for young women and one for teens. Residents enjoyed the opportunity to identify their particular ideas in map form. Adults were interested to see what the young women and teens identified. The mapping from the community workshop was collated and provided useful information for the entire process, including how issues were addressed and special places protected or enhanced.

Lessons:

- 1. The public **enjoys** hands-on planning that shapes its community. The more that community members can be involved in identifying their important places and places that need change, the more that they will participate in shaping the elements for those places.*
- 2. Community members usually know their community much better than those who are there temporarily or for a short time (i.e., often the planner).*

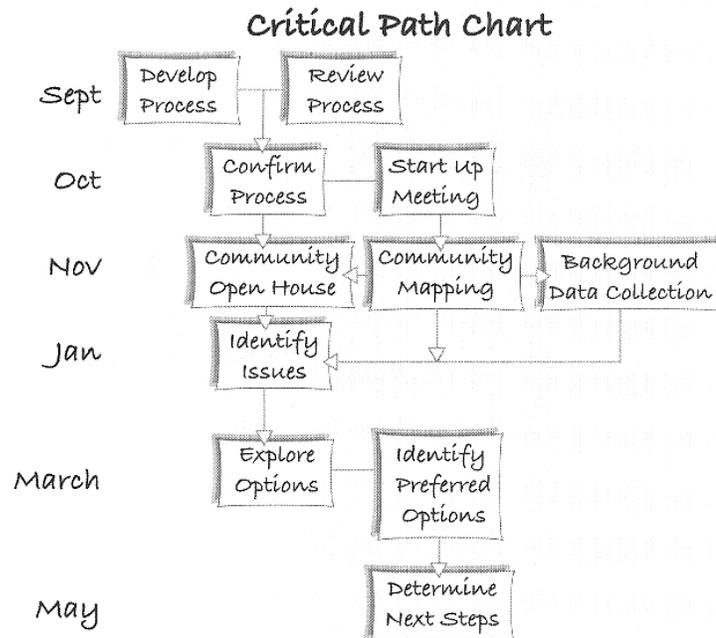
- **The red/green show.** This simple flexible technique permits participants to provide immediate feedback using green dots if they agree and red dots if they do not agree with specific items such as planning principles, concept plans and their individual components (i.e., participants can place green and red dots on the individual plan items that make up the plan), goals, policies and other identified items that need public

¹⁷ I actually have a tool bag filled with charrette tools, sketch and coloured pens, PANTONE pens, scales, straight edge, name tags, red and green dots, masking tape, and felt markers that I carry to meetings.

comment. This technique allows people to take their time and reflect upon the item before answering. It also provides people with a running sense of what others think, allowing those who disagree to comment at the time and discuss their thoughts with their fellow participants. Red and green dots can be used for roundtable members to comment on other table findings by using a fixed number of dots to comment on the total number of responses (see roundtables below). Experience indicates that using this technique causes participants to take their time to carefully think about the material being presented. It is not unusual for participants to take up to an hour or more to absorb material requiring their comment by way of placement of green and red dots (See: Case Study # 6).

- **Walkabouts.** Walkabouts have been used by a variety of professionals, including architects, planners and transportation planners. Walkabouts are just that, a walk about a project site or study area. Walkabouts are an especially effective tool for downtown revitalization initiatives where business owners, residents and decision-makers are asked to walkabout with the planner to identify items of concern or ideas. The planner can record the 'journey' on film (video, digital or print/slide camera) and make notes on a map of the area being examined. Experience indicates that people enjoy the opportunity to identify issues and ideas on the ground. A side benefit is the opportunity to get to know people and perhaps have a debriefing over a coffee at the end of the walkabout.
- **Ranking.** There are many ways to elicit public ideas, including what the public believes to be opportunities, issues/constraints (i.e., Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats [SWOT]). Using a Modified Delphi technique, participants are first asked to identify opportunities and issues/constraints individually or as part of a group (e.g., a roundtable session). Each participant is then asked to rank the top 5 or 10 opportunities and issues/constraints (depending upon the number of items identified) identified by the group. The selection may be on the basis of their 5 or 10 choice items or they may be asked to rank order their items from most important (5) to least (1)¹⁸. The totals are identified for each item. Each person is then given the opportunity to speak to one item that did not make the cut off. If the group agrees that item is worthy of being added to the list, then it is placed on the ranked list. The final list represents what the participants believe to be the most important opportunities and issues/constraints facing the community, park, region, resource activity, site or other item being explored.
- **Critical path charts.** While critical path charts sound awfully rational and bureaucratic they can assist communities to better understand the sequence and events that may be expected during the course of the study/plan/project, by identifying inputs, consultation points, products and timelines. Experience confirms that people like to know the proposed sequence of events and when they can be expected to contribute or review information. If used as a tool and means to an end not the end itself, then the critical path chart will probably serve a useful purpose. But, it should not dictate the process, rather it should be used to facilitate the process.

▪ ¹⁸ Note: if rank ordering is desired then participants should probably be only asked to rank order 5 items.



- Roundtables.** The use of roundtables provides participants attending large meetings an opportunity to feel comfortable discussing issues in a smaller venue within a larger venue. Each table appoints a recorder (or recorders are pre-selected prior to the meeting [e.g., the recorder may be a member of a project Steering Committee if one exists]) who keeps track of all points raised concerning a series of specific questions. Often tables are given the same overall question or different tables have different topics. Following a defined period of time, each table reports back to the group. Use of red and green dots (see red/green show above) to identify what the total group thinks of each other's findings is a useful means of identifying priority items.

Case Study # 6: Prioritising Roundtable findings

In a medium sized town, participants at a Development Plan visioning workshop were asked to name the issues/concerns and opportunities they had identified while discussing a number of topics (in this case: transportation, social and housing considerations, environment, economic development, servicing). There were two tables of approximately 8 people each to discuss each topic. Each table selected a rapporteur. Participants also identified their preferred Vision for their community (as discussed below). Each table reported back their findings. The summary sheets (32" x 40") were placed on walls. Participants were each given 10 green dots and 10 red dots and asked to place their dots (no more than one per item) beside the items from each of the other tables that they most strongly agreed with (green dots) or disagreed with (red dots). This process was repeated for the Vision words. Participants had fun doing this interactive process and the Mayor closed the meeting by stating that he felt it was the best public meeting ever held in the community. Throughout the remainder of the process, green and red dots were used (and came to be expected by the participants to be used) to identify community preference for concept options, planning principles and other items.

Lessons:

1. *It is not enough to simply ask community members what they think. Processes that involve the community should seek to identify what is important to the community, so that action can be linked to needs.*
2. *Community members like to have the opportunity to comment on the findings of processes and validate those findings in large meetings by seeking interactive participation that creates energy and support (political as well as citizen) for the overall planning process.*

- **Charrettes.** Charrettes have become a new tool used by many planners over the past few years. The author has made use of charrettes since the early 1980's, first as a design tool in First Nation communities, and more recently as a regular part of community planning processes, such as downtown redevelopment plans, urban design studies, and site plans. Modified versions of charrettes (design workshops to some) have been used to develop land use concepts for Community Plans, park plans and local area plans (i.e., those planning tasks that are broader in scope and scale). The word Charrette originated in the Ecole des Beaux Arts de Paris in which design problems required resolution during the course of one day¹⁹. Today, a charrette is used to create an interactive team process that responds to a particular design issue over a specific (usually short) time period with the end result being a creative design solution. It is one of my favourite techniques in either the full charrette form (i.e., 2-4 day process) or modified workshop process of several hours of interactive design and planning dialogue, sketching and plan resolution.

Case Study #7: Downtown Redevelopment Charrette

A small rural community had grown into an urban area of 18,000 in 20 years. Since it had emerged from a rural heritage during the age of the automobile, its commercial core was a series of strip malls and highway oriented commercial development. The community had determined that it wanted to create a traditional downtown. As part of the process, a charrette was held to develop two alternative concept plans. Charrette participants included members of Council, land and business owners, representatives of several citizen interest groups and municipal staff. The Charrette design team included an architect, a landscape architect and an urban planner. The Charrette was held during an evening. Background material had been prepared ahead and was presented to two teams. The teams used the Council Chambers to complete their work. The two concepts were very similar with variations in the location of several key elements (new Town Hall, new multi-use facility). A concept plan was prepared with the various options for key elements shown. At an open house, the public was asked to comment on the concept and key elements using . . . you guessed it: green and red dots. The Charrette plan was endorsed by a large majority of open house attendees. The final plan, including design guidelines, Community Plan and Zoning Bylaw amendments, was adopted by Council. A landowner and developer who participated in the Charrette, attended the Plan adoption public hearing to seek approval to tear down his strip mall and build a street oriented building with mixed uses as per the charrette product. The creation of the traditional downtown continues, in large part because the charrette permitted the various interests to create their downtown plan, understand its components and buy-into (literally in the case of the landowner) the vision.

¹⁹ A small wheelbarrow type cart (a charrette) was driven through the streets or student quarters with the driver ringing a bell to note the deadline for delivery of the particular design product. Some students, seeking to make use of every last minute to complete their presentation, would jump on the cart, applying the final touches to their work.

Lessons:

1. *Long term support for plan goals and implementation can often hinge on a community's understanding of those goals. Interactive processes that encourage hands-on planning, such as charrettes, and feedback/endorsement on ideas and programmes goes a long way to ensuring that all those affected (community members, politicians, business owners and interest groups) support the agreed-to action.*
2. *Charrettes provide a very useful way of involving the community in planning its future.*

- **Visioning.** Communities are often asked to envision a preferred future many years distant. Each of us has a particular way of getting communities or groups to identify their preferred vision. Here is one method that has worked for me:
 - I first ask people to bear with me and not judge what I am about to ask of them. Now, this can be an interesting process especially when it involves loggers, commercial fisherman, ranchers, farmers or miners (what I call the practical people or pragmatists of our country). Nevertheless, it seems to work because of its simplicity. Here is what I ask: "Pause for a moment and envision that you are 20 years into the future. You are in a new version of an air-transporter (a helicopter-like vehicle) that is taking you from the regional airport to the centre of your community. The air-transporter is enclosed by glass so you are able to see all around below you. But the transporter has been asked to hold its position while the landing site is cleared. While you sit in the air-transporter, please describe your community as you would like to see it in 20 years from now. Please tell me any images that you would like to see at that time."
 - I have used this technique successfully for many years. It provides a basis for people to dream about the future with a fixed sense of place and time, while not feeling foolish. Try it!
- **Issue tracking.** As discussed previously, issue tracking is an important means of maintaining order in processes that can generate a lot of information. But more importantly issue tracking gives participants a sense that they have been heard and how their ideas have been used or not used. Issue tracking requires that the issue tracking process be clear and accountable. (See: *Maintaining a record of decisions* above).

Case Study # 8: An early lesson

As a young aspiring Chief Planner for Parks Canada, he was faced with the daunting task of co-ordinating the preparation of the first Management Plan for a prairie-based National Park (as opposed to the older Master Plan process). The Park in question had a number of land use idiosyncrasies, including seasonal trailer/cabins, cottages that had been in families for generations and a townsite with commercial uses. The park was an important regional recreation destination and had been created in the early 1900's partly because of pressure from the region citizens and politicians (including Sir Clifford Sifton). Pressure from Ottawa to remove non-conforming uses immediately was strong. Park users, who were largely regional, opposed any changes to their special uses. The process began with considerable distrust on the part of both the regional population and the policy gurus in Ottawa. The Chief Planner felt caught in the middle. One of the Senior Planners developed an idea to try and address the myriad of issues and policy and regulatory items and relationships. It was a simple but ingenious method using a matrix to track ideas down the Y column and columns denoting the status of issues along the X column. For each issue raised by the public, a green dot was given to show we agreed, a yellow dot to show we were still considering the idea or a red dot to indicate that the idea had to be rejected. For yellow and red dots, an explanation was given as to the reasoning or status. For instance, regulatory requirements might be the cause for a red dot. During the course of the process, the matrix was constantly updated as new information or policy interpretations from Ottawa allowed us to move ideas from a yellow to a green dot or to a red dot. By the end of the process, only a very few yellow dots remained. And at the final public meeting the audience stood and gave our planners a standing ovation! That was a far cry from the rancorous first meetings where our planners were shouted down. A large part of the success of the process related to our openness in tracking ideas and being forthright in explaining why some ideas could not be accepted. It was a wonderful introduction to a complex process.

Lesson:

1. Maintaining accountability for ideas raised during public processes helps all those involved to keep track of ideas and input, assists in creating clarity for those involved, and provides a concise explanation for decisions and proposed action.

- **Kitchen tables.** Use of kitchen table discussions (roundtable format in the home) has mixed success. It has proven to be a useful way of getting the broader community to come together around kitchen tables to discuss specific topics. For communities that may not be comfortable discussing some issues in public, kitchen tables offer a vehicle to discuss and record ideas. Kitchen table discussions are also useful in smaller communities with divergent views and a way for some people to take time over a dinner or coffee to discuss issues related to the planning project. They need to be carefully organised (topic, recorder, coffee or food). Their challenge rests in their closure to broader public scrutiny. But their advantage rests in their ability to seek input in communities where people may be shy about public speaking.
- **Circle groups.** Circle groups are a variation of kitchen table meetings. Circle groups have been used in large community plan processes (e.g., CityPlan, Vancouver's Official Community Plan to small communities [see: Case Study #9]). They provide for an

opportunity for groups (geographic, common purpose, interest-based) to come together to identify their ideas and contribution. Depending upon the scale of the community and the topic under discussion, formal agendas may be used with facilitators or an unstructured local person-lead discussion may be held. In either case, an accurate record of the dialogue must be kept for sharing with others. Informality is recommended to create an atmosphere of respectful listening.

Case Study #9: Circle Groups

In a northern First Nation of 3,000 people, where hydro development impacts had wrecked havoc with the lives of the community and their traditional way of life, it was time to document one more time the needs of the community as identified by the community. The community is scattered over a great distance along a river. Clusters of family groups had formed along the river into neighbourhoods, each with a Cree name. A series of community Circle Groups –with pre-selected Circle Group Leaders- was held in each of the neighbourhoods to discuss the issues and aspirations of the community members. Circle groups were also held with various community groups (elders, young people, hockey teams, trappers, commercial fishermen, women’s groups, and others). In all, some 25 Circle Groups were held along with numerous community workshops to develop a plan of action for the community. At the conclusion of the planning process, the Circle Group Leaders presented the findings –the recommended action to seek remedy to hydro impacts- to the community in a large meeting. The planning consultant remained at the back of the packed room and did not need to say anything. The community had taken control of its destiny! The resulting document (called the Red Book in the community because of the colour of its cover) became a significant community-based resource tool for negotiations with the federal and provincial governments and hydro-electric utility. This process was central to the success of the Red Book and its credibility outside the community as well as within.

Lessons:

- 1. Public involvement should be creative and geared to the particular needs of each community.*
- 2. Processes that are more informal can be powerful methods for increasing community involvement.*
- 3. The planner needs to know when to ‘let go’ and let the community manage the process.*

2.5.1.2 About Protocol

Throughout our work, we are faced with a variety of situations, many of which require a working knowledge of appropriate protocol. Here are some suggested tips on protocol in a few common situations.

- ***Appearing before Council, Ministers of the Crown or other similar bodies.*** We all remember our first presentation before a Council, cabinet, Minister of the Crown or other similar body. We were probably in awe and nervous. For new planners, it is important to keep in mind that members of such groups were, prior to their election, very likely a member of the public much like the ‘rookie’ planner, except they were probably wiser in the affairs of life. That makes them human with a special status, but human nonetheless. The protocol is such that we should not be overly referential nor should we be overly casual. We need to seek advice before we appear before our first Council to get a sense of

'the lay of the land'. In most instances, Councillors and Cabinet Ministers are, like us, short on time and inundated with material. They will very likely appreciate a presentation that is concise, factual and pertinent. Sometimes we spend more time on the presentation of the presentation than on the content of the presentation. But content is key. It is key to how the presentation 'looks'. But having said that, the presentation should be of a high quality and high quality can be simply the use of overheads as compared to Powerpoint. Use of graphics and drawings, where drawings are appropriate, is an important way of gaining attention and breaking the monotony of many presentations, but the content must be apparent. Perhaps a good guiding phrase is this: just the facts ma'am; just the facts!

Case Study #10: Meeting the Premier and Cabinet

One of the early tasks of a young consulting planner was to present to the Premier and Cabinet an ambitious programme for renewal of an urban waterfront. The presenter was excited about the opportunity (the project and meeting the full cabinet). After a presentation of 20 minutes followed by a number of questions, the meeting took a break at which point the Premier walked up to the young consultant and indicated that he had enjoyed the presentation and the vision, but suggested that the presenter might wish to be not quite so enthusiastic in future presentations! This presentation had its effect, because the government funded the first stages of what has become a major riverfront development. Yet, the young consultant had been new to the 'game' and could have detrimentally affected the project if he had been too keen to 'sell the idea'. Fortunately, the Premier and Cabinet recognised his youth and gave allowance for his enthusiasm in recognition of the vision contained in the plan.

Lessons:

- 1. Avoid 'overselling' ideas to decision makers, but don't be too distant from conviction that the idea does not appear to have merit.*
- 2. The presentation 'game' takes practice. Learn from each one.*
- 3. Sometimes we can look back and smile at our youthful enthusiasm!*

- ***Being relaxed but not too relaxed!*** In some situations, planners have developed a solid relationship with Council or similar body. That relationship permits the planner to relax and be at ease. It can also lead to joking and use of first names. Those relationships are wonderful and often ensure that the needed planning gets done with lots of support (and some needed humour!). But, those types of relationships can lead to familiarity that might pose a problem when a contentious issue arises or there is a change in government. In front of the public some of whom just might end up replacing some councillors, such relationships might be seen as 'too cosy'. The planner needs to keep a professional relationship while enjoying the respect and warmth of her political 'bosses'. Joking and familiarity before public hearings may colour the view of those participating, especially if the decision is made not to approve a proposal. The planner may not want to appear to be too friendly with Council during times of public decision-making.
- ***Knowing the proponent.*** In small communities, the planner often knows the key players in land use. That may result in situations where the planner is required to comment on plans by someone who is an acquaintance. The planner must be careful to avoid the appearance of bias. Protocol suggests that the planner declare knowledge of the proponent if the proponent is more than an acquaintance. Council or Committee will determine the implications of the declaration.

- ***Appearing as an expert witness.*** We are sometimes called to appear as an expert witness. Our role in such situations is often scrutinised very carefully. We must be well prepared, ready to answer any number of questions and provide our answers in a clear and concise form. Usually in litigious situations, we will be ‘tested’ by lawyers before appearing as an expert witness. A rule of thumb is this: answer questions clearly and unambiguously and avoid saying too much. The latter can create a host of problems, including raising more questions some of which may not be relevant, may be confusing for the panel or adjudicator or may be misleading. Being concise is not the same as being deceitful, *it is about being relevant.* At our first expert witness session, we may be intimidated by the setting. We may want to describe our credentials in far too much detail. It is important that we relax and restrain our eagerness to please. We are there to provide our opinion of the facts as we see them, no more, no less.

2.5.2 Choosing the right method

We have quite a few tools in our practice bags. The challenge is to select the best tool for the job at hand. Sometimes we are able to make use of a large number of the tools described above, for instance for large complex community, management or regional plans. In other instances, we will need to use only a few of the processes and methods at our disposal. So how do we decide?

- ***Identifying the interests.*** There are usually a variety of interests affected by our work. A key first step for any organisation planning to plan should be the identification of the expected interests. Interests may be groups or individuals. By identifying the interests, those that may have an interest (individual, age/cultural/ethnic/ economic/social group, stakeholder) we are better able to develop processes that will better respond to the *range* of interests. Identifying interests is not meant to exclude but rather to identify those who may have special interest. Others should also be encouraged to participate by widely canvassing input. Limiting input to stakeholders is an increasing and dangerous occurrence. Interests and stakeholders are not necessarily one and the same.
- ***Identifying the time available.*** Much of the work we do is determined by the amount of time available as determined by others, including up coming elections, regulatory requirements and commitments made. We need to examine the particular situation or item under consideration and determine how much time we believe it will take to properly address it. What is the actual deadline? Who decides? Is there any flexibility? We need to ensure that we can deliver what is being asked of us within the time available. *If we believe we cannot complete the assignment in the allotted time, then, we need to alert those who need to know and we need to identify why, alternatives and a rationale for completion.*
- ***Identifying a budget.*** The available budget will have a significant affect upon the processes and methods that can be applied. If there exists a major expectation for a significant product or process but few resources to complete the assignment, then there will be a serious void between expectations and final product or process. We need to provide clear advice to ensure that all those involved understand the implications of the budget upon the process and methods. Sometimes budgets are too rich for the requirement, but usually budgets fall short of what is needed to ‘do the job.’ Our task is to provide proper advice so that decision-makers understand what is required and what are reasonable costs. A word of

warning: if we tend to identify budgets that exceed what is needed (real or perceived), we will likely develop a reputation for asking for more than is needed. This will become a problem if we get to a point where we identify a budget that is essential to get the task done but fail to get a favourable response because we have a history of over-inflating budget requests. This sometimes becomes a ‘game’ where the planner develops a budget with the view that it will get cut, so the planner identifies more than is needed. The decision-makers believe their staff always ask for more than is needed, so they cut back by a fixed amount. This ‘game’ is time consuming and can be unending. Where possible, we should avoid such situations and manage our budgets as if it were our own money. Once decision-makers see that approach they are much more likely to support budget requests as presented.

- ***Identifying expectations:*** Project work is frequently driven by the expectations of those involved, both internal and external expectations. The expectation may be simply a letter from the Mayor or Minister in response to something that requires a written response (although anyone who has been involved in writing responses for a Minister knows the letter may be simple but the process to ensure it is acceptable [i.e., vetted through a number of ‘advisors,'] can be mind boggling). It may also be a requirement to complete a major analysis and plan preparation. It is critical that the planner identify the expectations for the scale of investment of human and financial resources, the expectations with regard to involvement of others such as public, interest groups, other departments or other jurisdictions (some of which may be driven by regulatory requirements), expectations of timing and expectations of senior personnel. Each of those expectations individually and in combination will create a different response in terms of resource dedication. If expectations are not clearly defined (and signed off), the planner may end up spending too little time or too much time on an assignment and not addressing the expectations of those involved.
- ***Identifying information availability:*** The scope of an assignment will also be framed by the type, quality and quantity of information available. If there is little existing information available and there are few resources to dedicate to the assignment, then the assignment will need to be framed accordingly. It is critical that the planner alert senior staff, politicians and others as required to the fact that the desired expectations (timing, investment or scope) cannot be addressed without further commitments. Planners should avoid the ‘good news syndrome’ that afflicts so many of us (i.e., our propensity to want to please our public and private clients/supervisors/political leaders). Too many organisations operate on the basis that ‘those at the top’ want to hear ‘good news’ rather than the ‘real news’. Such an attitude can initially create harmony followed by finger pointing and failure to serve the system properly and forthrightly. Identifying information availability upfront can help to avoid finger pointing later on.

2.5.3 Best Practices

Planners are required (and should be compelled) to maintain currency in their professional practice²⁰. There are a number of ways for planners to ‘stay current’. One of the best ways (outside of a structured continuing education initiative) is the development of a best practices portfolio or library. There are a number of institutions that have developed or are developing

²⁰ There is growing evidence at time of writing that mandatory continuing education will be required of the design professions, including planning.

best practices works, from municipalities to federal bodies such as Canada Mortgage Housing Corporation (CMHC) (www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca). One of the most recent best practices guides is CMHC's Practices for Sustainable Communities (2000). This volume is a handy 'how to' on sustainable community practice, including policy development, natural systems processes and design, housing examples and infrastructure applications (ISBN 0-660-18235-1; Cat. No. NH15-364/2000E). The volume is an important contribution to best practice, because it provides useful examples of sustainable community practice, identifies advantages and disadvantages of techniques and tools, and provides clear point form descriptions of applications, supplemented by illustrations. The appendix includes a CD ROM of Quality of Life Indicators. Planners should ensure that they are on the mailing list or access the website of agencies that are producing best practices guides.

Many partnerships have developed to support case studies of best practice. ACT (Affordability and Choice Today) is a partnership of the Canadian Homebuilders Association, Canadian Housing and Renewal Association, CMHC and Federation of Canadian Municipalities. ACT highlights best practices that illustrate regulatory reform initiatives to improve housing, including design and planning studies. Plan Canada provides many useful case study reviews.

APA has also developed first rate best practice reports and booklets.

Access to the Internet affords planners the opportunity to identify and explore best practice from around the world. The possibilities are limitless.

Where appropriate and feasible, planners should also include best practices in their reports. For instance, community plans are more and more incorporating best practices as part of the text or as appendices. Words are no longer sufficient. Communities, policy makers and decision makers are starved for examples of best practice. Design Guidelines and alternative development standards are part of the movement to best practice considerations. As planners, we need to welcome this refreshing link back to design and the possibilities of melding policy with best practice examples. Communities will be the better for it!

2.5.4 Measuring success

Planners have not done a good job of measuring success (or failures). Planners tend to complete a project and move on without establishing methods or processes for determining if the plan or a project has been successful or requires modification.

Projects are more easily measured than plans because plans take physical shape in the form of development or programme structure. Their success is often measured by their use. While use does not address qualitative experience, it does indicate quantitative success (number of visitors, number of participants, number of dollars invested etc.). But it is a very limited means of measuring the full implications of decisions. Recent attempts to measure plan and project performance include the use of indicators, particularly Quality of Life Indicators.

Quality of Life Indicators are a means of measuring the degree to which community plans and projects address, over the long term, the goals of the plans and projects. They should be developed by and for the community affected. Unlike past means of measurement (such as number of new jobs created, new homes built) which did not measure all of the outcomes (e.g.,

affect upon air quality or housing affordability), or link economic, environmental and social progress, Quality of Life Indicators provide a useful measure of a range of outcomes such as number of jobs created and the breadth of access to those jobs, the number of houses built and the cost of housing relative to earnings, affect upon air quality, affect upon water quality, affect upon plant and animal species. Quality of Life Indicators refer to measurements of local trends that identify how a community is doing in achieving an economically, environmentally and socially healthy community. They are a living report card on a community well-being.

Quality of Life Indicators:

- *Should be relevant:* will they tell us something we need to know? Does it illustrate something about the long term social, economic and environmental health of the community?
- *Should be valid:* does the indicator measure what is meant to be measured? Is it grounded in fact? Can it be justified?
- *Should be credible:* is the indicator believable in the eyes of the community?
- *Should be measurable:* data should exist or be readily available.
- *Should be comparable:* the more that a community can compare itself to another community the easier it will be to get a sense of progress.
- *Should be understandable:* indicators should be understood by the community residents. They should easily identify trends; up or down.
- *Should be leading:* indicators should provide a sense of forewarning if something is amiss in the community.
- *Should relate to the whole community:* indicators should address the full range of citizens.
- *Should be a manageable number:* evidence suggests that 20-30 indicators should be sufficient to measure a community's progress and well-being.

2.6 Initiating Projects

While many planners move through their careers into more administrative positions as identified in Chapter 1, the bulk of planners begin and end their careers as project planners, responsible for specific assignments or tasks. This section will explore how planners can approach project work. Project work may be undertaken internally within an organisation using organisational staff resources, using contracted services to work within the organisation or to hire a consultant to work externally to complete the identified task. For all of those situations, much of the following will (or should) apply.

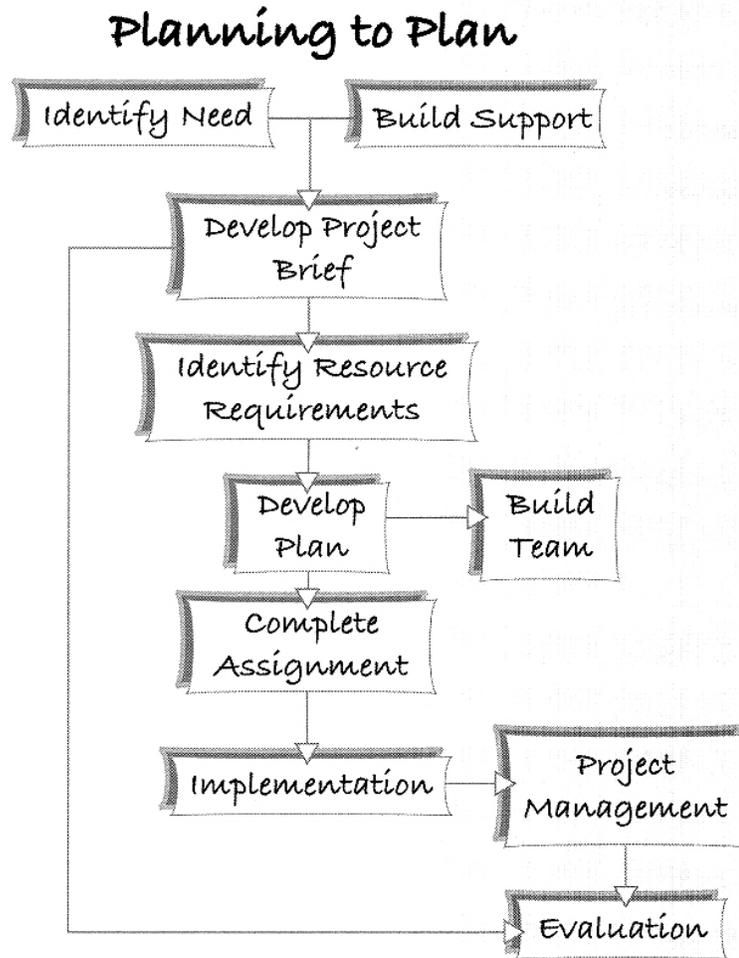
2.6.1 Planning to plan

We receive our instructions from a variety of sources, including our supervisors, committees, councils, clients and others. While the sources of instruction may vary, the requirements and processes are often complementary. There are a number of key elements worthy of exploration. These include:

- ✓ Identifying the need and building support;
- ✓ Developing a project brief;
- ✓ Identifying resource requirements;
- ✓ Developing a workplan;
- ✓ Building a team;

- ✓ Completing the task;
- ✓ Implementation;
- ✓ Project management; and
- ✓ Evaluation

The above are not discrete units. Each affects the other. Each will be discussed below.



2.6.1.1 Identifying the need and building support

It is critical that projects are grounded in an identified need. While there are a large number of potential research and planning projects that an organisation would like to complete, there are a number of limiting factors, including budget and staff resources to complete the task or to identify the task in sufficient detail to gain support for it. Decisions to proceed with a particular project may be driven by community demand, by political will, by senior staff, or as part of a long term strategic plan. Project justification will vary under each of those situations. But project identification will need to include justification for proposed staffing levels and expenditures. Through a justification plan, support for the project can be more easily obtained, assuming that the justification is valid and acceptable.

How far we go to identify support will vary with the individual project and our own biases and beliefs in the need for the project. It is important that we understand when to push really hard and when to back off because others do not see the merit in what we are proposing. The latter may be because we have done an inadequate job in identifying the need or because the proposed project is politically unacceptable. We may be frustrated with that type of response but we do not have much choice but to listen and rethink our strategy. If we determine what we are proposing is critical (for quality of life, safety or other key reasons), we may wish to become advocates in the full sense of the word. We may want to lobby a group of citizens (be really careful here!), our supervisors or politicians (you had better know them well!). This is the proverbial thin line which, if we cross it, may have significant implications for our career. While we have a responsibility to advocate a particular position, we also have an obligation to our terms of employment. At the end of the day, we must judge for ourselves if the project is of such importance that, unless it is undertaken, lives could be lost, liability compromised, or legal issues put in question. If we conclude that the project is essential for these or similar reasons and the organisation will not support its completion, we should:

1. Maintain a paper trail of our efforts to convince others to proceed;
2. Document the responses to our requests;
3. Contact a mentor or colleague to discuss an appropriate course of action;
4. Make a decision to 'let the issue go', 'stay and fight' or resign.
5. The latter allows the planner to 'go public' if necessary²¹.

Some theorists, including Sandercock²² have advocated that planner's should resign over issues of concern. But the reality for most planners is mortgages, families and loans. Resigning is a very last resort that very few should need to do over the course of their career.

²¹ Going public has major consequences for one's career. One could be labelled a trouble maker or a hero by one or more groups, including potential future employers. Such actions should not be taken lightly, but they have been necessary for some planners.

²² Comments made at a presentation in Winnipeg March 2000.

Case Study #11: Building support

Often we must take the initiative by providing advice that may not be popular, but that is appropriate and in the interest of the community or client. We are required to speak up. Sometimes these are matters of moral imperative or more simply matters of design. In the case of planning and design matters –in this case that are not ethically or morally driven- the planner may be required to propose solutions or actions that are unpopular or initially not supported (for a variety of reasons). These situations may arise in a variety of settings. In each, the planner may feel it necessary to push for a particular solution or vision that is in the best interests of the community or client. That statement, in and of itself- will raise questions about the role of the planner as the facilitator and implementer of others' ideas. But, we must be clear.

There will arise occasion when the planner must articulate a vision, solution or idea that may be radically or somewhat different from a decision-making group's view of the world. For instance, a city had initiated a downtown revitalisation project (the third in 15 years) through the Downtown Business Association. Many of the Association's members were sceptical of another process. The downtown had constructed overhead metal canopies in the 1960's that were meant to counter the development of an indoor shopping mall. The canopies had served their time, were unsightly and had detrimentally affected the historic building facades on many of the original turn of the 20th century buildings. Several building owners questioned the proposed removal of the canopies (note: a design workshop had identified the need to remove the canopies to create an historic character to the downtown, but there was not total agreement). They lobbied Council and the Board Chair to abandon the idea of metal canopy removal. The planner convinced the Association Board and City Council to proceed with the revitalisation plan, including the removal of the canopies. The Board Chair took the consultant aside and asked if the consultant was absolutely convinced that the revitalisation depended upon the removal of the canopies. The reply was forceful and affirmative and canopies began to come down on a demonstration basis. As historic facades were restored, those who were doubters became advocates for continued canopy removal and the remaining canopies continue to be removed as the revitalisation has been declared a success.

In another situation, a community, through a Community Plan process, had identified the need for a waterfront walkway as a top priority. Affected property owners protested and lobbied councillors (despite provisions for on-going and future consultation and compensation). The consultant made a special (most would say an impassioned) plea to the council to retain the idea and look to the long term future interests of the whole community. He pointed how other communities, that were well known to council, had created wonderful waterfront features. The council agreed and identified the walkway as a part of the waterfront redevelopment initiative and a key element of the Plan.

Lessons:

- 1. In both instances, there was strong interest lobbying against the recommendation and broad community support for the controversial initiative. The planner could build on the community support while strongly advocating sound planning principles.*
- 2. Experiences and lessons from elsewhere were both critical in selling others on the ideas and convincing decision-makers that difficult and not always popular actions are sometimes necessary.*

2.6.1.2 Developing a Project Brief

Project briefs provide an overview of the project or study that is to be undertaken. Project briefs are usually completed within the public realm in an attempt to gain approval to proceed with the proposed project or study, although the private sector may complete a design brief on behalf of a public, private or non-profit organisation to try and access funding for that group. In the design side of planning, they are called a Design Brief.

Project Briefs have several key ingredients:

- ✓ They are **concise**.
- ✓ They are **well organised**.
- ✓ They identify **pertinent** background information.
- ✓ They identify the **scope** of the assignment.
- ✓ They identify what is to be accomplished with **specific outcomes** noted.
- ✓ They identify any **special processes or methods** that are to be undertaken.
- ✓ They identify expected **timelines**.
- ✓ They identify anticipated **staffing** needs.
- ✓ They may identify **information** sources.
- ✓ They may identify anticipated **approval or review stages**.
- ✓ They should identify a **preliminary budget**.

Project Briefs provide decision-makers with required information to make an informed decision.

2.6.1.3 Identifying resource requirements

Identifying resource requirements is often a part of a Workplan; either as a direct output or as part of the early Workplan formulation. Resource requirements will include staffing, materials, research, technical and other support, and other needs specific to the particular assignment or issue. Usually key resource requirements (staffing and financial) are identified in a preliminary fashion, based upon experience in other similar situations. Planners, who have been in the business for a number of years, are able to ‘ball park’ preliminary costs with a good degree of accuracy. Those preliminary costs help to feed the development of the Workplan which informs the resource requirements by identifying specific needs. Where internal resources do not exist to address the requirement, then external support may be needed. That will have a direct cost. Costs may also be indirect such as use of public space for meetings and staff time taken away from other work.

Once resource requirements have been identified, a decision is needed to determine if the project can or should be completed. That decision may be made by a public agency which decides to proceed or not proceed and decides whether the work will be completed internally or externally. If the decision is made by a private sector planner, the decision may be to decline to respond or to respond with specific resources.

2.6.1.4 Developing a Workplan

Once a decision has been made to proceed with a project, it is necessary to complete a detailed Workplan. Workplans are helpful. They set out the process and methodology by which a study or plan will be completed. They provide a useful roadmap for all involved. Workplans may be developed internally within a planning group, by a consultant in response to a proposal call, by

an administration group in anticipation of a special study requirement, by a public group attempting to advocate a particular idea or project, or by a combination of the above.

Workplans:

- ✓ should be **comprehensive**.
- ✓ should be **well organised**.
- ✓ should identify an **understanding** of the assignment.
- ✓ should identify a **methodology** with **specific tasks and outcomes** noted.
- ✓ should identify projected **timelines and milestones**, including **review points**.
- ✓ should identify **staffing** to be assigned, usually by study task.
- ✓ should identify proposed **products**.
- ✓ should identify a proposed **budget**, by staff and disbursements.
- ✓ may identify **information** sources.
- ✓ may identify anticipated **approval stages**.

Workplans should also have some flexibility so that new information or new methods can be incorporated into them. Workplans offer useful information for decision-makers who may wish to see how a project will be examined and what tasks the budget is funding. They offer useful information for citizens who want to better understand how the planning will be undertaken. They also provide a very useful way of monitoring the planning work to ensure that what needs to be done or what was agreed to be done is being done.

Case Study #12: Shared decision-making in creating a workplan

Planners can find that workplans become an especially important tool for project management if and when the community has had a hand in drafting the workplan. This is especially so for communities where political polarization, time frames or controversy create distrust of imported ideas. In a northern First Nation community and a small resort community, preparation of a workplan framework (i.e., the identification of key potential steps and outputs) was presented to steering committees composed of a cross-section of community interests and views for the committee's review and modification and detailing. In each case, the resultant Final Workplan reflected each community's particular aspirations, expectations, inputs, products and timelines. This basic step of shared decision-making placed the responsibility for the workplan design within the purview of those affected. In both instances, the community was able to monitor the progress of their workplan, adjust it as required and feel that the community was in charge of the process (rather than reacting to an externally generated process).

Lessons:

- 1. Community's are well positioned to identify their special needs, timetable and potential sources of information. That combined with the planner's experience can create a creative and community-specific process.*
- 2. Shared decision-making should begin at the beginning, the workplan itself.*
- 3. Developing a detailed workplan after the start of a project implies that all participants understand fully the study requirements (a dangerous assumption in itself).*

2.6.1.5 Building a team

Once a Project Brief is approved, it is time to reflect upon the staffing resources needed to complete the assignment. How far should you cast the net?

The Workplan will identify staffing needs. It will usually identify the specific personnel. Building a specific team to address an assignment can take several forms, including use of internal resources from a single department or group to combining resources, including interdisciplinary resources, from more than one department or group. This team building requirement cuts across public and private sector planning. The challenge is to identify precise needs and identify those best suited to address those needs (within the available budget). A project leader will also need to be selected.

We often tend to build teams with familiar faces. That approach can have the benefit of familiarity with personalities, idiosyncrasies and special skills. It can also have the effect of limiting team building to 'the same old, same old'. Experience suggests that it is worthwhile to break out of past habits and consider use of new resources, including new dynamic people who offer new insight or technology. But one should do so selectively. Having said that, ensuring the right team chemistry will often cause the planner to return to a team that knows and respects each team member.

Team members should be well informed prior to the project start. A team meeting to review expectations, roles, reporting relationships, the Workplan and budget is critical, although, in the consulting world, budget reviews are frequently done one-on-one prior to the issuance of the awarded work. Building a successful team requires on-going sound team management and project management. Simply telling team members what is expected and sending them on their way without follow-up is a potential recipe for disaster. Team monitoring is an important part of team building.

2.6.1.6 Completing the task

Completing the task is the final stage of most assignments. Implementation is usually defined as a separate requirement or step. There are various tools available to complete the assignment, many of which were identified in Section 2.5. If the preceding steps are completed in a proper fashion, completion of the task will be less intimidating.

Implementation

The implementation of a plan is an exciting time. Usually implementation takes months or years as resources are dedicated and details defined. Planners have generally done a poor job of monitoring the implementation of their work. Implementation is often left to others and the planner moves on to other assignments. But there are occasions when the planner moves into the role of project manager. That can be an exciting and interesting time.

Project Management

Project management is the means by which we ensure that the tasks are completed on time and on budget with the key requirements of the assignment addressed. Planners usually make good project managers, not because they have been trained to undertake project management, but because their skill set permits them to see how all of the pieces fit together. A well-written Workplan, well defined critical path chart and associated detailed budget will go a long way to assist the planner as a project manager. Likewise successful team building with the right

chemistry and skill set will greatly assist the planner to manage the project successfully. Planners are urged to hone their natural project management skills by taking project management courses or reading project management material. Training under fire may work over the long term, but such an approach can be a harrowing experience.

2.6.1.9 Evaluation

We are notoriously bad at evaluating the results of our work. We seem to be a profession that appears to have time to only do the work that needs to be done. Very seldom do we actually pause and reflect upon our results, processes and methods, returns on our investment of time, finances and staff, and the reaction of others. We may do some of this by way of anecdotal reflection, submitting a project to our peers for awards or keeping a record of the evolution of the project (slides, photos, newspaper clippings).

Trying to develop a series of case studies has been a goal of CIP for years. But planners just do not seem to be willing to return to old projects and evaluate them and record lessons learned²³. So here are some tips to move you in that direction:

- during the project keep a photographic record of key events;
- make use of a project book to record meetings, work, ideas etc. to act as a ‘working log’ of the project;
- keep a copy of the project report and any significant supporting materials that help to describe the process, methods, issues and events;
- if the project had a significant design or drawing component, take slides or prints and scan them onto a disk;
- approach each major project with a view that you may want to submit it for an award (this will require that you keep a solid record of what you did);
- if the project was a physical design or plan, return over periods of time to record changes and outcomes;
- if the project was a social planning or economic product without immediate physical results, visit those affected and seek feedback.

While it will not be possible to keep such detailed records for all projects, we should keep a good record of some of our ‘best’ projects. At the very least, however, keep a copy of reports you have produced. They exemplify your life’s work.

2.6.2 Developing a proposal

Whether in the public or private sectors, planners will need to have proposal writing skills. In the public sector, proposals are often required to access funding sources or to gain senior staff or political support. In the private sector many proposals are written to secure work. Both types of proposal writing have similar requirements. The following discussion examines proposal writing to seek funding (in the case of the public sector) and work (in the case of the private sector).

Proposals are generally written to achieve funding or work. As a result, they should be approached with objectivity and careful thought. Questions that need to be answered are:

- What is the likely chance of success?

²³ This remains an exceptional opportunity for academics and planners who want to document case studies for publication.

- Is this a priority?
- Is the opportunity in line with corporate goals and direction?
- Are there partnerships that need to be developed with others in order to be successful?
- How much time and energy will the proposal take?
- Are the resources available: (1) to do the proposal; and (2) to carry out the work if successful?
- What is our organisation's edge?
- How well do we understand the need or the funder's requirements?
- Is there enough time to do a proper effort?
- Is the budget sufficient to do what is needed (i.e., in the case of a consultant) or are the available funds sufficient to complete the requirement (i.e., in the case of a governmental department)?
- With whom are we competing?
- Is the proposal clear on what is expected?

If all or most of the above can be answered to the potential submitter's satisfaction, then the potential submitter (private consultant planner or public sector planner) may want to propose for the work or the funding. In some situations, the private sector and public sector may collaborate to acquire funding for a planning project. In such situations, the assignment often becomes private sector work. But how the actual selection of the private sector assistance is made may vary. It could involve the use of the private sector planner who helped to acquire the funding or, especially in the case of very large projects, it could involve a selection process as described below.

Proposals should only be sought from the private sector when there is an actual project or funds in place. Proposals should not be used to seek a sense of interest or potential methods in absence of intent to proceed. For instance, in the case of a consultant preparing a proposal for a \$50,000 project, the lost billable time to prepare the proposal will likely range in the area of 5% of the potential fees or \$2,500.00 in lost revenue. Add to this, disbursements or out of pocket costs of usually 1% or \$500.00, one can see that writing proposals can be a costly experience. The total investment is approximately \$3,000.00 to acquire a \$50,000 project. But the gross profit (after salaries and expenses) on a \$50,000 project is probably in the order of 15% or \$6,000.00. Thus, the actual potential profit, after proposal investment, is only in the order of \$3,000 (approximately 7% – 8%). It is for that reason that the private sector much prefers processes that offer increased potential for investment return (i.e., a focused process as described below).

But there will be occasions when unsolicited proposals are submitted by private consultants to public agencies or by public agencies to potential funders. Usually such initiatives are driven by the submitter's belief that the idea or proposed project is so unique or important that it deserves special consideration (see: 2.6.2.2 below).

Experience suggests the following attributes are key to successful proposal writing. Many of the characteristics of proposal writing are similar to Workplans.

2.6.2.1 Proposal content

Proposals :

- ✓ must be **comprehensive**.
- ✓ must be **well organised**.
- ✓ for *funding proposals*, must identify a **rational** for the request and why this proposal deserves support by the particular funding organisation (e.g., funding requests are usually competitive situations).
- ✓ for a *proposal to undertake work* on behalf of an organisation, must **demonstrate an understanding** of the proposed assignment.
- ✓ for a *proposal to undertake work* on behalf of an organisation, must identify a detailed **methodology** with **specific tasks and outcomes** noted.
- ✓ for *funding proposals*, should identify a **preliminary methodology** with expected tasks and outcomes.
- ✓ should identify, in both cases, projected **timelines and milestones**, including **review points**.
- ✓ should identify, in both cases, **staffing** to be assigned, their roles and in the case of *proposals to undertake work* on behalf of an organisation, usually by **study task**.
- ✓ should identify, in both cases, proposed **products**.
- ✓ should identify a proposed **budget**, and in the case of *proposals to undertake work* on behalf of an organisation, by **staff and disbursements**.
- ✓ should include, in both cases, team member descriptions of **relevant experience** of the assigned team members.

And in both cases:

- ✓ may include team member **resumes**.
- ✓ may include **references**.
- ✓ may identify an **organisational chart**.
- ✓ may include a study **flow chart**.
- ✓ may identify potential known **information sources** to be used.
- ✓ may identify anticipated **approval stages**.

There are a variety of proposal formats that can be used, including those that focus upon a detailed description of the process and methods to be used (usually an important consideration in the awarding of grants or work). Others will focus upon the strengths of the team and their relevant experience. Prior to proposal writing it is important to talk to the funder or the issuer of the proposal to identify what is expected and desired. Is it a focus upon methods and processes? Is it a focus upon product? Is it a focus upon the people to be assigned? Are all of the preceding important?

2.6.2.2 Unsolicited proposals

There are times when an organisation sees an opportunity that others may not have identified but for which funding is available. In such instances, a decision may be made to invest in the development of an unsolicited proposal that is submitted for funding to a funding source, such as a foundation or other organisation with a mandate to support planning related projects and research. Prior to undertaking a unsolicited proposal the applicant should identify the potential for success, available resources to complete the proposal, potential and requirements or criteria

for submission. Contact with the potential funder is essential to scope out the preceding and the potential interest in the topic.

2.6.2.3 Expression of Interest

Expressions of Interest (EOI) are used to identify potential sources of interest in a funding opportunity (by the fund holder) or potential consulting work. EOIs short circuit the potentially lengthy process of full a Request for Proposal. EOIs promote efficiency for the supplier and the reviewer, by focusing upon the skill sets and experience of the EOI respondent. The EOI identifies the requirement (tasks and expected skill sets), seeks brief submissions identifying the submitter's skill sets, resumes, experiences, references for similar type projects and (frequently, but not necessarily) vision for the project. From the respondents to an EOI, a short list of potential candidates is identified and RFP's or funding applications issued to them.

2.6.2.4 Covering letter

Not enough attention is paid to the potential impact of the covering letter that is submitted with a proposal. Except for a potential chat on the telephone or meeting to gather background information for the proposal, the covering letter is often the first or second time that the recipient of the proposal has had an opportunity to reflect upon your style and ability. The covering letter should:

- ✓ be **concise** (you want them to read the entire letter in detail)
- ✓ introduce your proposal's **strengths** (you are trying to catch their attention);
- ✓ invite an opportunity for **follow-up questions** (you are trying to open doors);
- ✓ identify the **team leader** (this could be different from the letter writer).

2.6.2.5 Maintaining an ethical approach

As planning becomes more competitive in both the private and public sectors, it is important that we do not lose sight of the fact that we are part of a profession. We must remind ourselves that we should treat our 'competition' for work or for scarce funding with respect and integrity. Local government frequently competes for federal and provincial grants (e.g., infrastructure grants). Consultants compete with other consultants for work. Without an ethical approach to such competition, planners could try and discredit others seeking the same limited funding or work. If we do not approach our tasks with a solid ethical footing, we run the risk of not only damaging our profession, but our very being as considerate honest persons. In fact there may be times when we should share our knowledge of potential sources of funding with other 'competitors' to ensure that the best interests of our community or other communities are addressed.

2.6.3 Terms of Reference

Terms of Reference are usually developed by organisations that are seeking external assistance to complete a particular task or to provide specialised assistance for a set period of time. Terms of Reference may take the form of a letter requesting assistance and directed to a specific individual or group. It may take the form of a Request for Proposal (RFP). There are a number of considerations that should be covered in the Request for Proposal or Terms of Reference. Foremost is the realisation that the more comprehensive and detailed the RFP, the more likely that any Proposals developed in response will be what is needed (process, methods and approach), and what is desired (budget, team composition, timelines).

Terms of Reference or Request for Proposal:

- ✓ must identify the **closing date** and accepted **method of submission** (disk, hard copy [fax?])
- ✓ should be well **organised**.
- ✓ should describe the **purpose of the assignment**.
- ✓ should include **background** to the assignment, including key issues and events that have helped to frame the need to do the work.
- ✓ should identify desired key **milestones**, including **review points**.
- ✓ should identify a **completion date**.
- ✓ should identify desired **outputs or products**.
- ✓ should identify a proposed **budget**²⁴.
- ✓ should identify **selection criteria** and weighting (if applicable);
- ✓ should identify the **process** to be used to select the consultant;
- ✓ should provide a **contact** and note any limitations to gathering background information or other contacts.
- ✓ should request examples or descriptions of **relevant projects** completed by the proposed team members.
- ✓ may identify a preliminary anticipated or desired **methodology** with **specific tasks and outcomes** noted.
- ✓ may identify expected **team composition** by discipline or speciality.
- ✓ may identify **information sources**.
- ✓ may request **references** for similar projects.
- ✓ may identify anticipated **approval stages**.

2.6.3.1 Soliciting responses

There are many approaches that can be used to solicit responses to RFP's. The methods include:

- **The 'cattle' call:** when an organisation issues a broad call for proposals in response to Terms of Reference. This may involve an advertisement in a newspaper, notice through the Internet, or other broad posting. (Note: an EOI can take the form of a cattle call but provide an opportunity to short-list a few preferred EOI respondents. This is an acceptable and useful approach for all).
 - ✓ **Advantages:** lots of potential responders, some of whom may not be familiar to the issuing organisation.
 - ✗ **Disadvantages:** could generate an overwhelming response and burden the review process. Could eliminate highly qualified potential responders who do not develop proposals for which they have not been short-listed because they are successful in their work and gain much of their work through sole source processes (and may see 'cattle calls' as a poor investment of limited available time). Could eliminate firms who do not believe this is a reasonable investment of time and energy, given the likely large number of submitters.

²⁴ This is often a contentious issue with public agencies. But, after having evaluated proposals and having written numerous proposals, I firmly believe that it is in everyone's interest to identify the available budget. This not only creates a 'level playing field', it also ensures that proposals are written to address the budget's capacity to support a specific amount of work.

- **A targeted call to a specific group**, such as a member of CIP or an Affiliate of CIP. Such RFPs are usually directed to members of a particular organisation that is deemed to be representative of a core requirement, such as a professional affiliation. These too are of a ‘cattle call’ nature and tend to be sent to the full membership of the targeted group.
 - ✓ Advantages: lots of potential responders, some of whom may not be familiar to the issuing organisation. Targeted to those who have the desired skill set.
 - ✗ Disadvantages: could generate an overwhelming response and burden the proposal review process. Could eliminate highly qualified potential responders who do not develop proposals for which they have not been short-listed. Could limit those who work in the field but are not members of the targeted organisation. Could eliminate firms who do not believe this is a reasonable investment of time and energy, given the likely large number of submitters.

- **A pre-selected targeted call** for proposals is frequently used when the issuing organisation has a good sense of what potential responding groups are best able (resources, experience, special expertise) to respond to the RFP. In this situation, it is not unusual to limit the RFP distribution to 3 or 5 pre-selected responders. (Note: in such cases the issuing organisation should expect pressure from those who have not been invited to submit a proposal to seek to be added to the list. The issuer should have determined a response in advance).
 - ✓ Advantages: focused to those who are known to the issuer as being capable of doing the work. Permits more time to review proposals. Likely to get a higher investment of time and energy by the responders. Permits dialogue on issues and questions (although such a dialogue must be, and be seen to be, fair and equitable).
 - ✗ Disadvantages: may miss an up and coming group or create an impression of favouritism.

Other methods include:

- **Design competitions** have been used in selected instances to hire a preferred consultant and to develop a sense of vision prior to the selection of the preferred consultant. Usually design competitions involve one of the preceding steps before 2 or 3 teams are selected to undertake the competitive design. A budget is required to fund those selected to complete the competition. The design is then judged and the ‘best’ design is usually selected²⁵.
 - ✓ Advantage: can create imaginative solutions and often offers new firms a chance to ‘show their stuff’. There may be instances where those ‘competing’ decide to assist each other, because they respect each other.
 - ✗ Disadvantage: the results of the competition may not be what the proponent had in mind. There may be times when no submission is made because ‘word on the street’ suggests that the circumstances of the work or funding are such that a response may be futile²⁶. Usually limited to design projects.

²⁵ While the ‘best’ design is usually selected, there have been times when the process has become ‘politicised’ and the ‘best’ design in terms of public comment and staff recommendation has not been awarded.

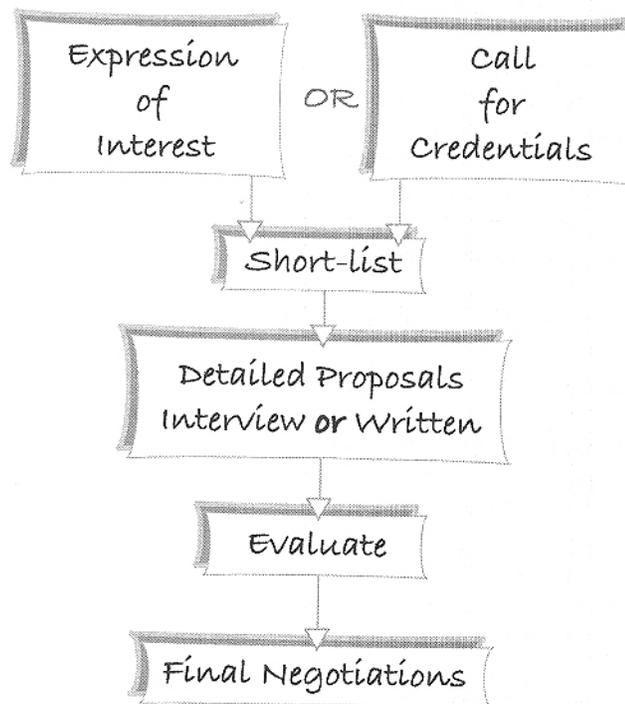
²⁶ For instance, the funding may have already been allocated or the work is not intended to proceed or has already been assigned and the RFP is simply a way to justify the award (for instance, a minimum number of proposals are required prior to a proposal selection being made).

2.6.3.2 A preferred approach

It is important to keep in mind that an RFP and the attendant selection process, should be flexible, depending upon the size and scale of the intended work, the available budget, and specific expectations or requirements. A rule of thumb suggests that:

For consulting projects that are relatively small for an organisation, meet regularity requirements, are relatively straight forward and not controversial, and are commonly done, a simpler RFP and award process could be considered such as: sole source award or request for a letter proposal from a few sources. For large organisations this suggests a budget of \$10,000.00 or less and for smaller organisations a budget of several thousand.

For large projects, (by the standard of the particular organisation involved), a more rigorous selection process will likely be required (as proposed below). But, where a client and a consultant have developed a strong working relationship, flexibility will be in order and contract award may occur on the sole source basis (as long as the award can be justified within public fiduciary obligations).



For many large projects, holding a multi-stepped selection process is the most ideal method to retain assistance to address an RFP. The following is my preferred approach (based upon my experience from 'both sides of the counter').

- **Issue an Expression of Interest.** This may include any one of the above: 'cattle call', targeted call (preferred approach: from the consultant's and organisation perspective) or pre-selected targeted call (a preferred approach: from the consultant's and organisation perspective)²⁷. In the latter case, however, the pre-selected group would likely number at least 5 to as many as 10 potential responders. The Expression of Interest should be:

²⁷ There will always be debate about the merits of approaches. My experience (on both sides of the counter) suggests that a limited proposal call will elicit better responses and allow for more time to properly evaluate the proposals received.

concise, describe the essential elements of the proposed assignment (issues to be addressed scope of work, expected products, timelines, budget and requirements or criteria to select a short-list). The EOI seeks a brief description of the submitter's qualifications, understanding of the assignment, examples of similar work, proposed staff to be assigned and any other pertinent information limited to a fixed number of pages (often no more than 5 pages).

- **Call for credentials:** This may take the place of an EOI and be simply a request for responses to a Design Brief. It is intended to identify the firms that could supply the required services. The call for credentials could then be followed by an EOI or detailed call for proposals.

- **Selecting a Short-list.** Once the Expressions of Interest (EOI) have been received, the proponent should complete a systematic review of all EOI's. Prior to the actual evaluation, an evaluation matrix should be developed. The matrix could include such items as: quality of EOI, degree to which EOI requirements have been addressed, proposed team and leader, experience of the respondent in the area of proposed work, other pertinent items. *Budget should not be a consideration at this point.* A selection team should be formed prior to the EOI. They should have an opportunity to contribute to the development of the EOI. The selection team should be given sufficient time to review the EOI's and rank them. A meeting should be held to review the EOI's and short-list between 3 to 5. Letters informing the unsuccessful candidates should be sent out immediately. In the case of invited EOI's, a follow-up telephone call to the unsuccessful candidates is a courteous way of recognising the time and energy the unsuccessful candidates put into their unsuccessful submission. Calling the unsuccessful candidate has two advantages: (1) it will create good will and (2) it will provide an opportunity for the candidate to be informed on how to improve their submission or team.

- **Seek detailed proposals:**
 - **Hold interviews.** Holding interviews instead of requiring detailed written proposals, allows each of the short-listed candidates and the requesting organisation a chance to meet face-to-face. While it may be likely that some members of the selection team may have met one or more of the candidate's team, it is very unlikely that each has met all members of the consulting team. An interview process can be used to award the contract or it can be used to verify the selection of a consultant who has provided a detailed written proposal and was selected as the preferred consultant on the basis of the written submission. In either case, the candidate should provide a comprehensive verbal (with supporting graphics) presentation of the project understanding, proposed methodology, proposed team, products and milestones. The interview process permits the selection team to ask questions and determine the quality of the proposal and responses.

 - **Written submissions.** As described previously written submissions should include a variety of items, most notably the proposed team, process and methods, products, timelines and budget.

- **Selecting a consultant.** Evaluation criteria developed for the EOI should be refined and applied to the selection of the preferred consultant, in either an interview or written submission format. The preferred consultant may not be the least costly (in fact their submission may be higher than the approved budget), but should be the best and most cost effective for the proposed process, approach and product. Those who are unsuccessful should be notified immediately (subject to the final contracts being signed) and should be told why their proposal was not selected.
- **Final negotiations.** Too often, the contract signing is completed as a mere formality. In fact, it should be seen not as the conclusion of the hiring process, but as the beginning of the project process. A face-to-face meeting to sign the contract conveys a sense of duty and obligation that reinforces the professionalism of the entire process and beginning assignment. Depending upon the scale of the project, a letter of authorisation to proceed may be sufficient or a detailed legal document may be necessary.

Remember: a solidly written proposal becomes the Workplan for the project²⁸.

When all is said and done, the assignment of a contract for services can be an exciting opportunity for all involved to learn from each other and complete a project that has merit and value to a community's quality of life.

2.6.3.4 Trusted Advisor

There are opportunities to develop and nurture close relationships between some private sector/public sector planners and some clients and organisations. Over time there may develop a relationship based upon trust and respect. In such situations, the consultant or public servant becomes a 'trusted advisor'. The trusted advisor provides key advice on key issues. For a consultant, the trusted advisor also means being selected to provide advice on a retainer basis. The trusted advisor does not go through the consultant selection process for each project (although that may be how they were initially retained), but is retained to provide expertise and assistance usually over a long period, because they have proven their capability and ability to respond as required with highly competent advice that addresses the needs of the client.

2.6.3.5 It is not a 'biding' process

In the case of RFP's for consulting assistance, issuers of the RFP should not refer to the RFP as a 'bid', unless that is what is meant. A bid connotes issuance of the work solely on the basis of price. Price is a poor way of determining selection for planning and design work. Price does not take into account team experience, specialised knowledge or method. Planners are not selling widgets, they are selling *ideas* and *expertise*. For that reason, it is often strange to see Purchase Agents as the identified proposal recipient. Use of Purchase Agents by an organisation sends signals of being a bureaucracy and being price driven.

²⁸ Alternatively, the selection of a consultant on the basis of an EOI and associated credential package allows the client and consultant to develop the workplan together.

2.7 Report Writing

Whether in the private or public sector, planners are usually required to write reports at some stage of their career. Since reports can vary significantly, depending upon the purpose, audience, budget, expectations and available information they can take many different forms. They may be a letter, an expert opinion, a Report to Council, Committee or Cabinet, a study report or a plan adopted by bylaw. For each (and there are many others), there is a set of considerations that can be applied.

Letter. This is the most straightforward report. It should contain:

- Brief discussion of purpose of letter;
- Brief identification of any outstanding issues;
- Brief analysis of pertinent information;
- Recommendation on a course of action.

➤ **Expert opinion letter.** This letter is intended to provide an opinion on a specific subject. It should contain:

- Brief outline of writer's qualifications;
- Discussion of purpose of letter;
- Identification of any issues;
- Analysis of pertinent information;
- Discussion of findings;
- Recommendation on a course of action.

➤ **Report to Council, Committee, Cabinet.** Each organisation usually has developed its own standard format and requirements for such reports. Those existing standard formats should be adhered to unless there is reason to differ. Such reports usually contain in order of appearance:

- Recommendation;
- Executive summary;
- Additional information (such as applicant, other departmental interests, relevant legislation, legal description);
- Background;
- The Proposal, including pertinent analysis, implications, relation to statutory requirements;
- Discussion by topic/issue heading, other departmental issues;
- Prerequisites for approval or adoption;
- Policy considerations;
- Supporting maps and plans;
- Appendices.

➤ **Study Report or Plan adopted by bylaw.** All of us have a particular approach to report writing. Creativity should be promoted, but for plans requiring bylaw adoption, legislation and regulatory requirements can frame much of what is written, both in terms of content and style. Even so, here are some suggestions:

- Develop an outline and format before writing to ensure that you are meeting the organisation's and legislative requirements;
- Where possible, provide an executive summary (keep it to 1 page);
- Identify the purpose of the work;
- Identify pertinent legislation and regulatory requirements that affect the document;
- Describe pertinent background information (i.e., information that had a major bearing on the outcome) (remember appendices and supplementary separate documents are useful ways of minimising background in the report or plan);
- Detail recommendations with supporting graphics (note: make use of images to convey ideas);
- Identify budget and other implications;
- Identify financing options;
- Identify phasing and implementation requirements.

2.8 Project Management

Project management is a key element of successful planning project completion. Good projects require astute management, usually with limited resources and conflicting interests. The type of skills needed for project management is seldom, if ever, taught in planning schools. Here are a few pointers, recognising that we will have different methods and experiences and that we should always be open to learning from others over the life of our career.

2.8.1 Planning studies

Planning studies will vary in scale of effort, intensity of scrutiny and expectations. Before undertaking a planning study, the planner should note the particular issues affecting the planning study, the level of expectation, investment and interest²⁹. Project management for planning studies should consider:

- identifying the interests and their expectations;
- identify the approved budget and supporting documentation to proceed (e.g., Design Brief, Terms of Reference, RFP, workplan);
- create a team if one is not in place;
- prepare workplan if none exists;
- meet with team to review roles and expectations;
- identify a budget management process;
- develop a critical path chart for complex projects;
- identify preliminary milestones;
- review the critical path chart and milestones with team to ensure that they are able to deliver;
- finalise milestones;
- hold regular team meetings;
- promote joint team discussions and working sessions, including brainstorming, internal workshops and charrettes (avoid individual team members working in isolation);

²⁹ Note: public consultation requires careful thought and dialogue with the affected community and a separate project management approach, perhaps using many of the techniques described on these pages.

- hold regular reviews and internal team presentations of products and findings;
- monitor production of materials for quality and findings (as identified in approved workplan);
- monitor the budget in relation to workplan;
- provide regular reports to the client or supervisors;
- hold special meetings with team as required to address emerging issues;
- co-ordinate production of final reports.

2.8.2 Managing consultants

Organisations manage external assistance in different ways. Smaller organisations may develop a close relationship with their external supplier of planning services. Larger organisations may have more formal relationships with their external professional support. But each situation will vary. Invariably, a level of comfort develops between organisations and consultants when the two groups have worked together on previous occasions, especially if they ‘have gone to the wall together.’ Here are a few tips for successful consultant management:

- be clear on expectations, budget and reporting relationships;
- adopt a Workplan that you both agree to;
- promote a collegial working relationship;
- identify any special sensitive situations that may affect the project such as sensitive political issues;
- request regular reports (verbal or written) at specific milestones or time periods;
- ask for monthly invoices by task completed as per the workplan (avoid asking for detailed hour by hour detailed invoices, you are only taking away valuable time that could be spent on the project);
- monitor the above;
- provide reasonable assistance if warranted;
- meet with the consultant on a regular basis (but use good judgement to let the consultant get the work done);
- provide written feedback on work submitted.

2.8.3 Managing a planning office or team

Many planners end up as managers, either of an office or group of people. Most planners are not trained for such tasks. It is usually a situation of learning while under fire. Here are a few tips:

- treat people fairly;
- show respect for effort;
- share recognition and provide recognition;
- celebrate achievements;
- share information;
- if unionised, understand the contract and its implications;
- develop collective organisational or group workplans;
- encourage the development of personal performance plans that can be measured;
- promote, where possible, a studio space for collaborative work when appropriate;
- lead by example;
- do not criticise publicly;
- believe first and question later;

- support career development;
- invest in supporting resources;
- pay fairly;
- hold a Friday afternoon gathering to reflect on the week and ‘kick-back’.

2.8.4 Communication Strategy

And one last thought. Consider developing a communication strategy as part of your project management approach. A communication strategy is not about manipulating public opinion (although the cynic in us would first think that), but it is about identifying the techniques and means of communicating with the general public as the project unfolds. It is also about identifying points of information access (steering committee members, chair, planner, administrator, councillor etc.) that are known to the community and press.

2.9 Summary

This Chapter has reviewed a cross-section of information to assist planners in their day-to-day work. Each of us will develop our own comfortable set of applications and methods. Each of us will determine what is appropriate in certain situations. But each of us should remain open to new improved ways of undertaking our work. The more we share our experiences and lessons with each other, the more that our profession will respond to the needs of society in a concerted and appropriate manner.

3. On the Front Line

Planners find themselves constantly on the front lines of community debate and quality of life considerations. Those front line skirmishes are cause for concern as planners are frequently caught in the middle of debates about private property rights, resource distribution, service delivery and equity issues. This chapter examines some of those front line experiences.

3.1 What do planners think?

Planning has been identified as a profession in crisis by members of CIP. Sixty nine percent of respondents to my survey believed that planning is facing or is in a state of crisis. Others, including architects and landscape architects have pointed out that the design professions, including planning, face an uncertain future (Fisher 1998, 2000, Landscape Architecture 1998, Rowe 1996). Is there cause for concern? What is the cause for this crisis?

3.1.1 Elements of the crisis

CIP members have identified the cause for the crisis as chiefly related to the political nature of decision-making, lack of public understanding of planning, lack of understanding of planning by politicians and lack of political support for planning. As noted earlier, planners are likely to blame the politics of planning for the crisis.

But, there is more to planning's uncertain future than the political nature of planning. During the 1990's, urban design issues (i.e., the details of everyday life) began to take a prominent role in the life of communities, citizens and decision makers. Unfortunately, many planners stood on the sidelines as the urban design field became dominated by non-planners, such as Andres Duany and Peter Calthorpe. Notwithstanding Duany's and Calthorpe's label (and their excellent contribution to the ideas of planning) by some as urban planners, their origins lie in the discipline of architecture. Like so many other urban designers with roots in architecture and landscape architecture, they have become major spokespersons for enhanced urban design, quality of life, sustainable urban development and associated economic, environmental and social attributes. Much of their writing has placed a good deal of the blame for the deterioration of urban living at the feet of the profession of planning and its adherence to exclusionary zoning, rigid development standards, and separation of uses. While these generalisations may seem unfair, there is substantial truth to their implication that planners were often at the forefront of 'more of the same'³⁰.

As a profession, we need to take responsibility for much of the sprawl that exists in many of our communities and spills out along many arterial roads and highways. There is no question that some of the urban ills associated with sprawl, including excessive reliance upon private automobile use and separation of uses, occurred because zealous planners applied outdated bylaws. But those bylaws were developed in response to a set of societal desires of the time, many of which seemed 'reasonable' and many of which reflected the political will of the time.

³⁰ In fact , my research (1998) has shown that 85% of CIP members believe that planners have become agents of order rather than agents of change. But, it is interesting to note that consulting planners are much more likely (59%) to *agree strongly* that planners have become agents of order than local government planners (38%).

In hindsight, those planners who advocated recently a separation of uses were still responding to experiences from another time when heavy industrial uses were detrimentally affecting residential and other uses³¹.

With changes to employment patterns and employment generators, from large smoke belching factories to dispersed 'clean' employment centres, mixed uses have become acceptable, even desirable. A special irony is the conversion of former industrial plants, such as Massey Ferguson in Toronto to mixed use. Those who seem to have figured this out first are those from the design professions. A quick glance at the best selling books on urban redevelopment, quality of life and sustainable urban design are authored principally by architects. The Congress of New Urbanism is home to a large number of architecturally trained urban planners and urban designers. Planners appear to be standing on the outside often looking onto the urban design action that is taking place around design studios and in board and committee rooms. Part of the blame for this development rests at the feet of the planning schools where issues of design and site development had been cast aside in the modernist classroom discussions of empowerment and social justice³².

During the 1960's through to today, many of our Canadian planning schools have promoted a policy focus within their curricula. This trend has been partly in reaction to the narrow 'blue print' planning of pre-World War II when planners ignored the collective whole and focused upon site planning and narrow design solutions. That rejection of part of planning's tradition has resulted in planning practice often being devoid of a design capability. That void became an issue in the face of bland site planning and urban planning with its emphasis upon single uses, sprawl and commonality of design (i.e., each subdivision began to look like every other subdivision in North America; I call it everywhere North America). Thus, those planners who were designing the large tract greenfield subdivisions had little training in urban design or site planning. It is no wonder that their plans began to look alike and that the reflections of the region and community failed to materialise in the products of their work. They simply had never been taught that there might be another way. It was only in the blatant reaction to the emergence of 'slum' clearing that attention began to be drawn to the effects of poor site planning and urban redevelopment. That period of Canadian urban planning is a sad commentary on an ill-conceived attempt to 'better' the lot of people, many of whom did not want to be 'bettered'. Planners have received considerable criticism for those times (see: John Sewell's *The Shape of the City*, 1993). But they were not alone, if blame is to be partitioned, politicians and society as a whole must also be accountable for that sad time in urban planning and development. It seems that planners have taken blame for many urban ills because we did not speak up. That may be true, but neither did many other professions nor did few politicians. If blame is to be placed, it should be a shared blame. That period, however, deserves attention for it has marked the profession of planning and caused it to be suspect. Planners appear to be guilty as much by association as by action.

³¹ Part of the reality is that smoke belching industry continued well into the 1960's. Citizens clamoured to 'get away' from those polluters, to seek the emerging good life of post war North America and live in new modern housing stock. Believing that planners were the lynch pin for such societal demand is like pulling oneself up by the bootstraps, it is misguided at best. Planners were responding. By the time we were discovering the detrimental effects of sprawl, the damage had been done. Our problem as planners was that we had not been the first to blow the whistle on the whole sorry mess.

³² Those discussions were extremely important, but planning is an integrated profession with multiple interests and linkages. It required a continued footing in the design heritage of the 1920's to 1950's as well if it was to apply the lessons of post modernist thought to the issue of place. The total rejection of any acknowledgement of planning's links to its 'blueprint' period has been a serious disservice to the profession.

In recent years, many planning schools have responded by broadening their curriculum to cover sustainable development issues and social policy discussions. A few offer some design courses, but except for a few instances, there has not been a concerted attempt to blend policy and design in an urban design framework, especially in an interdisciplinary setting. Urban planners need to become design literate so that the built form issues that dominate much of the planning debate can be intelligently discussed by planners. Planning schools could do a better job here by dialoguing with Schools of Architecture and Landscape Architecture. The Profession could also increase its own dialogue with the architecture and landscape architecture professions. This is an important issue for the profession for 80% of Canadians are urban dwellers.

Often, planners are seen to be based in a profession without special skills and training. How many times have we heard members of the public, developers or politicians question our capability, recommendations or ideas in a manner that approaches rudeness? How many times have we heard members of the public state that they could do a better job? This is not to say that the answer rests in a return to the old days of professional elitism, but there has to be a return to a foundation of mutual respect that has been eroded over the past 20 years. Public rudeness is more common. Stressed out planners are more common. There is something terribly wrong with this picture! A federal government study of careers found that, of the professions, planners were one of the most inclined to state that they were leaving the profession or unhappy with their career choice. CIP members appear to confirm that finding. In my survey, only 30% agreed strongly that they expected to continue to practice planning until they retired. Only 23% agreed strongly that they could look forward to a rewarding future in planning.

3.1.2 A way out

There is an increasing awareness that the world is a complex web of connected systems. There is also an awareness that solutions to the world's problems will rest on integrated approaches to issue analysis and solution identification. Saul (2001: 30) calls this "lateral connections." The future of planning practice offers much hope in the search for integrated solutions, "lateral connections," and the definition of the context within which decisions will need to rest. But with that hope comes significant responsibility for planners to do 'things' much better. Those 'things' include:

- how we act and perform in our day-to-day work,
- how we respond to challenges,
- how we advocate and articulate information,
- how we establish the context for that information, and
- how we come to face the crisis that will envelope society: the crisis of the well-being of this planet³³.

What can we do?

Personal:

- Each of us has a job to do here. Each of us must **approach our work with pride and principle**. We should be ready and willing to listen and take advice, but we should not

³³ This simple practitioner's guide is not able to venture down that path. But, make no mistake, we will be called upon (as Maurice Strong did) to show leadership (likely in a time of crisis, for we are a crisis action-oriented society) and vision as the earth's climate continues to change and biophysical change begins to affect our collective and individual well-being.

tolerate rudeness in the delivery of ‘advice’. We should challenge rudeness rather than ignore it. Ignoring rudeness condones it.

- We must learn to **become advocates for change**, for better quality of life for citizens, for the ecological well-being of planet earth. We must advocate for sound well-thought long term decisions.
- We should live our life with commitment to the goals that we advocate. That implies making decisions about how we shop, what we buy and how we conduct ourselves within and without our work environments. Simply, we must **lead by example**.
- We should develop **coalitions of common interest** with like minded other professions and interests. We should network with other groups and get involved with emerging concepts.
- We should constantly **strive for excellence**. We should be constantly (well alright, at least some of the time!) reading, learning, thinking about our profession and discussing planning issues, items related to our profession and what other professions are doing. We should be open to new ideas and methods of doing our work.
- We should study our profession’s history, read some of Thomas Adam’s enlightening work, and **reflect** on what our profession has accomplished and what we have accomplished and need to accomplish.
- We should **share our knowledge** with others. We should challenge those we believe are wrong.
- We should **promote our best work**.
- We should **balance our career lives with our personal lives** so that we always have a ‘safe haven’ during stormy times.
- We should **walk the talk**.

On interdisciplinary healthy sustainable practice, thought and action:

- The future will rest on successful applications of integrated interdisciplinary healthy sustainable practice, thought and action. Anything less will mean that we have collectively, by that I mean society, failed to acknowledge and act in the face of the continuing reality of a world in ecological, economic and social turmoil. CMHC’s Practices for Sustainable Communities (see: Section 2.5.3) offers considerable assistance in this area. Connecting health and sustainability could be our professions greatest legacy!
- We must provide leadership in the linkage of economic, ecological and social health to the decisions of everyday life. We must advocate processes and thought that recognises the importance of accepting uncertainty (because life systems are so complex) through rigorous questioning of our underlying societal assumptions.

On integrated practice:

- The world requires a voice for the integration of fractured disciplines and approaches. Increasingly, the complex world is examined from narrower and narrower perspectives. We are trained to consider the context of issues and the linkage of issues. We can offer much leadership in our approach to the consideration of complex problems.

On new emerging concepts:

- We are at the centre of the debate about the future of the city, the environment and global climatic change. We must be willing to participate and advocate new ideas (or, as the case may be, recycled old ideas). Smart Growth is one example of an old idea in new clothes; an idea that has come of age because of the possibilities it offers to build coalitions of

common interest. New Urbanism offers interesting ideas, although it, like so many concepts, needs to be scrutinised to ensure that its best features are utilised in practical and meaningful ways for the reason that they are the right approaches, not because they are the 'in' thing to do.

On urban design³⁴:

- Planning schools need to consider the development of urban design streams to complement the urban policy focus of so many schools. The profession needs to demand urban design support from some schools to ensure that urban planners are able to converse in the urban design language and contribute to the debates about sprawl, quality of life, emerging urban concepts such as Smart Growth and urban form and character, while leading the discourse on sustainable development, social planning and urban policy. Sandercock (1999) has identified the need for the planner TAMED which includes a design side. Evidence suggests that the best placed schools to deliver urban design are those that specialise in urban planning and urban studies and have access to schools of architecture or landscape architecture.

- Planners need to upgrade their urban design vocabulary and skills so that they can actively participate in the urban design discourse that is occurring in large and small communities across Canada. Planners need to team with architects and urban designers and 'learn on the job'. Urban design team work is the way of the future. Planners can sit back and watch as others lead or they can participate and offer leadership as well.

Case Study #13: Creating an effective urban design team

A prominent architect has developed a highly regarded professional practice in urban redevelopment. He and an urban planner have teamed up on design charrettes (regional town centre, new downtown, redeveloped downtown, campus plan) to create an exciting combination of design skills and process/facilitation skills. Combined, the two have developed a team approach that takes the strengths of each and combines their skill set into a whole that is greater than its parts. The fluidness of their charrette process, its completeness and quality graphic products are testament to the advantages of recognising the strengths of each and the combination of those individual strengths into a single team. Not only is such a combination of skill sets important for the client, it is also fun of the architect and urban planner, as each plays off the other.

Lesson:

- 1. There is great advantage to a planner teaming with an architect to help influence design decisions, while offering specialised expertise to the architect. It is a winning combination for client and the professionals and it is fun!*

³⁴ This suggestion is not meant to limit the discourse in planning schools to urban design. Other areas of practice are equally important and schools need to specialise in key areas such as rural and regional planning, economic development, parks and recreation, tourism, resource etc. But, a few schools need to build on an urban study and urban planning focus by offering connections to urban design. My own view is that, through urban design, we will be able to better use existing urban areas, infill and brownfield sites to reduce the need to continue to expand urban areas. Urban design will lead to growth management.

On Research Centres:

- Planners need to develop and support research centres where planning work can be studied, lessons learned and documented and ‘good’ planning promoted. Much of what we do is not the glamorous design products of so many of the design professions. But much of what we do is necessary to support a high quality of life in our communities. It is often the foundation upon which detailed design takes place. Our planning schools are failing us in the lack of research institutes that study Canadian cities, regions and rural communities and document what works and what does not. Too many of our lessons are anecdotal. The University of Winnipeg’s Institute for Urban Studies (located in a university without a planning programme) is an example of what should be done to provide important research literature for the profession.

On Studios

- Planning offices (and planning schools for that matter) would do well to establish studios that provide a collaborative environment for forward thinking planning work. Such spaces can be central meeting areas where teams come together to respond to projects or applied studios where solutions are developed in a collegial questioning environment.
- University programmes need to make use of studios with ‘real’ clients so that students and faculty are exposed the world of practice with all of its idiosyncrasies. Such processes benefit the students and the community. Through the crits that take place during studio presentations, students may be exposed to professionals, politicians and community members and private and public sector interests. Planning schools need to team with other disciplines to explore mutual interests, learning and interdisciplinary team teaching through the use of studios³⁵ and crits.

Action Research

- We will need to continue to work with others, such as CMHC, FCM, NGO’s and senior governments to explore new models and research new appropriate responses to global issues. In particular, planner practitioners and academics must promote a collegial enterprise in action research. Our future contribution will rest much more on our research, linking the effects of land use and resource husbandry with global warming and sustainability³⁶.

CIP:

- Planners on the front lines need to be supported by their peers. Perhaps, CIP should have a ‘help line’ for planners to call and talk about an issue with a fellow planner. Such a system could be discrete and readily available, especially for planners who are dealing with difficult political issues.
- All CIP members, upon acceptance in the Institute as a Full Member, should be given a framed Code of Conduct to place beside their membership certificate to indicate to others that planners do have a set of guiding principles to help direct their practice.
- We need to take responsibility for our past actions or lack of action and develop a dialogue amongst ourselves to ensure that we ‘get the future right’. The development of

³⁵ Donald Schon has written extensively on this topic, see: Educating the Reflective Practitioner, 1987.

³⁶ A reflection upon the work of Thomas Adams confirms the importance of action research and the linkage of land use decisions to environmental and societal well-being. Adams work was highly regarded as critical input to government action. It was work that generated significant respect for the profession.

specialisations within CIP (similar to APA) would stimulate dialogue amongst the numerous areas of practice.

- On-going continuing education opportunities (whether required or not) should be promoted.

3.2 Getting Started

You have just graduated or have decided to find a new job. Where do you begin? The following material will provide some light on a place we have all been at one time or other.

3.2.1 Setting goals

As planners we are constantly setting goals for others. We need to avoid the cobbler's fate of not paying attention to our own needs. Since our profession has such a breadth and scope to its Areas of Practice, we should set goals for ourselves. We should ask ourselves a number of questions. They could include the following:

- What type of work really excites us? Or another way, what turns our crank? (Note: our primary interests may very likely change over time as new opportunities develop and we expand our knowledge and skill base).
- What type of personality do we possess? Are we a bit shy? Are we outgoing? Do we like structure? Do we like to be constantly challenged? Do we desire security, tenure? Do we want to travel or remain close to home? Do we want a 9-5 job or do we want flexibility and variety? Are we educators at heart?
- Where do we want to be (position, geographic location) in 5, 10, 20 years?

New planners should remember that they are in a networking profession where building networks of associates, other professionals, information contacts, interest groups and clients creates a base for information, advice and assistance. Thus, when a planner starts a new job, the planner is immediately building a network of contacts that can lead to enhanced career and professional life benefits. So, choose the first job with that in mind. Your first job may be the start of a long career in one geographic location. While planners with a few years experience usually have lots of flexibility to move about within and between different regions of the country, those in their middle careers usually have less choice for a number of reasons (family commitments, roots, other partner career goals, well known locally but not nationally). So, think about where you might like to spend the next 10 - 20 years of your career when you take your first job. You may discover you can't afford to leave that region for some time!

3.2.2. Finding employment

All of us have left school to find our first job. For some it was a relatively straightforward task. For others it was a gruelling experience. Much of the first job finding experience is tainted by a few factors that lie outside our control. For instance, a downturn in the economy reduces the number of available new spots for graduates. But, for the most part, our first job is related to how we have undertaken our search and the methods used to acquire employment. *Remember that how you approach your job search tells a lot about yourself.*

3.2.2.1 Tips for the beginner

Here are some general rules for new graduates:

- Begin preparing for your career early in your university education. A solid university programme that builds into an obvious career path shows that you are focused, well organised and serious about your chosen career. (But remember to have some fun too!).
- Begin networking with prospective employers well in advance of graduating (probably 6 to 12 months ahead of graduation);
- Research prospective employers by searching out their web-site, talking to people who may have worked for them or currently work for them (all may have biases that do not reveal the true nature of the potential employer);
- See if there is an opportunity to do your research paper or thesis on an area that ‘gets you in the door’ prior to graduation (there is nothing better than knowing a potential employer and they knowing you);
- Remember that you should be ‘evaluating’ the prospective employer to determine if it is a place where you really want to work or if their work area fits your skills and interests (you do want to come out of your employment experience with a good reference);
- Attend CIP and/or affiliate events to build contacts;
- Prepare a first class resume that is brief, to the point, describes your key skill set and identifies your key interests. It is important that your resume is focused so that a potential employer really gets a sense of your special skills that set you apart from others. You need to capture their attention by:
 - Personalise the employment search by sending your resume or dropping it off (do not fax it- unless invited to do so) with a covering letter (think of the letter as a another way of selling yourself so be crisp, and include a few words about your skill set or experience);
 - Identify in the letter that you will follow-up with a telephone call to make an appointment;
 - If you drop off the letter, call ahead to see if you can make an appointment to see the person you have directed the letter to (do not walk in and ask to see the person without calling ahead);
 - If you sent a letter or dropped off the resume without making an appointment, follow-up the letter and resume with a telephone call to ask if it was received and if you could meet with the person (remember that you need to show interest, simply sending off a resume without follow-up or notice of follow-up will probably mean that your resume gets discarded);
 - Call to make an appointment and, if you receive a reply that there are no positions available, ask if you can meet to identify potential other sources of employment, such as names and telephone numbers, or employment status of the profession in the area ;
 - Use references, preferably someone who has experience with your planning skills. Always ask if you may use the person as a reference (this is as much as to be polite as it is to ensure that you will receive a good reference). If possible, use names known to the prospective employer.
 - If you had to read about the job opportunity in a job posting, you are probably too late. Most employers hire or develop a short list through contacts. Job posting is usually a policy requirement of the prospective employer. Many jobs are filled without resorting to job ads (especially in the private sector).
 - Be persistent without being a ‘pain’. And, be prepared to be ingenuous (see Case Study 14).

Case Study #14: Being inventive

She was a recent grad from a Landscape Architecture programme. A job ad had been posted for a CAD technician. She had CAD skills so applied and came in for an interview. Although she did not get the CAD position, she had an excellent landscape architecture portfolio that drew the attention of the person in charge of the CAD group. She in turn alerted a senior partner of the office who headed up the urban design group. One of her references was known to the partner. Her obvious versatility and ability to be flexible allowed the consulting firm to offer her a position as a CAD operator to help fill in for a short time with the proviso that she would be used for her landscape architecture skills from time to time. Within the first 3 months, 60% of her time was working in a design team format and by the first year she spent 100% of her time in a design studio. She eventually became a key player in the design studio and achieved her landscape architecture registration.

She was successful because she 'sold' her skill set and was ready to apply one set of skills to 'get in the door', prove herself, create a job for herself and become an accomplished urban designer.

Lessons:

- 1. There are a variety of ways to gain experience, one may just have to be innovative to 'get in the door'.*
- 2. Having more than one skill to offer can be attractive to a potential employer.*

3.2.2.2 The Interview

Think of your job interview as always happening! That's because you never know when an opportunity might arise. For instance, many people are hired as a result of working with someone on a project (professional organisation, contract, research project). Hiring is done frequently when the person hiring has direct knowledge of the person being hired or knows someone whose judgement they trust and has direct knowledge of the person being hired. For just about every job, some form of interview occurs. It may be over an informal meal, in a formal interview panel setting or a series of meetings. For all types of interviews, there are a few rules to consider as suggested below.

The Interviewee

The interviewee should be well prepared. Preparation relates to not only the position being offered but also the organisation offering the position. The interviewee should answer questions with interest, tact and knowledge. The interviewee should seek clarification if a question is not understood clearly. The interviewee should also have her own set of questions related to the proposed position.

The interviewee needs to take time to answer the questions, look directly at the questioner and others present when answering a question. Use of examples is a good idea. And remember to be relaxed but not too casual. Recognise body language and deal with it by trying to sit back with arms unfolded and by making eye contact. Avoid playing with pens or pencils. Look interested!

The Interviewer

The interviewer needs to be organised and on time. Questions should be prepared ahead of time, along with an evaluation sheet, and agreement on who will ask which set questions (questions unique to the interview should be developed as the interview proceeds). The interviewer should display personal knowledge of the interviewee by taking note of items in the interviewee's resume and incorporating those items in the interview (this will go a long way to relax the candidate). The interview should be in a relaxed environment with a relaxed tone, free of interruptions and preferably in a roundtable setting.

3.2.3 Gaining experience

The proverbial Catch 22 is this: you usually need experience to find employment but you can't get experience unless you have been employed³⁷. So the key is to create experience opportunities. Here are some suggestions outside of the normal employer/employee role:

- Try and seek experience while in university through the research work of your advisor or other staff;
- Consider volunteering for one of a number of NGO's that are quite often full on ideas and potential tasks but short on resources to complete them (remember that word focus: stay focused on an NGO that relates to your field);
- Develop and apply for a research grant from granting agencies (this can often lead to great contacts and research product that will show case your skills);
- Volunteer to sit on a government planning related committee (another great way to network);
- Use your professional organisations to network and volunteer for their committees;
- Develop a specialisation and present your work to a conference/meeting of peers;
- Keep a detailed record of what you completed (use the CIP log book as one means);
- Get letters of reference from any such experiences.

3.2.4 The Resume

Resumes tell a story, a story about you! They begin as fragile undertakings with a brief outline of what we have studied and relevant experience, if that exists. For those beginning at the beginning, work experience may be unrelated to the chosen profession. In such situations, the resume writer will need to be creative to identify the key skills that were acquired as those skills might apply to the particular job at hand or area of professional interest. The resume should have a focus. For a start, a beginner should have several different resumes, each geared to a particular target employer or area of practice. Remember a resume that tries to cover too much or is too general by being all things to all prospective employers may have no particular meaning or appeal for any prospective employer!

Over time, resumes or curriculum vitae become a record of one's career. Two resumes are in order for those with considerable work experience: one should be a two page summary of key points and one should be a compendium of project experience by area of practice. Both should contain a history of relevant contributions to the profession and society.

³⁷ There are unique University programs, such as the University of Waterloo's Co-op program that short circuit this problem.

The resume should whet the appetite of the reviewer. It should cause the reviewer to pause and think that this person should be considered further or at some point in the future. It is an introduction. It is a means of conveying a sense of the individual without revealing the individual.

3.2.5 Starting out

Our first full time employment should be a memorable experience that we carry with us for the rest of our lives. Here are some pointers to help ensure that is the case.

- Approach your first job with a mix of enthusiasm, humility, caution and pride. Don't display too much of any of those characteristics. Remember that you are very likely getting to know each other for the first time, that you are the beginner (albeit with some relevant current ideas and methods) and just starting out.
- Make sure you understand what is expected, get a copy of the job description if one exists or sit down with your supervisor and sort out expectations, roles and timelines, if possible (put in a letter describing your job and expectations, if you are not provided with one and seek feedback and confirmation [without being too pushy]).
- Listen carefully, note the important stuff and the not so important stuff. Focus on the former without losing sight of the latter.
- Don't judge too quickly because there may be past experiences, special knowledge, decisions or commitments that limit options.
- Show respect for the elder 'warriors' who have been in the trenches for a long time, but do not be gratuitous or intimidated.
- Ask questions but don't be a nuisance. Ask questions about process, procedure, clarification and expectations.
- If unsure of something, seek help. Don't assume anything!
- Seek out a mentor who will commit to guide you and provide career advice.
- Identify potential needs and opportunities but bide your time before identifying them (you do not want to appear overly aggressive) and wait for an occasion to raise them.
- Be clear on protocol. Don't sign letters on behalf of the organisation or make commitments on behalf of the organisation if you do not have the authority.
- Keep a record of discussions with the public, just to make sure no one tries to take advantage of the 'new the face' behind the counter.
- Be proactive in helping others, but do not push.
- Prepare a performance plan (after a short time) for yourself in consultation with your mentor or supervisor to make sure you understand what is expected of you and what you expect of yourself (this also applies if the organisation does not have a process for identifying personal goals and measurement tools).
- Watch and learn, learn and watch, and watch and learn.

3.3 Organisations

We usually work within a corporate culture or our work defines our corporate culture. Whether part of a large government or consulting office or as a sole practitioner or sole planner in a small agency, we reside in an organisational culture. That culture is perceived in a particular fashion from within and without the organisation. Organisations often develop a clear sense of purpose, direction and identity. Others struggle to gain a sense of themselves. The key is this: **organisations are what they are, not what they say they are!** That statement has profound implications for organisations that believe they are viewed and act in one way but are seen to act in another way (by employees or those outside looking in). Many organisations promote an identity that creates an illusion. That illusion can attract new employees. But the illusion is not reality and the new employee may find herself in a situation where everything that was said about the organisation by the organisation (beware web sites where anything can be said or promoted!) was a distortion. In such situations, the new employee needs to assess the risks of staying against the risks of an early exit.

Planners need to find a ‘home’ in order to effectively affect change. ‘Home’ may mean working as a single practitioner with associations and links to like minded other individuals or firms. It may be as a single practitioner in a small municipal office and association with other professionals and staff, or it may mean being part of a large organisation of planners or other professionals. In each of those situations, the planner needs to connect to others to have real effect. Flying solo simply does not cut it over the long term for the planner, client/community or profession. Organisations should provide sustenance to grow, explore, research and complete projects in a continuing series of innovative and stimulating environments. Organisation fatigue can lead to professional fatigue. By its very nature, planning is a constantly evolving profession. It must be nurtured to thrive (simple survival should not be an option). Healthy organisations are critical to the creation of a nurturing environment. If your organisation does not nurture your profession, it is probably worth considering: (1) your ability to make changes to the organisation or (2) your future in that environment. Think about it!

The following describes some general organisational characteristics that may help new employees ‘judge’ a potential employer.

3.3.1 Organisational types

Many local government organisations have a common look to their structure and function. Most have mission statements. Most have a hierarchy for administrative purposes, usually with a CAO at the lead reporting to Council. Federal, provincial and territorial governments have similar structures and line functions and reporting systems. NGO’s have more flexibility as they usually report to volunteer boards. Consulting offices vary greatly, depending upon the corporate culture and ideals of the senior people.

When approaching an organisation for employment, you need to consider the following:

- How does the organisation present itself? Is it welcoming? Do the employees seem genuinely committed to the organisation? How do the employees interact with each other?

- Is the material and verbal description of the organisation consistent with the actions of the organisation? (Note: this may not be possible to judge except from inside the organisation).
- What does the hierarchy look like? If they tell you it is a 'flat organisation' with lots of individual accountability, ask for a description of accountability and examples of how that might affect you.
- What is the reporting and decision-making hierarchy? Ask for an organisational structure chart.
- Who will have the final say in your hiring? This will tell a lot about the actual power base in the organisation and the degree to which there is accountability and trust.
- If you know someone on the inside, ask that person for his assessment to some of these questions.

3.3.1.1 Government organisations

Government structures have changed over the past 15 years, partly in response to downsizing and changes to management philosophy. For the most part, gone are the days of the narrow top-down line function approach where each employee was placed in a cog. In the old days, employees had narrow job descriptions, limited access to decision-makers and isolated terms of reference. Now, many governmental organisations have developed team approaches in which a group of employees with varied levels of experience come together to work on assignments as equals, working with a team leader rather than reporting to a supervisor. These rapidly deployed teams offer an exciting opportunity to work on a variety of projects with a variety of people. Others have established 'customer friendly' approaches at the counter and in meetings.

A key ingredient to governmental organisational success is the CAO and the role and function displayed through action. While a CAO will likely be only with an organisation for a limited period of time rather than an entire career (as occurred in former times), the CAO can have a long term affect upon an organisation's character and makeup (i.e., they may have been responsible for building a dynamic highly regarded team or they may have instituted and welcomed organisational change). The CAO will (should) set the tone and culture. Are they a team player? Do they readily seek advice from staff? Do they have an inclusive style? Many organisations are first judged by the attributes of their CAO.

Many government organisations still display a competitiveness (in some cases it is outright hostility) towards other line departments, such as sometimes exists between engineering and planning, or between finance and engineering and planning, or between forestry and parks. Some CAO's actually promote internal competition and disharmony! These organisations should be avoided.

One way to judge a government organisation's approach is to get to know individuals who have dealt with the organisation (e.g., consultants, interest groups, developers). Find out what their experience was like looking from the outside in.

3.3.1.2 Consulting firms

The greatest organisational variability occurs within the private sector where each firm decides for itself the approach it will take to organisational structure and style. Firms may be one person outfits or consist of many hundred. The approach will vary within each.

Many single person consulting offices (albeit not all) have been formed by disillusioned public sector or private sector professionals seeking autonomy and variety in work projects. The one person office is a major challenge in terms of being a catch all for administrative needs, client development and servicing, production and teaming with other consultants. The rewards (financial and personal) can be well worth the extra effort, especially if the consultant has corporate tax status, profit sharing with the household partner and access to support from a few other firms. As technology continues to increase the individual's ability to produce high quality work, network easily with clients and maintain accounting records, more and more individuals may turn to the single person office format. A future trend, as well, may see single person firms forming strategic relationships with other firms while maintaining the advantages of a separate practice.

The typical consulting practice has organisational structure in the form of staff, owners or partners and clients. How those groups relate to each other provides an excellent insight into the workings of the consulting firm. A hierarchical approach would restrict staff and client contact. Staff would be assigned work through the partner. Presentations to the client would be made by the partner, whether the partner completed the work or others did the work. Other firms might opt for a different approach in which staff has clients for which they are primarily responsible for serving and project managers who are responsible for managing specific projects. Partners and staff would have similar client and project roles. Corporate decisions would be the responsibility of partners (with or without staff input).

Usually the larger the consulting practice, the larger the bureaucracy required to keep it running. Large consulting organisations have payroll commitments that represent in the order of 80% of their fixed costs. The machine needs to be feed. An organisation that is unable to invoice and collect payment in a timely manner is doomed to bank financing which, in high interest times, can be a disaster. Experience suggests that there are trigger points for consulting firms:

- 1-3 persons: can handle all needs without financial/secretary support staff;
- 4-30 persons: can manage with one secretary and one financial person³⁸;
- over 30 the organisation changes dramatically in style and operation;
- over 100 and firms take on a different character and style to meet the commitments of the organisation.

In each of these consulting practice environments, it will be critical that a business plan is completed, including an overall strategic look at the firm and its environment, a marketing plan, a financial plan, and a human resources or personal plan.

When exploring consulting firms, try and determine the actual method of operation as compared to the one described by senior people. There could be quite a difference, depending upon where one resides within the organisation. Companies that demonstrate their willingness to share decision-making and power with junior people offer a special opportunity for young planners.

³⁸ My personal bias is towards firms of 12 to 20. The ability to focus on project work, build quality teams and avoid overhead is significant.

3.4 Becoming a manager

Many planners have a history of moving up through an organisation over time. Some end up as senior managers and, increasingly, others are being appointed Chief Administrative Officers or Chief Executive Officers. For planners interested in a challenging career, there is considerable attraction to becoming a manager. Many move into management positions without receiving formal training in management practice³⁹. The following examines manager issues and needs.

- Planners have a set of skills that contribute to their role as managers, including strategic planning, organisational, visionary, conflict resolution, communication and team building skills;
- Many public sector planners have developed a solid sense of the nuances of public sector life, particularly the politics of place and working relationships with councillors or Ministers of the Crown;
- Many private sector planners have developed a grasp of the needs for the organisation to be built on team work and vision;

Managers need to:

- Learn interpersonal skills, including interpersonal communication, conflict resolution, and team building;
- Learn to manage teams not just individuals;
- Encourage vision and embody a long term view or strategic approach;
- Manage decisions as a team to ensure consistent and thorough implementation;
- Be seen to be decisive while listening and acting on advice;
- Seek out trouble spots or issues and address them;
- Set an example (in attitude, approach, balance of work and family);
- Go to the wall with their staff on matters of ethics or fundamental virtues of practice;
- Balance the enthusiasm of staff with the realities of politics and place.

Many managers are appointed to manage from inside an organisation. Others inherit an organisation and staff through appointment from outside. Each method of appointment can have positive and negative aspects.

In the case of an externally appointed manager, a number of issues may arise:

- What if the existing staff and the new manager do not appear to have a common purpose?
- What if some of the staff believes they or someone else in the organisation should have been appointed manager?
- What if the manager is believed to have a particular management style that may not fit with the previous management style?
- What if rumours begin to swirl about the new manager?

In every case, the manager needs to address issues quickly by meeting with staff individually and collectively to talk about their personal and collective goals, to get a 'lay of the land'; to

³⁹ Universities are starting to respond. For instance, Royal Roads University in Victoria has developed a highly regarded and responsive to professional needs MBA that offers 'learners' the chance to combine continued work with a part-time MBA.

seek advice on key issues, opportunities, and needs, but **never** to discuss or talk about other staff. The first few weeks are critical to the restoration or development of confidence in all of the parties. New managers should not simply assume everything will be fine or that they can simply step into the new job and assume life will continue without interruption. New managers should be diligent in seeking ways to build confidence in their abilities and style. Dialogue and action are the best ways of demonstrating capability and building support. Such dialogue should include a joint team plan to address the next few months while the new manager fits into the organisation and begins to learn its structure, nuance and internal workings. A joint vision should be identified after some time 'in the saddle' when the new manager has a sense of the scope of the work and organisational milieu.

In the case of an internally appointed manager, a few issues may arise:

- Were other potential internal candidates overlooked or not selected?
- Is the organisation going through a major change?
- Is the organisation resistant to changes that you feel are important?

Since the manager is familiar with the organisation, she should be 'up to speed' on the organisation's goals and nuances. Less time will be needed to assess the staff situation. But the manager must address those questions by meeting with all staff in a group session to identify a collective vision for the future. The manager should meet with those who were not selected to ensure that they are still committed to the team. Where discomfort is apparent, the new manager should work with the concerned staff person to build a sense of trust and positive role for the affected person. And, in some situations, where the by-passed person is creating disharmony, helping the affected person recognise that it may be time for that person to apply their strengths elsewhere.

There are a number of benefits that one should expect from acceptance of a management position. Those benefits could include:

- Increased autonomy in and accountability for decision-making;
- Increased ability to influence decisions and contribute to quality of life debates;
- Opportunity to help build a team with common goals and ideals;
- Opportunity to mentor staff and assist them in their professional growth;
- Ability to apply leadership skills;
- Peer recognition.

3.5 Developing a career

Planners have a variety of options to apply their skills, including public and private practice, research institutions, and NGO's. Some choose a particular career path with the view that they will remain in that particular area of practice or sector of planning for most of their career. But events conspire to affect our choices, including our career path.

Everyone will have their own particular recipe for fulfilling their career plans. Here are a few of the author's thoughts:

- **Be prepared for change.** The changes that have occurred over the past 25 years have been staggering. From the days of a secretary who took hand written notes and reports and typed them into an original report that could be reproduced to today's desktop publishing capability, planners have been affected by technological change. But there have been more fundamental changes, such as societal views, role of government, role of the professional and development trends. This suggests that the career plan identified upon graduation may be superseded by events of life and profession. So, be ready to adapt and evolve.
- **Be open to change.** Issues continue to evolve. Planners need to be open to new ideas, methods, processes and tools. Planners should embrace change and modify their practice accordingly while retaining the fundamental precepts and theories upon which they built their career. Resistance to change suggests that one's career has stalled.
- **Consider a mixed experience career.** Planners that remain in one area of practice or in one work environment limit their potential for growth and experience. Planners are well advised to blend a career in the private and public sectors to gain an appreciation for each and take life lessons from each and apply it to broaden their practice.
- **Participate in the life of your affiliate and CIP.** Planners are members of a fragile profession. Common commitment to its ideals and goals assists the profession and strengthens one's career. One can't be committed to the profession without being active in its institutions.
- **Network and network some more.** During our careers we are constantly exposed to new people, new events and new situations. The contacts we make in those associations can have a significant influence on our future career path by opening doors for us that would otherwise be closed. Networks offer a backdrop for advice and support. They also provide a source for information and career development.
- **Keep track of your work.** Our practice may evolve over time and a record of our work (reports, photographs) are important sources of who we are and what we do.
- **Take time to do the best work possible.** In the end, we are judged not by what we said we would do but by what we did. This is the litmus test for all of us. There are times when taking shortcuts seems reasonable, almost plausible. But shortcuts can lead to inferior quality and inferior quality leads to career-wilt. Do the best work possible within the constraints provided.

3.5.1 Starting in the public sector

Many of us started or will start our planning careers in the public sector. It is there that planners are able to acquire a range of skills or develop a specialisation that allows them to grow in their practice. Work in the public sector carries with it a considerable degree of responsibility as the beginning planner deals with public interest issues. While such work can be intimidating it can also be incredibly rewarding. Working in the public sector will likely require a good deal of patience as the starting planner is often placed in a narrow task role (such as counter work, development application review, data collection). But those roles can sometimes be short-lived, especially if the planner has proven her worth. They can also prove to be important introductions to the frontline work of planners. Frequently new employees may be asked to assist in a new project or emerging topic and gain early experience in presenting to Council or Committee. There are a few key points that beginning planners may want to consider to help them ease into planning practice in the public sector:

- Take every assignment as an important job that should be done well. This applies to what may appear to be mundane tasks. You will very likely be given increasingly varied and interesting work as you prove your capability.
- Allow for a good period of time to pass before seeking 'more stimulating' work. Asking for more interesting work too early is a sign that you may not be prepared to 'put in your time'.
- Make sure you understand your role and what is expected of you.
- Ensure that you have a mentor/supervisor, that there is no grey area about to whom you report. You do not want to get caught between a power struggle or between two 'bosses' both of whom may have too much work for one person to complete.
- Keep a close watch on the action around you. You can learn a lot by being at the edge of interesting issues and discussions. But don't offer your advice until you have developed a solid working relationship with your peers and senior staff, unless you have a clear knowledge of the topic or have been asked for your two cents worth.
- While you may want to 'pitch in' you should remember that most public sector offices are unionised and you could be seen to be encroaching on someone's job.
- Attend social events, coffee breaks and other opportunities to become part of the group and make sure you select the 'right' group! (Mostly kidding here,) but there can be factions some of which may be the disgruntled ones whose interest is not that of the whole. You should be wise to office politics if that is the case.
- Try and get around to meet all the staff and ask if they would spend a few minutes with you to talk about their knowledge of the history of the organisation and their job. This provides you with some good inside knowledge and also conveys to others that you are interested in them.
- Treat everyone with respect. A new degree does not equate to many years of front line experience by those without a degree.
- The accounting and secretarial pool often control considerable power. Don't upset them! Fill in their forms (and smile).
- Don't expect great working space. Many public sector offices are crammed and jammed.
- Keep your thoughts to yourself at least initially.
- Recognise that offices have a culture that has evolved over a period of time. As a recent addition, you should try and fit into that culture, rather than try and change it.

Within a matter of months, you will likely begin to feel comfortable within the organisation. If you don't, then, you may want to consider another location or another position within the organisation.

3.5.2 Starting in the private sector

Many planners move into the private sector after gaining experience in the public sector. For those who enter private practice directly from university, there are a few points that may be worth noting. Many of these points are common to the public sector:

- Take every assignment as an important job that should be done well. This applies to what may appear to be mundane tasks. You will very likely be given increasingly varied and interesting work as you prove your capability.
- Allow for a good period of time to pass before seeking 'more stimulating' work. Asking for more interesting work too early is a sign that you may not be prepared to 'put in your time' or support the work of the company.
- Make sure you understand your role and what is expected of you.
- Ensure that you have a mentor/supervisor who is able to spend time with you.
- Keep a close watch on the action around you. You can learn a lot by being at the edge of interesting issues and discussions. But don't offer your advice until you have developed a solid working relationship with your peers and senior staff, unless you have a clear knowledge of the topic or have been asked for your two cents.
- Keep a good record of your time by logging projects in a daily diary.
- Attend social events, coffee breaks and other opportunities to become part of the group.
- Help to clean up the coffee room, especially after yourself.
- Avoid waiting for others to do the menial tasks, do them yourself!
- Get to know a few of the partners. These are the people who make the decisions in the company.
- Try and get around to meet all the staff and ask if they would spend a few minutes with you to talk about their knowledge of the history of the organisation and their job. This provides you with some good inside knowledge and also conveys to others that you are interested in them.
- Treat everyone with respect. A new degree does not equate to many years of front line experience by those without a degree.
- The accounting and CAD group often control considerable power. Don't upset them! Fill in their forms (and smile). Sit down with the CAD people and work beside them from time to time to get a good sense of their capability and to form a team work atmosphere.
- Don't expect great working space. Many private sector offices use an open studio concept. The advantages (part of a team, sharing in information, easy casual banter) of such space outweighs the disadvantages (lack of privacy).
- Keep your thoughts to yourself initially.
- Recognise that offices have a culture that has evolved over the period of time. As a recent addition, you should try and fit into that culture, rather than try and change it.

Once you have spent a few months in the office, you should feel comfortable to begin to establish your own personal stamp on your practice. If you don't feel comfortable, you may want to explore new opportunities elsewhere.

3.6 So you want to start a consulting company!

Many consulting companies have come and gone. The ones that survive do so for a number of reasons. Here are some pointers to help you develop a successful consulting practice⁴⁰. This review will focus on a partnership⁴¹ model.

- Do you want to start on your own? Or, do you want to team with others? This is a critical and fundamental question. Although you may wish to start on your own, you may discover quickly that you are much more suited to a team environment. If you really know that you will not function well on your own, you should look around. Is there a new emerging firm that you can help to build or *someone of like mind and whom you know well* (or others whose judgement you trust) and whom you know wants to enter consulting as well?
- A consulting partnership is like a marriage. It has many of the commitments of that institution. Therefore, while a partnership of like minds can be an important and critical element in the long-term success of a consulting company, it brings with it its own set of unique challenges. Are the potential partners compatible over the long term, especially when the going gets tough? Do you and your potential partners share common goals and views about consulting?
- Starting a partnership should begin with an agreement that assumes it may not succeed or that it may continue until one of the partners retires or gets hit by a bus! There should be a buy/sell clause that allows for a reasonable transfer (that includes timing, goodwill calculation, non-spousal interest). Retain a good reasonable lawyer and agree on an accountant early on.
- Think about a partnership of companies. Such an arrangement can have significant tax savings. That is a partnership in the fullest sense of the word. But a partnership of companies will only function for a limited number of companies (probably to a maximum of 6 to 8 partners).
- What is the likely success of the partner discipline mix? The market is a funny place. Forming a partnership with someone who has the same skill set is probably not a good idea. Variety of skills is important in order to remain flexible in the face of changing markets. Some successful mixes have proven to be a planner and a urban designer/landscape architect/architect, or a planner and a market specialist, or a planner and an engineer.
- Develop a business plan and marketing plan that sets out some clear measurable goals. The goals should be realistic (not too aggressive and not too timid). Identify your interim cash flow needs. Focus on your strengths. Make the following decisions based upon the business and market plans:
 - Meet with your banker to review your plans. During start-up and the hard times your banker can be your best friend. But, take long term aim to build up a cash flow that reduces your reliance upon the bank. Until you do expect to give your personal guarantee!

⁴⁰ The list includes my own biases. I ask those who disagree to forgive that self-indulgence, but I know what worked and did not work for me.

⁴¹ That is a partnership of companies where decision-making and liability is shared.

- Selecting an office location is important, but should not be done until you are in a position to move forward with the practice. You need to determine your target market and image you want to convey to reach that market. For instance, funky may suit work for young developers, NGO's and other consultants, it may not suit large private corporations and public organisations. But funky is usually less expensive and establishes an interesting image. Clients often forgive funky, particularly for a start-up practice. Avoid the suburbs, unless you can locate in an interesting building or location that provides a non-strip mall feel. Planners should walk the talk.
- Support staff that complements the mix of skills will be needed almost immediately. Choosing the right support staff is critical, especially in a small firm in which the partners will be frequently out of the office getting work.
- Create an interesting office environment. Create a studio space where you and your partner(s) can collaborate. Avoid unnecessary expenses at the start. Think about using doors for desks.
- Prepare interesting business cards, web sites and promotion brochures. Each should complement the other. Brochures should be developed in a flexible manner so projects can be added to indicate the scope and type of work completed.
- Work hard to get on proposal call lists. Focus your efforts on the work that fits your skill set and business goals. Approach each project with enthusiasm and energy. You want to build a practice that is based upon long term clients and repeat work, rather than constantly writing proposals. But you have to start somewhere, so be prepared to do your share of proposal writing at the start of your consulting practice.
- Take time to enjoy your success. Think about a 'beer' Friday with staff to reflect on each week as you move forward. Have fun!

In addition to the foregoing, there are some other 'side points' that those entering the consulting world should consider:

- Don't disparage your competition. It's not nice and its unethical!
- Don't mislead clients about the work you are capable of doing. It too is unethical.
- Don't mislead the public or public representatives. Yes, it too is unethical.
- Don't accept assignments or remuneration for projects that are unethical. This may seem obvious, but new firms can be really challenged when a large project comes by that has ethical undertones. Learn to say no.
- Be honest with your partner. Share concerns and issues. Don't let them fester.
- Make sure you share equally in decisions affecting the partnership, even if the ownership is not in equal portions.

Building a successful practice is an incredible experience. Good luck!

4. Ethics and Standards

Ethics is the central element in all of this discussion. Ethics is the crucible, the fulcrum for our work. It positions us within the milieu of the varied interests and needs of our clients, the publics and the political nature of planning. It is our anchor in the stormy seas of practice.

Howe (1994) identified four ethical principles:

- honesty, in the legal sense;
- duties of justice, including the obligations to provide independent professional advice and to be responsive to the public;
- the duty to be accountable to elected officials; and
- the duty to serve the public interest.

Saul (2001: 66) believes that “ethics is central to the way we see ourselves and our society. Responsible individualism is, to a great extent, an expression of ethics.” He notes that:

“ethics is not romantic. It is perhaps the least romantic of all human qualities. It has a steely edge which makes its existential nature impossible to ignore. That steely edge is there precisely because ethics is down-to-earth and practical, a matter of daily habit.”

CIP adopted a Statement of Values and Code of Professional Conduct in 1994. It indicates that a code of professional conduct has three main elements:

- the planners’ responsibility to the public interest;
- the planners’ responsibility to clients and employers; and
- the planners’ responsibility to the profession.

Planners would be wise to ensure that their practice respects the Code of Professional Conduct and that their work is rooted in the anchor of ethical practice. Some CIP Affiliates such as OPPI have adopted their own Code of Conduct (Appendix 1).

The nature of practice suggests that planners will be tested on their ethics from time to time. For instance:

- a public sector planner may be approached to help to move a development proposal forward by:
 - providing normal advice to the proponent on the approval approach. No ethical issue arises.
 - providing normal advice outside of the office (at a lunch or event) on the approval approach. No ethical issue arises if the discussion does not go beyond normal advice. But, at this point the question of perceived breach could occur. And the planner should buy her own lunch.
 - receiving favours in exchange for support of development approval. An ethical issue arises.

A private sector planner may be approached by a group to oppose a particular development by:

- providing advice on how the approval process works, critiquing the proposed development and advocating before decision-makers. No ethical issue arises as long as the private planner has not misconstrued facts.

- developing an opposing argument that is not founded on defensible facts. An ethical issue arises.

Case Study #15: Developing an Ethical Practice

Public and private sector planners alike face issues of ethics on a regular basis.

A public sector senior planner worked in a local government office that promoted development. Previous councils and the administrator had encouraged helpful processes that would speed up development permit review. The local development community got to know the senior planner and came to expect easy access to over the counter advice. That approach became to be seen by some other developers, especially those from outside the area, as too friendly and helpful for a select few. Council changed and the senior planner came under scrutiny. There was a growing unease with the processes used. The senior planner eventually resigned. Were the actions of the senior planner unethical?

In the scheme of things, no criminal acts had been committed. The senior planner believed he/she had been following 'instructions' or 'expectations'. But there was a view that something was wrong; that the rules of the game were not the same for everyone. That perception of unfairness was sufficient for the parties to part company.

A private sector planner believed that his First Nation clients were getting bad advice from a group who appeared to have a political agenda. It appeared that this other group wanted to terminate the benefits of a signed agreement by offering several millions of dollars over the short term so that senior governments could be absolved of potential hundreds of millions of dollars in claims over the long term. And, it became apparent that some of the First Nation clients had been won over by the other group. While there was no evidence of wrong-doing, there was a sense on the part of the private sector planner that 'something was wrong'. The private sector planner had two choices: (1) attempt to raise concerns publicly in the absence of hard evidence or (2) raise concerns privately in a meeting with the First Nation and some others. The private sector planner choose the latter, partly because he felt that the First Nations communities needed to determine their own future action relative to their needs, their agreement and associated compensation.

Lessons:

Ethics is not always a straight forward consideration.

- 1. In the case of the public sector planner, he/she thought he/she was following unwritten instructions and expectations of Council. The senior planner should have ensured that all development approvals were treated and seen to be treated (for instance through record keeping of each and every discussion/meeting) in a similar and timely manner. In this case no unethical behaviour was found, but the perception of unfairness was enough to cause the resignation to occur.*
- 2. In the case of the private sector planner, several years passed to confirm that several of the communities would have been better off waiting to seek full compensation. Without adequate evidence, however, it becomes impossible to raise concerns publicly that cannot be substantiated.*

4.1 Challenges

To state the obvious, we live in very challenging times; times of change, uncertainty and complexity.

A new set of world thinkers and philosophers, many of whom are Canadian, such as the late George Grant, Thomas Homer-Dixon, Michael Ignatieff, John Ralston Saul, and Charles Taylor, have examined our world and culture to identify the issues and solutions facing society. Generally, they have captured the essence of the dilemma as follows:

We live in a world in which western democracy (read: individualism) and capitalism have created a set of processes and expectations that are not always compatible with societal values, cultural norms and technological innovation. Professionals are singled out as being part of the problem, as gatekeepers of information, users of jargon and purveyors of complex solutions. Compounding those process issues are concerns about the implications of uncontrolled growth and consumption as each relates to the well being of ecological, societal and cultural, and economic systems. And as Homer-Dixon (2001) notes, there is too often increasingly an “Ingenuity Gap” between what we need to accomplish and our ability to get the job done, especially as science, technology, issues and solutions become more complex.

Charles Taylor has lead much of the debate about society and our place in it as members of community, citizens and individuals. He has captured the “situation” by stating that:

What our situation seems to call for is a complex, many-levelled struggle, intellectual, spiritual, and political, in which the debates in the public arena interlink with those in a host of institutional settings (1991: 120).

Planners will be challenged in how we respond to those situations, how we encourage considered debate and how we promote change.

Perhaps, it is the “Ingenuity Gap” that poses some of our greatest challenges for society and planners. Homer-Dixon considers the implications of the ingenuity gap in relation to our area of particular interest when he writes:

The amount of ingenuity needed to run (a city) system is, of course, not the same as the amount needed to create it, because at any one time an enormous array of routines and standard operating procedures guides people’s actions. But our urban system, with its countless elements, is the product of the incremental accretion of human ingenuity. It was created, over time, by millions of small ideas and a few big ones (2001:22).

Homer-Dixon identifies two types of ingenuity: technical ingenuity and social ingenuity. Technical ingenuity helps us solve problems in our physical world, such as requirements for shelter and transportation. Social ingenuity relates to the challenges facing the social world, such as economic, political and social affairs. It is obvious that, as planners (and unlike many professionals), we have a vested interest in both technical and social ingenuity. In particular, Homer-Dixon notes that “social ingenuity . . . is a critical prerequisite to technical ingenuity.”

He continues:

I soon discovered that many of the critical obstacles occur not when the ingenuity is generated (there is usually no shortage of good ideas) but when people try to implement new ideas. The biggest obstacle is often political competition among powerful groups, which stalls or prevents key institutional reform (2001:23).

The Ingenuity Gap reminds us that we are increasingly short on solutions that work. We are good at analysing problems (greenhouse gas production, energy consumption, land consumption, loss of farmland, habitat destruction, waste production, air pollution, reduced economic efficiency, central city decline, cost of the failure of current institutions, social implications of current lifestyles, loss of community and decreasing sense of place). But, we are poor at implementing solutions. Allow me to repeat Homer-Dixon, "*The biggest obstacle is often political competition among powerful groups, which stalls or prevents key institutional reform*" (2001:23) (my emphasis).

Homer-Dixon's thoughts resonate with planners. Our challenge, as noted in some of my own research, is compounded by the political nature of planning. Planning is also susceptible to the rigours and challenges of the politics of place, for it is the arena of much of our practice.

But there is a disturbing tone in much of post-modern writing. For instance, Saul (2001) raises substantive and troubling questions about the management of society and issues affecting the well-being of society and the environment. He scorns the managerial classes. He scorns scientific rationality. He scorns the processes in support of, and that focus on, certainty in what he believes is an uncertain future. He scorns the likes of professions like ours (and by implication planners) for our attachment to order. How do we respond? Are we beyond redemption?

I believe that Homer-Dixon, Saul and Taylor are correct in much of what they have to say. Our responsibility as planners is to take heed, to re-think our assumptions and to explore new ways of doing things. While we do reflect much of what Saul despises, we also are a profession that promotes much of what he proposes: community discourse, context, analysis of complexity, and integration. We need to recognise that "the examined life makes virtue of uncertainty. It celebrates doubt" (Saul 1995: 198). We need to make use of processes and tools that seek answers while recognising that societal and environmental issues are complex and deserve answers that offer integrated solutions to complex problems. In particular, we need to understand that "the virtue of uncertainty is not a comfortable idea, but then a citizen-based democracy is built upon participation, which is the very expression of permanent discomfort" (Saul 1995: 195).

While much of the reading suggests that the issues are immense, most if not all of the aforementioned authors, offer qualified hope. But, unlike the philosophers of the past, our modern day philosophers appear to be setting time limits for action. Many suggest that change is needed within the next decade. During the latter half of 2001, most of the debate has focused upon one dimension of the effects of what Ken Wilber (2000) calls the "the human consciousness project." In A Theory of Everything, Wilber (2000) explores the need for a "worldcentric Civilisation" that emerges from egocentric to ethnocentric to a worldcentric perspective with "all of its perilous ups and downs."

He notes:

a worldcentric Civilization is not a uniform, imperialistic, homogenized mush, but a rich tapestry of unity-in-diversity, with as much emphasis on diversity as on the unity. What it does not do is champion only ethnocentric diversity, which leads to all the horrors – fragmentation, alienation, and war (2000: 126).

Wilber's call for a broader inclusive society; one in which diversity is championed offers hope for planners who are familiar with such situations. Planners have been constantly faced with the challenges of seeking agreement, addressing diversity of interest and placemaking. From the days of Thomas Adams, who faced political challenges of his own to our current time, some 100 years later, we are faced with the need to marry our professional training with our communities' vision of the future. That discourse will be at times frustrating, overwhelming and disillusioning. But it will also offer the opportunity to shape our communities, our society and our future. It provides us with the penultimate challenge: avoiding the Ingenuity Gap and offering concrete workable alternatives to a world desperate for understanding and hope through action.

I urge all of us to examine our own lives and commitment to addressing Maurice Strong's fading view: "(that) planning has become one of the most challenging and most necessary pursuits of the modern era".

4.1.1 Public Sector Challenges

The public sector has experienced significant challenges and change over the past thirty years, from times of apparent bottomless financial resources to planning initiatives to more recent cutbacks that threaten the ability to manage urban issues and resource sector transformation. The public sector planner faces a crisis of confidence as cutbacks and the politics of place meld into an overwhelming array of challenges and issues.

Once again, the public sector planner will need to re-evaluate her role and determine how best to address the role of public adviser in an atmosphere of public apathy and distrust of the professional while moving to a world of individualism and corporatism. (as so eloquently described by John Ralston Saul: 1995).

There is nothing new about bureaucracies – as opposed to management. Since the Roman Empire they have tended to grow uncontrollably and to lose purpose. This is not evil. It's just a characteristic.

What is new is the devotion of the whole elite to the bureaucratic ethic – that is, to management- as if it were a primary skill. This is the product of corporatism. It is what happens when you rank reason and method over content.

The result is that those elites which should counter-balance the bureaucracy, do not. Instead, time is wasted on fights between the interest groups: public versus private; regional versus national; national versus international; all blaming each other for whatever it is they say is wrong. Whatever they claim, these fights are rarely over policy. Corporatism is about interests and the division of those interests. Their fights are over who gets what. (1995: 126)

As Saul (1995: 183) notes, “most of what we reward works against the public good and most of what we discourage or even punish would work in its favour.” The public servant planner is caught in this void, this nether-nether land of ill-advised decision constructs.

There exists a growing expectation (largely an unrealistic one) that the public sector must adjust at all costs. That is both imprudent and unwise. The public sector has a long history of important service and innovation in the planning profession. It was the public sector that addressed the ills of the late 19th century and early 20th century. It was the public sector that adapted to the demands of the post-war 1950’s and ‘60’s. It was the public sector, in cooperation with NGO’s, that raised alarm bells about global warming. It will be the public sector that ensures that our future remains healthy for all our citizens. If we think that others will somehow take the lead, we are fooling ourselves and losing time, valuable time. The public sector needs a strong advocate at the highest level in Ottawa and our provincial and territorial capitals to recognise that planners and planning is essential to the long term ecological, economic and social health of our country. Maurice Strong got it right. So too, must our senior governments. To ignore the public sector role in planning for the future is to ignore our collective responsibility to our country, our cities and communities, our rural and resource lands and our environment.

4.1.2 Private Sector Challenges

Like the public sector planner, the private sector is also caught in the currents of present ambivalence and distrust of the professional. As Saul (1995:172) notes:

It is therefore a matter of inserting the citizen into the system in whatever way we can. And letting the mechanisms of criticism combined with high levels of involvement take effect.

While we often think such a role is within the exclusive realm of the public sector, it is my belief that the private sector planner can offer significant hope in this regard, for “in a corporatist society democracy is formally discouraged. It is marginalized into volunteerism” (Saul, 1995:173). The private sector planner could play a major role in invigorating public debate in private projects and in turn facilitating healthy debate or, in the words of Saul (1995: 195) “the examined life makes a virtue of uncertainty.”

The private sector depends upon clients for direct income. That linkage is seen by some as one that taints the relationship and creates a potential situation where the private sector planner is seen to be ‘ beholdin’ to the client, and ignores or stifles public debate and criticism. While there may be some limited truth to that notion, it is in fact much more of a working partnership in which the private sector planner works with the client (and that could be a public, private, or non-profit client) to achieve mutually supported goals that, ideally, have public support and merit. This notion of partnership and mutual goals is an important one that bears further discussion.

The challenge for the private sector planner is this: how to ensure that the needs and aspirations of the client fit with the needs and imperatives of the public. To what degree does a private sector planner ‘compromise’ some basic personal values in order to influence a client to change direction and initiate a different process or product that supports broader needs? When is the line crossed? Who decides?

Private sector planners, unlike most public sector planners, have the luxury of choosing with whom they intend to work. Reality and experience suggests that the need to choose does not happen very frequently, partly because like seek like. But there are instances when the private sector planner must simply say 'no' to private sector work. 'No' may be for a number of reasons, including disagreement in approach and philosophy or conflict of interest. The private sector planner must always be ready to apply an ethical equation to a potential job.

In the bigger scheme of things, the private sector planner has much to offer in identifying and implementing long term solutions that commit us to the well-being of ecological, economic and social issues facing the country and its communities. The biggest challenge for the private sector will be to recognise that its value will rest in collaboration with a reinvigorated public sector. For a weak public planning sector will only contribute to a weakened private planning sector.

4.1.3 The Commodification of planning

The design professions face another challenge, particularly those resting in the private sector. The increasing challenge relates to the commodification of design practice. Commodification is emerging out of the globalisation of practice –the increase in large international design firms- with concomitant potential loss of regional-based design, and rise of international 'star' designers (starchitects by some accounts: See Planning January 2002). The scale of excessively large firms causes some to ponder the fate of accountability, responsibility and to whom, and designer as merchant. Planning must be vigilant to ensure that it does not become a managerial-based profession rather than an innovative, problem-solving profession.

Commodification is a potential emerging challenge for the professions and for the communities affected by their work. It needs further exploration.

4.1.4 When to say no

There is no simple tool for each of us to indicate when we should back away from an assignment. Each situation will vary. But there are some common elements we may wish to consider:

- Is the assignment unethical;
- Is there some question about the legitimacy of the assignment;
- Is the client who the client purports to be;
- Is government, Council or Committee legally mandated to address the issue;
- Is there a past history that taints the enterprise;
- Is there a commitment that can not be met;
- Is there an overtone to the assignment that will compromise the public good;
- Is the success of the assignment dependent upon questionable data;
- Is there public perception that the assignment is 'cooked'.

Each of us must be alert and apply our own judgement in the knowledge that we may be judged by others.

Case Study #16: Saying No

The issues were significant and the potential consulting income considerably over 3 figures. The problem, however, became obvious almost immediately. A consulting group, who wanted to contract a planner who was well respected by and well known to a number of First Nation communities, was retained by third party to bring 'resolution' to a number of long outstanding issues. The planner was asked to assist in a process that could ultimately lead to the resolution of issues that would have enormous benefit for senior governments and could have potential long term benefits to affected communities. The planner attended a meeting to get a 'lay of the land', including a sense of the consulting groups approach, its mandate and potential implications of the process for the affected communities. During the meeting the planner's instincts and intuition told him that all was not right. And his presence at the meeting appeared to give credibility to the senior government position. On the air charter back to the city he pondered his involvement and realised that he was 'being bought' to sell a concept that might not be in the best interests of the communities. His choice was clear . . . resign from the assignment immediately. (That choice, that instinct/intuition proved to be correct).

Lessons:

We need to be ever vigilant for issues that cross ethical bounds and make choices that reflect "an expression of responsible individualism" (Saul 2001: 85).

Sometimes the 'selling of our soul' can be tempted by significant financial 'reward', promotion or other 'favours'. We need to refuse such temptations and honour our commitment to ourselves, our communities and the environment.

4.1.5 When being right is wrong

The nature of practice places us in constantly changing circumstances. As a result, we may find ourselves in the middle of situations that are uncommon to us and cause us worry and angst. One such situation is when we believe that everything we have come to know about a particular issue or problem and everything we have learned as professionals tells us that a particular answer or solution is warranted, yet others tell us we are wrong. Such a situation would not be the first time that professionals have held one view and the public another, only to recognise years later that the public was right (e.g., the effects of slum clearing).

Experience suggests that, when a cross-section of the public or other disciplines (i.e., not a single voice or narrow interest) believe that we are wrong, when we think we are right, then we are probably wrong! The point is to be open to being wrong.

Case Study #17: On being wrong

In a city of 60,000 people, there was a desire to plan and design a new neighbourhood of 5,000 people using emerging New Urbanism principles. An innovative plan was completed (including mixed use, mix of densities, narrow lots, higher densities, greenways, pedestrian-oriented streets) and included narrow local streets with parking on one side and two lanes of traffic. But Council was of the firm belief that the local street scheme would fail. Notwithstanding a major presentation, debate and discussion with Council, the proposed narrow local streets were simply in the minds of Council too narrow. Examples from elsewhere did not matter. Reasoned argument did not matter. Council's mind was made up. Councillors believed that the plan and all its other New Urbanism elements were quite enough for a first try at 'doing things differently'. They were excited by the other possibilities (mixed use, increased densities, pedestrian environment, environmental protection etc.) But, they could not see the merit of streets narrower than the city's current standards (which in comparison to other cities were narrower than the norm).

There were two choices: continue to present arguments in favour of narrower local streets (8m) or give in to 10 m local streets (at least over the short term) and have the rest of the plan adopted. The latter seemed like the prudent thing to do. Council adopted the Neighbourhood Plan.

Lessons:

It is important to recognise that communities are in different stages of their evolution toward post-modern planning. Fighting the small battles can cause the planner to lose the bigger achievement.

When a cross-section of Councillors make the same point, the planner is well advised to listen and save debate for another day.

4.1.6 Taking the high ground

We are constantly challenged in our profession. We must be prepared to take the high ground and hold onto our professional values. In the arena of politics of place we are frequently challenged to maintain our integrity.

4.1.6.1 Politics of place

As noted earlier, the politics of place creates a major test for practitioners. Planners need to deal with the politics of place not by ignoring it but thinking carefully about their role and place within it. Each of us must come to our own conclusions. There is no short list here. How we deal with potential issues of political interference, political favouritism, political shortsightedness, political posturing, political turmoil, political poor judgement and political subterfuge requires careful consideration. We need not dwell on this for we may never experience such situations. At the most, we will likely experience issues of political misjudgement or turmoil related to disagreements and dissension. In those circumstances there are some points worth noting:

- Don't take sides. As a professional you should be independent of such situations.
- Don't discuss these issues publicly. No comment is the best comment.
- Don't participate in rumours in the office or social situations. You will only become part of the problem.
- Don't judge the participants. There are two sides to every situation.

4.1.6.2 Administrative fairness

We should try to ensure that administrative fairness is embodied in our work and our approach to our work. Administrative fairness relates to the degree to which all those affected by the planning process or decision-making process believe that it is fair, open, accountable and ethical. If some players believe or perceive that the process is skewed in favour of others, then it is probably an unfair process. Administrative fairness must be the basis upon which planners operate. No one person or group should have special access to information that others who are participating in the process or who may participate in the process do not have. Administrative fairness also relates to the decision-making steps that public sector organisations use. Decision processes that affect the public interest should be clear and well defined for all. All should be affected by the decision process in the same way. There can be no favourites. Some potential points are:

- Promote shared-decision-making;
- Promote clarity and openness in public discourse;
- Ensure that information is accessible (language, location, timing, distribution) to all who wish to participate or may later wish to participate;
- Promote accountability for decisions;
- Ensure that all members of the public are treated equally.

5. Conclusion

We are in an exciting time, a time of re-emergence for planning and design, a time when the design professions have found new life, citizens are exploring ways and means of enhancing their quality of life, and governments are recognising the importance of ecological, economic and social health. Planners can be expected to play an increasingly important role in those deliberations and the affairs of society. There are too many planning related issues that are emerging as crises, requiring careful deliberate thought and action, to ignore the contribution of our profession.

Once more, much like the turn of the 20th century, this new millennium requires planners who are leaders, who contribute to a new vision, who offer solutions and integrated action tied to research. It truly is an exciting time to be a member of the planning and design community.

But, we must be mindful of past experiences and trends. We must be prepared to provide difficult advice, promote broad dialogue, answer tough questions and urge thoughtful action. We cannot afford to languish. We must create a dynamic professional body in CIP and work with others to foster a new age of planning through dynamic ethically based practice and continued theoretical exploration!