

# PLAN

NORTH  
WEST

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

Spring 2021, Issue 8

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**SPECIAL PANDEMIC ISSUE**



# NORTH WEST





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# THE EDITORIAL BOARD

The social interaction restrictions made necessary by the COVID-19 pandemic have affected everyone. COVID-19 has also affected planning in many ways. It has affected the way planners communicate with others and gather the information necessary to make plans. Thousands of office workers working remotely has also affected public transit systems, businesses and the nature of downtowns, things that most would not have thought possible prior to the pandemic. The pandemic has also increased the importance of the already vital role that parks and open space play in our communities. The pandemic has shown us that nations, communities and planners are resilient, resourceful and adaptive. Will we need to change the way we plan in the future to build and redevelop our communities differently in response to the pandemic?

Please enjoy this special pandemic themed issue of *Plan NW*. Thank you to the authors who have kindly shared their ideas and stories with us. Also, please take a moment to consider the important professional obligations that planners need to remember by reading the final article in this issue,

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# MPPI MESSAGE

Aside from preparing this message, there were two things that I had to do today: One, complete a survey on planner competencies and two, prepare for our next MPPI Board Meeting. Considering these tasks together, made me think about the contribution our members make to the Institute and how fortunate we are to draw from such a capable group of people. The MPPI is a small affiliate, yet we continue to fill our board and our committees with skilled volunteers that apply a multitude of competencies to the betterment of our profession. These people are leaders, collaborators, and communicators. They are experts in their fields, but they are also accustomed to working in an inclusive and collaborative environment. As the MPPI president this makes my job easier, and so I would be remiss in not taking this opportunity to thank them. It is through the efforts of these volunteers, whether they are planners or public members, that we grow as a profession.

Although the survey may have brought it into focus, today was not the first time that I contemplated planner competencies. I was recently asked to sponsor a candidate member. We met virtually and discussed the professional competencies listed in the Professional



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Standards Board application package. Presented as a checklist for obtaining membership, I now realize this list of competencies may also be viewed as a road map for personal growth and professional development. I encourage everyone to reflect on your role as a planner, think about where your career is taking you and seek out opportunities to build on the competencies you have acquired.

We are living in a time of change. Climate, technology, even the culture of our communities and workplaces are undergoing transformation. As planners it is challenging but important to keep current. Whether you enhance your knowledge and skills through continuous learning or lead the way by developing innovative solutions and sharing this knowledge with your peers, you will be assisting in the development of our profession. Conferences, webinars, and PLAN North West provide an opportunity to share expertise, challenge assumptions, initiate dialogue, to empower and to be empowered. I expect this issue of PLAN North West will stimulate thought, but perhaps it may also inspire you to submit an article.



**Manitoba Professional  
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# SPPI MESSAGE

The year 2020 is over! This was the most challenging year I can remember, and I feel I am not alone with that statement. The ways that we work, live, and play have all been changed in the past year, as have the ways we communicate with colleagues and the general public. My hope is that there is a silver lining from all of this, where people feel more engaged in decisions that impact them, even while they are distanced.

Our profession has responded as well as any profession to the challenges of the past year, and credit goes to all of you. Years down the road, I am sure



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we will look back at 2020 as the year that changed everything. Will the 'new normal' be substantially the same as the days before the pandemic or will our lives fundamentally change? It is too early to know the answer to this question, but rest assured, planners will be on the leading edge of new trends that impact the profession and our built environment.

I am looking forward to the days where we can meet in person rather than through a screen.

Please enjoy this latest edition of *PLAN North West*.



# APPI MESSAGE

A year ago, we were beginning to recognize that a new normal was about to set in. Not a scenario we had intentionally envisioned and planned for, not a scenario for which we had reams of data to analyze or processes to implement, but a situation that would in some ways challenge our planning paradigm. For many of us, our customary methods of visioning, strategizing, engagement, action planning and structured implementation had to be put on hold. Certain lofty principles and concepts from the professional planning lexicon suddenly became real: concepts like resilience, flexibility and adaptation.

Who knew? Who knew how quickly we would be asked to abandon bottom-up planning and consensus-based decision making and pivot to reactive emergency measures, in order to combat a constantly evolving but largely invisible threat? As planners, we are accustomed to respectfully valuing all stakeholders' interests to inform our assessment of the overall long-term public good. During the Covid-19 pandemic, however, we have had to refocus on new and often incomplete data, and accept science-driven top-



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down decisions to protect immediate public safety.

It has now been over a year since we had to unexpectedly and dramatically shift the way we live, work and play. Most of those disruptions are still with us and many are likely to linger for a long time to come. However, after a year of cascading events, enforced restrictions and personal adjustments, we are already assessing where we have been, how far we have come, how we got here, and where we need to go next.

The articles in this issue of Plan NW are intended to throw some light on these questions. Planners across the Canadian prairies are proud to contribute to the profession's consideration of specific and cumulative impacts, the identification of next steps, and the implementation of critical action items. As we plan our re-emergence from Covid-induced isolation and social distance, please take some time to ponder the stories and experiences presented in this volume, and others, and bring their lessons to bear on your work. The light at the end of the tunnel beckons.

*At the time of the release of this issue of Plan NW Mac Hickley's term as APPI president had concluded on April 29th 2021. APPI's new president, Jeff Chase will share his message in the next issue of Plan NW.*

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# VOL UNT EER



*Tim Hogan*

## VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

It is “an interesting time to be working” understates Tim Hogan, who has recently been working about 50/50 between his office and home, managing the effects of COVID-19 on his planning practice at HTFC Planning & Design in Winnipeg. Tim and his firm have used technology to overcome the hurdles of COVID-19 and continue communication and consultation with the communities for whom they work, of which many are remote. It has certainly helped to be a planner with plenty of experience finding ways to communicate with communities in rural and remote locations. Indeed, a passion and a genuine care for the Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities he works with is at the core of Tim’s practice. Conference calls, video conferencing and emails are some of the tools he uses to communicate while practicing community and land use planning.

Tim practiced for a few years prior to becoming involved with MPPI. He quickly realized that there was an entire community of planners in Manitoba with shared interests and passions. He joined MPPI Council in 2013 and co-chaired the communication and

events committee, later also serving as secretary-treasurer and on the registration committee. Joining MPPI helped him learn new perspectives on planning at the local, regional and even national level, as he connected and formed friendships with other planners through MPPI.

In addition to volunteering with the MPPI Council, like many of his fellow MPPI members Tim has also volunteered advising students at the University of Manitoba planning program, where one of his favourite events, the wine and cheese mentorship evening, will continue this year using a virtual format until COVID-19 has receded. This event brings together planning students and professionals, providing each with opportunity to learn new ideas and perspectives.

Tim’s strongest memory of volunteering with MPPI was watching the hard work of other volunteers with MPPI come to fruition when Manitoba’s Registered Professional Planners Act was passed. This was critical in raising awareness of professional planners in Manitoba, and it continues to this day. Although the

planning community in Manitoba is relatively small, Tim thinks that the accomplishments of MPPI are large, and that the people, their knowledge, ideas and passion for planning that comes from both the experienced members and the younger people are one of the key reasons to volunteer with the MPPI. Tim notes that volunteering can come at many different levels, so that even those who may not have much time can still become involved, taking advantage of learning about what their fellow planners do and enjoying the social aspects such as meeting like-minded people.

Since Tim has become involved with MPPI there has been a lot of change – the membership has grown in number and MPPI has become more vibrant. The professional designation stemming from the recent legislation has raised public awareness of professional planning and strengthened the profession. His advice to people considering volunteering is that it is a “win-win” proposition. You can build your professional and personal relationships with others, learning a great deal, and at the same time make a contribution to your profession and community.



# VOL UNT EER

## VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION



*Diana  
Hawryluk*

Diana Hawryluk first became involved with the SPPI in her final year of university as the student representative on the SPPI Council. That was the beginning of what turned out to be seven years on Council, which also included the role of president, and SPPI's representative on the Professional Standards Board from 2012 to 2018. Additionally, her career in planning has included positions across Saskatchewan, Alberta and even to Bermuda.

Diana has years of fond memories volunteering with the SPPI, from her years on Council to working on the International Accreditation Committee (2003-2011) and the inaugural Professional Standards Board. Working and building relationships with other planners seems to be one of things Diana enjoys the most about volunteering. A long list of people including Alan Wallace, Chris Leach, Laura Hartney, Mary Bishop, Patrick Deaux, Elizabeth Miller, Denton Yeo and David Palubeski figured prominently in giving advice, help and mentorship in her career. In turn, Diana is proud to have mentored other planners and to share her experiences, passion and knowledge of the profes-

sion. Her enthusiasm for planning has even helped to lead a young planner to a new life and career in planning.

Diana believes that volunteering can enable established planners to learn new ideas from younger planners, and in turn for younger planners to learn from established planners. Plus, she thinks that relationships we can build through volunteering can give a planner a lifelong network for receiving advice and feedback on projects and ideas, and to provide support through difficult issues. Volunteering also helps build professional strengths such as collaboration, teamwork, learning new perspectives and about other areas of planning.

One of Diana's most memorable SPPI events was the 1998 conference in Moose Jaw, a few years after the spa had opened. The guest speakers and tours were successful. The highlight was that former CIP President, Patrick Deaux, attended the conference bringing news of the great work that the SPPI was doing to the national level.

Overall, Diana has seen the SPPI change over the years as a greater

number of people have entered the profession in Saskatchewan and with the SPPI also growing its profile with the public in general and with planners from across Canada. The SPPI has also increased their level of communication with members over the years, doing a great job in providing a forum for communication amongst planners. This has given her a great sense of pride in the profession.

Currently working for the City of Regina, Diana acknowledges that COVID-19 has provided some significant challenges. The City of Regina adapted quickly by moving to electronic submissions to keep business moving. Going forward, the focus will be on the economic recovery, trying to help business recover and grow both from a regulatory and policy perspective. She also feels there are many human and organizational challenges to consider with COVID-19, such as communicating with the staff and the public to ensure that information continues to be exchanged. After work, Diana enjoys spending time with her daughter, volunteering with her church and spending some time golfing.

# VOL UNTE EER



*Ann Peters*

## VOLUNTEER RECOGNITION

Ann Peters has lived and worked in Yellowknife, the capital of the Northwest Territories (NWT) and home to over 20,000 people, for over 30 years. How communities look, function and change always interested Ann, even before she knew that planning as a profession existed. Ann's formal education in planning came after first obtaining degrees in fine arts and architecture, working in architectural project management in the NWT and Nunavut, and being actively involved in community planning issues, including heritage, culture, the natural environment and sustainable growth.

The Alberta Professional Planners Institute (APPI) includes the regulation of professional planners in Alberta, the NWT and Nunavut. Although there are a small number of members of APPI in the north, the NWT has a land mass about 75 per cent larger than Alberta's, and over 30 communities. Ann feels that the profile of the APPI in NWT has been raised over the past ten years, with Council meeting in Yellowknife in 2012 and 2019, Planners from Yellowknife serving on Council, and improved use of on-line communication – these efforts have made planners in the NWT

and Nunavut feel much more a part of APPI.

Ann joined APPI in 2007, and became a full member in 2009. Volunteering with the journal committee in 2011, she becoming chair in 2012 and until 2015 worked with a team of volunteers to produce a total of 11 issues in what she describes as a "rewarding and energizing" experience.

Currently working as a consultant to smaller communities on projects including community planning, infrastructure planning, and housing, Ann notes that planners in the north are more often 'generalists' than planners in more populated areas of Canada. In addition to the size of the communities and the type of work, planners working in the NWT and Nunavut also work in a different political and regulatory than Alberta planners, and are accustomed to remote communication and engagement.

Just as planning is a field without distinct borders, and Ann believes that membership and volunteering in APPI helps planners to learn about aspects of planning beyond our own areas of

expertise, and to build relationships and learn from others. As an example, Ann noted how APPI has encouraged mentoring and through the Professional Standards Board program, and participating in continuous professional learning activities. Because the number of planners working in the NWT and Nunavut is small, with planners often being separated by large physical distances and differences in practice, mentoring and being mentored takes on a heightened level of importance, and APPI helps that happen by providing opportunities for personal connections.

Although much change has occurred in APPI since 2007, what has not changed is the respectful and welcoming atmosphere that Ann feels demonstrates its core values. Ann has strong memories of the great people she has had the honour of meeting through APPI, such as Jamal Ramjohn, Gary Willson, Beth Sanders, and many more.

Outside of consulting work Ann volunteers with several community organizations, works in her pottery studio and spends time in the outdoors with friends and dogs.

# LET'S TALK DIGITAL - ADAPTING COMMUNITY EVENTS DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC

SUBMITTED BY: Chelsey Rudolph



Main Street Stony Plain  
SOURCE: Chelsey Rudolph

COVID-19 has brought numerous challenges to the planning practice over the past year, but perhaps one of the most pressing difficulties was how we effectively adapt business operations to continue serving our communities in a safe and healthy manner.

The Town of Stony Plain is a close-knit community of almost 18,000 residents and is well known for its historic Main Street that is home to a series of painted murals depicting the town's past. As a town that has a high regard for arts and culture, annual community events are one of many valued attributes that contribute to the unique sense of place referred to as the "Stony Plain Feel." With several annual traditions that are usually celebrated by hosting community events, the question remained-how could we continue these cherished traditions given restrictions on public gatherings?

With the initial mindset that all in-person events would be cancelled in 2020, we went back to the drawing board to explore how we could encourage residents to stay connected and involved with the community, while following health and safety requirements. Although not the preferred method of social interaction for most, the transition towards virtual technology and reliance on the digital world presented an opportunity to explore new ways to sustain and continue fostering community involvement. This article will discuss how we adapted two community events to virtual formats using Esri and ArcGIS Story Maps.

Prior to 2020, my own experience with Story Maps was limited to presenting academic information. When COVID-19 prevented us from hosting in-person events, I realized that Story Maps could be an effective resource as they are widely accessible by the public and have the capability to combine text, images, and other multimedia content. With an organizational license for the ArcGIS platform, I started planning a virtual Jane's Walk.



Jane's Walk is an annual community-led tour that encourages people to share stories about their neighbourhood and discover unseen aspects of their community. Each year, we explore a new topic to encourage residents to teach us about the community they call home. Jane's Walk is typically hosted as a group walking tour for community members to connect with their neighbours. Despite not being able to gather in person, we created a virtual tour instead as an interactive platform for the community to participate in the event.

Jane's Walk 2020 explored the theme Generating Urban Diversity in a Small Town, presenting local examples of the four components that generate diversity in urban environments: small blocks, mixed uses, aged buildings, and population density. With emphasis on Stony Plain's historic buildings and diverse representations of how density can impact the built form, residents were encouraged to view the town from a community planning perspective.

Traditional Jane's Walks are limited to a certain time and distance, but hosting this tour virtually enabled us to explore a larger topic, presenting examples from across the town as we were not restricted to a set time or geographic boundary. This way, members of the community could participate in the event from the comfort and safety of their own homes, with the option to explore the tour stops in person when it was safe to do so.

A virtual tour was a successful alternative for achieving the objectives of Jane's Walk. This generated the momentum for adapting other in-person events in a similar manner, which led to the idea for celebrating Arbour Day. Arbour Day is another annual event, which celebrates the importance of trees in urban environments to promote greener communities for the



Stony Plain's 2020 Arbour day site - Willow  
SOURCE: Chelsey Rudolf

future. The event typically consists of a community party where attendees can help plant trees in an area of the community, while enjoying games, food, and drinks.

We created a Story Map to celebrate the 10th Arbour Day celebration in Stony Plain. Presenting this event in a visual format allowed us to take a more educational approach than usual, including information on the history of Arbour Day in Stony Plain, its significance and why we celebrate it, along with background information on the event site and characteristics of the trees chosen for this year's planting. Although we were unable to invite the community to celebrate the event in person, we completed a successful tree planting that was documented with photos and video footage to share with the community in a virtually accessible format.

Overall, 2020 looked quite different from what we are all used to. As easy as it can be to look back and focus on the negative impacts of the pandemic, it is important to recognize the adaptation, growth, and accomplishments experienced during this time of great

uncertainty. The challenges we face as professional planners bring opportunity to think differently and use creativity to solve real world problems. By sharing our experiences and learning from each other, the planning practice can continue to remain resilient during times of change. As much as we hope to be back celebrating in-person events in 2021, we have proved that positive outcomes can result from undesirable circumstances and in some cases, even foster the start of new traditions.

**Chelsey Rudolph** has a Bachelor in Community Design from Dalhousie University, with Honours in Environmental Planning and Sustainability. She came to the Town of Stony Plain in 2018 as a Planning Intern through the Municipal Internship Program and has since become the Town's Sustainability Planner focusing on current planning and environmental initiatives. She hopes to expand her professional portfolio to include community sustainability and placemaking, while working towards her designation as a Registered Professional Planner with the Alberta Professional Planners Institute.

For more information on Jane's Walk and Arbour Day, check out the Town of Stony Plain Website here: <https://www.stonyplain.com/en/play/arbours-day.aspx>  
<https://www.stonyplain.com/en/play/jane-s-walk.aspx>

# ACHIEVING MEANINGFUL ENGAGEMENT DURING THE PANDEMIC

SUBMITTED BY: Samantha Blatz | Tim Daniels | Chris Elkey RPP, MCIP | Tom Janzen RPP, MCIP

## INTRODUCTION

Anticipation for the redevelopment of the former Kapyong Barracks in Winnipeg has been building for almost two decades. Following the Government of Canada's sale of the property to the Canada Lands Company (CLC) in 2007, a legal challenge was put forward by the Treaty One First Nations (T1N) on the basis that Canada had failed to consult and accommodate the First Nations prior to selling the land. After years of litigation the Federal Court of Appeals ruled in favour of the Treaty One Nations, which led to the signing of a Comprehensive Settlement Agreement in 2019, giving the Treaty One Nations the ability to acquire a large portion of the former Barracks. Today, the Treaty One Nations, through their collective development arm, the Treaty 1 Development Corporation (T1DC), are collaborating with CLC on a joint Master Plan for the long-range redevelopment of the 160-acre site.

Recognizing the site's high-profile status and long-term potential for creating space for reconciliation, community engagement has been central to the Master Planning process. The extensive engagement program included dialogue with each of the seven First Nations belonging to the Treaty One First Nations ownership group, residents and business in the surrounding neighbourhoods, and a multitude of stakeholder and government interests. This article examines the collaborative planning efforts between the Treaty One Nations and CLC, with a particular focus on community engagement and the challenges of delivering an inclusive engagement program in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## ONE PLAN, SEPARATE JURISDICTIONS, MULTIPLE COMMUNITIES

One of the largest influences on the engagement strategy was the cross-jurisdictional nature of the project, with the ownership of the site split almost two-thirds/one-third between the T1N and CLC respectively. Whereas the CLC portion of the lands will be developed as a fee simple urban development, under City of Winnipeg jurisdiction, T1N's lands will be held and developed as a joint urban reserve, not subject to City of Winnipeg by-laws or development regulations.

Not only did the planning process need to result in a cohesive vision that spanned the jurisdictional difference, it also needed to address the significant public curiosity (and anticipated apprehension) around the creation of a large urban reserve covering the majority of the site.



*Land Use Build Out Concept*  
SOURCE: T1DC/CLC





*A rendering of the Mixed-Use Village*  
SOURCE: T1DC/CLC

This unique ownership arrangement, together with the protracted legal dispute associated with the purchase of the land, the military legacy of the former Barracks, and the location of the site amidst well-established neighbourhoods, results in numerous communities, groups, and individuals with a vested interest in the future of this place.

From the outset, it was a shared objective of both T1N and CLC to ensure that all communities were engaged with meaningfully and effectively and were able to share their ideas and insights at critical steps throughout the Master Planning process. T1DC played a lead role in shaping the engagement strategy to fit the unique needs of their own communities, both before and after the onset of the pandemic as the engagement landscape shifted.

Working with Scatliff + Miller + Murray, the project's planning consultant, a robust engagement and communications plan was developed that laid out a series of public events, stakeholder meetings, and in-community engagements with members of the seven T1Ns.

In early 2020, the engagement process began with initial meetings between the project team and municipal departments and special interest groups, as well as T1DC staff visiting various Treaty One communities to meet with local leaders, youth, and Knowledge Keepers. This first step of engagement went smoothly, with stakeholder meetings wrapping up in February, in-community engagement set to ramp up, and the project team working toward two major in-person public information sessions slated for late March 2020 (as the seriousness of the looming pandemic really became pronounced).



# COVID - CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

With engagement boards ready to go and one day after placing an order for 6,000+ invitations to the two public information sessions, the definitive word came that public gatherings were no longer safe. After an emergency engagement meeting with the project team, it was decided that rather than wait to see if public gatherings would be possible again in the near future, we would adapt our approach to digital and virtual methods.

Our first major adaptation was to pull all the content from our ready-to-roll engagement boards and repackage it as a webpage on the T1DC website. Launched in early April, this webpage gave us the opportunity to share infor-

mation about the project quickly and accurately with people across Manitoba. Promoted through newspaper ads, radio spots, TV interviews, and social media, the project webpage (<https://www.treaty1.ca/kapyong/>) reached a large number of people and generated comments, questions, and ideas from the public.

As part of this engagement content, three preliminary concept plans were shared for the public to view and offer feedback on by way of an online survey. Response to this survey gave our team essential insight into public perceptions about the planned redevelopment and what they wanted to see created through the planning process.

The switch from in-person to virtual resulted in another significant opportunity to reach a much wider audience. We replaced our two in-person public information sessions with a virtual webinar on June 17, 2020. As registrations for the event began to pour in it became clear that the virtual webinar format was going to help us reach many more people than we had originally targeted. We engaged with over 800 people through the Zoom platform, with more tuning in through the livestream to Facebook. The virtual webinar took the engagement materials from the webpage and led viewers through a more detailed description of the process and progress of the concept plans.



T1DC staff and Treaty One Knowledge Keepers  
SOURCE: T1DC

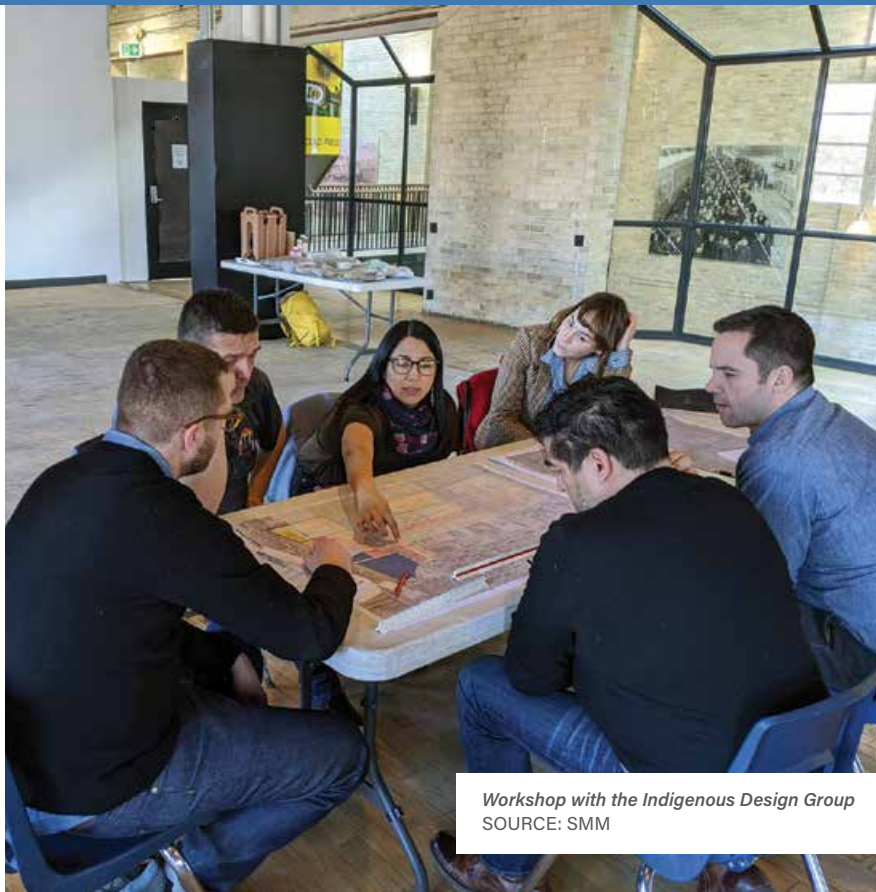
Though digital and virtual methods of engagement have opened up new ways of communicating with the public that are able to offer people greater flexibility and access, they do not come without their challenges. Some of the challenges we faced were the barriers created by the introduction of new technologies, the need for hardware, and the ever-necessary need to access the Internet. Though we faced some these challenges in our own office – specifically when a lightning strike temporarily knocked out the internet in our office building eight minutes into the virtual webinar – our top priority was addressing related challenges within the seven T1N communities, as to ensure band members would remain informed about the project and have ongoing opportunities to engage meaningfully with the Plan materials and Master Planning Team.

Working through our overhauled engagement and communications plan and realizing that not everyone would be able to join in for the live virtual webinar, we recorded the session to be shared through Facebook, the T1DC website, and forwarded to the seven communities. This was accompanied by the creation of a Kapyong Update newsletter that was circulated throughout the communities, which featured information from the engagement webpage, virtual webinar, and online survey results. However, what truly made this community engagement possible was T1DC's work to ensure provision of audio and video conferencing hardware and software in each of the seven communities.

Working closely with each community, and within their specific public health restrictions, T1DC also continued to facilitate small in-community engagement sessions with youth and Knowledge Keepers, bringing their insights back to the rest of the project team to be incorporated into the evolving plans and designs.

# COLLABORATIVE PLANNING + DESIGN

The foundation for collaboration between T1N and CLC was set early on (pre-pandemic) in the planning process, through a series of workshops between T1N and CLC leadership. Those workshops provided a forum to share ideas and priorities, but also helped cement the sense of partnership and understanding. The most important outcome of those early workshops was the collective formation and endorsement of a set of seven project aspirations. Encompassing a broad range of goals and values, these project aspirations not only guided the Master Planning process, but are also intended to guide future planning and development decisions as the Master Plan is implemented.



Workshop with the Indigenous Design Group  
SOURCE: SMM

*“Collectively working with a creative team to visualize the Kapyong projects provides an opportunity for First Nations voices to be at the fore in cultural advisement in the urban design and planning process. Having an integral role and stake in design will affirm self-determination strategies that are influenced by First Nations culture by First Nations people. If the team is made up of Indigenous planners, artists and designers to form the internal design advisory team, the outcome will be shaped with a strong and foundational integrity. A thriving neighbourhood is shaped by a thriving community.”*

*- Jaimie Isaac, member of the IDG*

Another significant collaborative element of the project was the work done with the Master Planning Team’s Indigenous Design Group (IDG). Bringing together Indigenous designers, architects, community builders, and Knowledge Keepers, the role of the IDG was to generate ideas and concepts, provide critical feedback on the evolving Master Plan, and embed Indigenous perspectives on design and culture throughout the process.

Integrated within the broader Master Planning Team, the IDG was instrumental in building a vision for the redevelopment that would bring people together from across Winnipeg and Manitoba. Working from the shared Project Aspirations, the IDG brought tangible elements that could bring these aspirations to life. These pieces included ideas for public art and architecture, music and recreation, cultural and medicinal plants, active living, public space design, and on-the-ground ways that this redevelopment could support Indigenous businesses.





Rendering of the central  
Community Space  
SOURCE: T1DC/CLC

## PLANNING FOR FUTURE OF ENGAGEMENT

The pandemic has swiftly changed the ways in which we do engagement, making virtual methods an essential element of connecting with the community, key stakeholders, and municipal partners. In many ways this has made it easier for people and project teams to contribute to projects in their own way and on their own schedule. However, these same methods have also made it more difficult for many people and communities as the lack of hardware, programs, and access to high-speed Internet establishes a significant barrier to participation. It is likely that many of the new virtual engagement techniques that have been honed over the course of the pandemic will be here to stay, placing a responsibility on planners and designers to continue examining the disparities and barriers present in engagement, in addition to developing solutions and methods for effectively engaging multiple communities.

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# BIOGRAPH



# PLANNING PERSPECTIVES ON PANDEMICS & SUSTAINABILITY

SUBMITTED BY: Ronald Morrison MES, RPP, MCIP

The unprecedented global crisis caused by the coronavirus disease (COVID-19 or COVID) has transformed the world. In its wake, new perspectives on planning for sustainability are emerging. While the pandemic has resulted in unimaginable change, it also presents opportunities to rethink the future and how we plan toward different kinds of community and economic sustainability models. Nonetheless, change in every possible manner is the bottom line associated with COVID.

From the obvious human health impacts on entire populations to market recessions, transportation and mobility patterns, acute commodity shortages and soaring prices of almost everything in global supply chains, change from the pandemic is inescapable. For many, the accepted response with each new example is 'it's a sign of the times,' implying that there will be a return to some semblance of the past. For others, these outcomes are all part of the 'new normal.' Whatever the response or perspective on these changes, it is clear that a greater focus on people and human health should occupy the platform on planning for sustainability into the future.

## THE HUMAN HEALTH PIECE OF THE PLANNING PUZZLE

In recent years sustainability planning has been preoccupied with climate change, but the risk to sustaining human health at the community or even national levels, much less at global scales, has received considerably less attention. COVID has been complicated by some of the concerns addressed within the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), such as poverty, hunger, lack of clean water and sanitation, and education. The SDGs seek to ensure healthy lives and promote well-being. They further outline the need to build capacity for early warning, risk reduction and management of national and global health risks. However, they do not seem to elaborate on pandemic outbreaks, their relationship to the triple bottom line of sustainability, nor the role of planning to mitigate the impacts.

A comprehensive view of sustainability promotes the concept of environment, society and economy all being inclusive and working together at the same time. COVID has revealed that risks to the human factor and people have not been weighed in balance with the economy and environment in the equa-

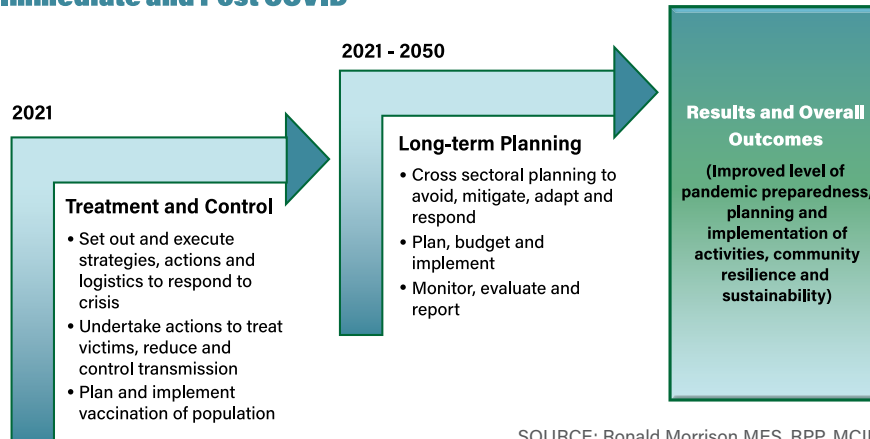
tion. There has been much opposition to the various restrictions and lockdowns that have shut down economies. The pleas for the economy have not recognized that any economy can only be supported by a healthy population, without which economic concerns are somewhat irrelevant. While basic human needs are closely tied to the economy and environment, risks to human health must at the same time be included in planning to achieve sustainability.

Large urban centres and communities have responded to climate change with adaptation measures and action plans to mitigate impacts. In a similar manner adaptation to changing health conditions and risks needs to be considered as part of the planning tool box for COVID and future pandemics. While COVID has exploded into a global crisis like few others, the urgency of dealing with the human health crisis has been experienced at the front lines of communities. Human and social health like our changing climate must to a greater extent be factored into plans at different levels, as they are inextricably linked to the crisis and sustainability at a global level. With this perspective, there can be a broader focus for planning to build community resilience for these kind of events, be it the current pandemic, climate change or other major events in the future.

So what do we need to consider once the current crisis is behind us? In the short term, COVID will remain with us for a while, so the needs to continue adapting to the ongoing risks with it and control its spread will prevail. For the longer term - timing is everything. We need to plan now and cannot wait to respond to more variants or another super bug that will spawn the next pandemic. There is little excuse for lack of planning and preparedness given the experience that we now have from COVID.

# Planning Priorities and Horizons

## Immediate and Post COVID



SOURCE: Ronald Morrison MES, RPP, MCIP

## THE MEETING OF PANDEMICS & PLANNING

Pandemics and planning - what is the relationship between the two and how can we better plan for sustainability into the future? The sustainability of our national, provincial and regional economies ultimately depends on healthy populations. Economies quite simply, cannot function without healthy populations. As a novel dimension moving forward, sustainable futures will depend on not only how we account and plan for pandemic risk, but in turn, also how well we are prepared for and respond to the risk. Planners can play key roles in each of these challenges.

It's taken about a century for the current pandemic to catch up with us. Between 1918 and 1920 at least 50 million deaths occurred from the Great Influenza Pandemic or Spanish Flu over its course in three waves. The lessons learned were how unprepared the world was and the inability of governments to control the pandemic. Not unlike our observations with COVID, the majority of deaths were directly attributed to the crowding of people. Crowded cities, military camps, hospitals, jails, ships and factories were all sites where the pandemic spread exponentially.

Planners acknowledge and accept that urbanization at a staggering pace, accompanied by the crowding of people into our more populated centres will continue to happen, so we plan to counteract sprawl and encourage densification to sustain urbanization. Early support of this premise can be read in the core principles of the Vancouver Declaration 2006 of the Global Planners Network that asserted there can be no sustainable urbanization without effective planning.

With the continuing shift to urbanization, population concentration and densification are viewed as planning alternatives for sustainable development, but crowding of people has

emerged as perhaps the most significant contributor to the spread of COVID. So it begs the question, is this really the best planning scenario when we begin to think about longer term sustainable futures in light of lessons from pandemic history? Perhaps other ideas such as how we might create conditions and/or incentives to disperse population growth into more of the vast rural and resource rich expanses across our country need to be pondered.

Charting into new territories, planners must begin to address alternatives and measures that can be taken to avoid, mitigate and prepare for future pandemics. Will another pandemic occur in the future? Most likely. It may take another century, but we cannot wait until then to begin planning and preparing. With these realities, new approaches to planning are needed to achieve sustainability at the community, provincial, national and international levels.

## THE W5 OF PLANNING AND PANDEMICS

Planners understand the spatial and temporal dimensions of land use, population characteristics, infrastructure, transportation patterns, setting goals and evaluating alternatives, collaboration and public consultation. With this expertise, they can and should play an important role in our preparedness for and response to pandemics that may become more prevalent in our new normal of the future.

Further consideration is needed into planning by who, for what, when, where and how to achieve better results in avoiding and responding to future health crisis events. In the current COVID crisis, the imperative is to plan and execute the most effective immediate response action to control transmission and mitigate the impacts. Post COVID, the focus will shift to prevention, limiting risk to conditions that give rise to these kinds of outbreaks, and our preparedness to respond

to them. Cross collaboration in planning with not only public health authorities, but all other sectors, communities and levels of government and industry will build capacity and preparedness for future events. Resilience, emergency response, isolation, contingency and business continuity plans will better prepare communities for more sustainable futures in relation to pandemics.

It has been acknowledged that before COVID, the world was on an unsustainable path. Well beyond the crusades of young people who recently marched the streets around the globe in light of climate change, we are now at a worldwide pause and point of reflection in terms of human health concerns and planning to achieve the broader goals of sustainability.

The role of planning in sustaining communities, economies and the environment is at the cusp of maintaining the status quo or extending its perspective to advance sustainability. The magnitude and kind of change brought about by COVID presents a timely opportunity for planners to reflect and adopt a new paradigm to evolve and progress in their profession. A door has been opened to broaden the scale, scope and function of planning, and assume a critical role of shaping the sustainability of our collective futures.

## WHO PLANS FOR PANDEMICS?

FEDERAL AND PROVINCIAL	MUNICIPAL	ACADEMIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR
<p>Government Leaders</p> <p>Public Health Departments &amp; Ministries</p> <p>Health Sciences &amp; Research Agencies</p> <p>Supply, Procurement, Transportation, Military Logistics &amp; Emergency Response</p>	<p>Healthcare Institutions &amp; Medical Facilities</p> <p>Other Frontline and Professional Service Workers</p> <p>Community Land Use and Infrastructure Planners</p> <p>Community Social &amp; Economic Development</p>	<p>University &amp; Private Medical Research</p> <p>Pharmaceuticals</p> <p>Institutional &amp; Transportation</p> <p>Natural Resource Development &amp; Manufacturing</p>

SOURCE: Ronald Morrison MES, RPP, MCIP

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# REFLECTIONS ON COVID IMPACTS - PARKS, RECREATION AND RESILIENT COMMUNITIES

SUBMITTED BY: Dr. Robert Priebe MCIP, RPP | Benjamin Jonah MASRS | Jason SimituK BRMCD

## ABSTRACT

Parks, recreation and leisure services have always been important elements of sustainable city policy and programs that foster the creation of economically, ecologically, socially, and culturally sustainable cities. Recent Google Community mobility data revealed how people intrinsically valued parks and park systems in times of Covid. In Canada and elsewhere, the population flooded outdoors to mentally and emotionally deal with the loss of community connections, a loss of indoor recreational facility opportunities, and the shifting of education and work settings to home environments. These trends may have lasting effects. As we seek to economically recover from the pandemic, municipal elected officials and administrators might pause to consider how cuts to recreation and leisure opportunity budgets may harm higher level health and wellness outcomes. We also need to redouble our efforts to ensure vulnerable populations disproportionately impacted by Covid are part of consultation processes of all kinds in the creation of sustainable cities.

*Louise Mckinney Park*  
SOURCE: City of Edmonton





## INTRODUCTION

Park lands are public places designed for users to be physically active, connect with nature, reach out to your neighbours, or a place to decompress and de-stress from our daily lives. They are an integral part of a sustainable city. These human needs still exist, arguably even more important than ever, in times of Covid. So how has Covid impacted Albertans here and elsewhere? What learnings can we accrue from those experiences about the contribution of parks to a sustainable city?

Covid was not our first experience with a severe virus. The driving force behind modern urban planning, and the planning profession itself, was the late 1800s tuberculosis public health crisis that engulfed over-crowded slums caused by poor housing, lack of clean water, and sewage disposal. The crisis of the late 1800s gave rise to “the connection between physical design and public health” (Fisher 2010). The connection of physical design and public health can most famously be seen through the design and creation of Central Park and Prospect Park in New York. Soon, two core ideas would emerge: first, that government could make cities more liveable and sustainable; and second, that the spatialities of social processes and the qualities of place were important elements of well-being (Healey 2015). Such notions also emanated from the Garden City Movement in Great Britain and the City Beautiful Movement from the United States (Hodge 1985; Freestone 2015). It was thought or theorized that aesthetics would have a trickle-down effect on the social health of the community, but not necessarily enjoyed by all. As noted by Bertrand Russell, In Praise of Idleness (1932); “The idea that the poor should have leisure has always been shocking to the rich” (Stodolska 2020). Over time it became obvious that beautification or aesthetics for its own sake in parks (i.e., Stanley Park in Vancouver, Public Gardens in Halifax, Mount Royal in Montreal) were seen as shallow, difficult to fund, and had to be more closely married with utility.



Borden Park  
SOURCE: Robert Priebe

That utility, if not mandate, provided by parks and recreation activities included contributions to the physical and emotional well-being of all urban residents through healthier lifestyles, enhanced social well-being, and the reduction in social intolerance. The provision of ecological goods and services provided by greenspaces, as well as the positive impact of parks on property values, property taxes, and economic activity are now well understood and documented (Harnik and Crompton 2014). Covid offers a unique opportunity for planners to reflect on the business of city building, but from a novel parks and park services lens. The discussion will have five elements: the impact of Covid in 2020 on parks and recreation service delivery, a summary of Covid park use constraints and park visitation trends, the mental health impact of Covid, Parks as a prescription or (Rx) for a sustainable city, and recommendations for urban planners and politicians.

## PARKS, RECREATION, & COVID IMPACTS

The virus and Covid mitigation actions have resulted in millions of job losses, shifted the location of workforces,

closed small businesses, reduced travel, created unprecedented hospitalization rates, horrific deaths, and long term negative physical and mental health challenges for some who have survived the virus. Seniors have been significantly impacted. The parks and recreation sector are no exception and has been impacted significantly.

The primary constraint to leisure and park use is the need to social distance and the limitation in the size of congregate activities (Stoldowski 2020; Moore et al 2020), with a consequent impact on use and benefits of park and leisure activities. Closures tended to focus to a greater extent, but not exclusively, on indoor recreation facilities. In Alberta, those types of facilities typically included indoor arenas, pools, curling rinks, fitness centres, soccer centres, field houses, court sports, etc. Also restricted therefore were ancillary uses such as food services, sporting good sales and physio-therapy clinics. Closure of these facilities also impacts training for outdoor leisure activities. Outdoor facilities, with some exceptions, tended to remain accessible but adult and minor sport programs were curtailed if not cancelled. Special events and major festivals, of which there, are many were cancelled for obvious reasons. Playgrounds were roped off from use for

part of the year. Restrictions varied over time, and in some cases by locality.

Both the Canadian Parks and Recreation Association (CPRA) and the United States National Recreation Association (NPRA) reported significant impacts on the recreation field. The financial impact of Covid in Canada on recreation has been estimated at \$2.7 billion dollars due to the sunk costs of infrastructure with zero or no financial recovery and social benefit if shuttered. When they do open fully, expected increase costs for hygiene, social distancing could raise facility operating costs by \$226 million, monthly, nationally (CPRA 2020). Municipal recreation and sport employees have been laid off en masse, and not all qualified for federal government income support programs. Two Ontario municipalities laid off 2,200 and 5,600 temporary employees respectively. Similarly, Alberta saw over 4,000 recreation and parks employees laid off with some municipalities reporting up to 90% staff reductions among recreation and park departments (Alberta Recreation and Parks 2020). Temporary employment is by its nature precarious employment with less benefits; a situation made worse by the pandemic for those employees. Social distancing will require smaller program delivery but with the same sunk infrastructure costs. New capital and operating expenditures will be required when facilities are re-opened. The public's fear about infections may slow the return of patrons to these facilities.

Similar impacts were seen in the United States that included massive layoffs, reduced or closed facilities, and increased operating costs. The three biggest types of outdoor facility closures were playgrounds (93%), outdoor fields and courts (66%), and beaches (49%). Approximately 48% of park agencies in the United States are anticipating cuts to operating budgets by an average of 20% and 33%, and are making cuts to capital budgets an average of 37%. Fifteen percent expect capital budget cuts by at least 50%. There are hiring freezes of full-time and



Laurier Park  
SOURCE: City of Edmonton

part-time staff, and some full-time staff are being shifted to what was previously part-time functions (NPRA 2020).

## PARK VISITATION TRENDS – A 2020 SNAPSHOT

Park visitation trends were identified both globally and regionally using the Google Community Mobility Report (Geng, Innes, Wu and Wang 2020). Parks include outdoor places like local and community parks, national parks, public beaches, marinas, dog parks, plazas, and public gardens. In this study, park visitation data using Google Community Covid mobility data were statistically extracted from February 16, 2020 to May 26, 2020 that assesses the first wave of Covid and associated lockdown impacts. The studies here tracked movements to different forms of land uses.

In most selected countries and regions, park visitor use increased correlated with government measures such as restrictions on social gatherings, workplace closures, and public event cancellations but was dependent on the stringency of the measures adopted by jurisdictional entity. Workplace relocations also can mean both reduced work

commutes and more flexible schedules to access local parks and in particular nature connections. The closure of malls and restaurants means outdoor parks are one of the few places left to socialize and decompress. This trend was particularly true in Canada where park use increased by up to 100% during the study period, although National Parks were closed at this time (Teng, Innes, Wu and Wang 2020).

Using the same Covid-19 Community Mobility Reports for a snapshot of park visitation in early December of 2020 in Canada, showed an increase in park uses of 6% and 8% in residential movements. It also showed a reduction of 26% in retail and recreation (also includes libraries, movie theatres, theme parks), 7% in grocery and pharmacy trips, 50% in transit settings, 14% in workplace settings. The same data set in Alberta showed park use increased by 35%, Saskatchewan by 30%, Manitoba by 10%, and BC was down 2% (Google 2020).

Park trips in Alberta was up despite the closure or limitations of access to indoor recreation facilities which normally would help drive park visitation numbers. It is even more striking in cities like Edmonton and Calgary because some schools in the spring moved to



on-line delivery, once again reducing trips to school and park sites. Combined, this data suggests an even more significant shift in park visitations and recreation activities from indoor to outdoor.

The trend of increase park use is being seen internationally as well. Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park in London, UK conducted research in June 2020 which showed the overall increase of local park use of 16%. Furthermore, 60% indicated they will visit a park at least a couple of times a week. The majority of those surveyed indicated they traveled less than two miles to a park and most did by walking or running (London Legacy Development Corporation 2020).

## COVID AND POPULATION HEALTH AND WELLNESS

The combined economic and health crisis here and elsewhere in the world is most concerning. A Canadian Mental Health Association survey released in December of 2020 revealed that 40% of Canadians felt their mental health has deteriorated since the onset of the pandemic. Those most impacted were those with pre-existing mental health conditions, with disabilities, Indigenous peoples, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ+) populations, and populations aged 18-24. The most common emotional responses were anxiety/worry, stress, sadness, and depression. Canadians were most worried about a second wave of the virus, getting the virus, losing a loved one to the virus, and vaccine safety and efficacy. Those most vulnerable to suicidal thoughts and self harm were LGBTQ+ respondents and those with pre-existing mental health challenges. The primary coping strategies were exercising outdoors, connecting with friends, and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. The level of substance abuse as a coping strategy raised alarms. Overall compared to other Canadians, Albertans tended to worry a bit less about the virus, experienced less stress, anxiety and depression, exercised outdoors more, and were more concerned about their finances than other Canadians (Canadian Mental Health Association 2020). The Canadian study mirrored research from other parts of the world, which has led that study to suggest that the emotional responses (i.e., stress, anxiety, depressive symptoms, insomnia, denial, anger, and fear) may lead to changes in decision-making and create long lasting health concerns (Torales, O'Higgins, Castaldeli Maia and Ventriglio 2020).

A Canadian survey of the impact of Covid on children and youth on their movement was authored by researchers with expertise from kinesiology, recreation, public health, and urban planning, including Alberta. Covid had an adverse impact on the movement and play of children and youth, both who showed more sedentary behaviour including increased screen time, and with changed sleep patterns. Parental encouragement and support, more parental engagement in physical activity and dog ownership were all identified as



*Seniors*  
SOURCE: City of Edmonton



*Dogs and Parks*  
SOURCE: City of Edmonton

positive in supporting more physical activity (Moore et al, 2020). Similar more sedentary outcomes were found in a study in the United States (Dunton, Do and Wang 2020).

There are differential population psychosocial impacts of the pandemic. Those with pre-existing conditions, health care and first responders, isolated individuals, those living in long-term senior care facilities are particularly precarious (Pferbaum and North 2020). Those with little or no opportunity to isolate and social distance at work or at home (Slater, Christiana and Gustat 2020), and those in precarious service jobs are more likely to be impacted as well, and are often made up of low income and immigrant populations. Urban and minority populations may be more likely to use public transit to access parks and facilities (Slater, Christiana and Gustat 2020) which may have reduced services and/or potentially a source of community transmission.

Similar to the 9/11 attacks in the United States, the reaction of some to the pandemic is to target the outsiders, in this case the Asian populations. Some have been assaulted and/or refuse to leave their homes fearing attacks. Racism knows no boundaries, and left immigrant populations increasingly and unnecessarily vulnerable in Covid times (Stodolska 2020). Another study of racism, black lives matter and Covid acknowledged that racism pre-dated Covid, but solutions should focus on shifting processes of power to ensure more inclusion, representation and evaluation with an eye towards long-term trust building. The solution was not simply to add more parks, but to give greater voice to diverse communities (Hoover and Lim 2020).

## PARKS AS RX FOR A SUSTAINABLE CITY

Public health entities have stressed the importance of staying physically active during times of lock down orders (Slater, Christiana and Gustat 2020). Parks and “green spaces” offer psychological restoration and ease mental health challenges (i.e., stress, anxiety, and depression), which are currently rising due to the pandemic and quarantine policies (Cortinez-O’Ryan, Moran, Rios, Moran, Anza-Ramirez and Slovic 2020). Community parks may improve social cohesion at a community level and help build a sense of integration and inclusion amongst residents in their communities (Geng, Innes, Wu and Wang 2020). The Canadian Mental Health Association identified outdoor parks as the number one coping mechanism in Canada and Alberta (Canadian Mental Health Association 2020).

Prior to the pandemic, researchers had extensively catalogued the benefits of leisure and recreation. Parks can increase physical activity levels, provide stress relief, and have general health and wellness benefits (Konijnendijk, Annerstedt, Neilsen and Maruthaveeren 2013; Parry, Gollab and Frans 2014). Physical access to community parks can improve cardiovascular and pulmonary function (Geng, Innes, Wu and Wang 2020). Parks foster the creation of connections between individuals and groups with like interests, build social capital, community tolerance, and resiliency (Taylor, Davies, Wells, Gilbertson and Tayleur 2015), and reduce crime rates (Troy, Grove and O’Neill-Dunne 2012). These benefits continue unabated during pandemic times. These activities and associated benefits portend to more resilient community before, during and after Covid.

The ecological goods and services of green space continues unabated, further evidence of the restorative abilities of nature absent people. Carbon sequestration, reduction of urban heat island, storm water management, and pollution control provided by trees, natural areas, landscape grasses and water bodies continue to silently create healthier living environments (Harnik and Crompton 2014). Research has shown that Carbon Dioxide (Co2) emissions in Canada are down 20%, as the restorative ability of nature to restore air and water quality occurs unabated if given the chance.

Continuing unabated is the positive impact of the value of residential property adjacent to park lands. Lot value benefits accrue to individual properties adjacent to or near parks, and to the municipal tax base more broadly (Alberta Recreation and Parks Association 2007; Harnik and Crompton 2014). Unfortunately, this also has triggered economic interest in repurposing public lands using sustainable city rationales. The economic benefits of park lands can end up being a perverse incentive for its own demise when evaluated using only economic metrics.



Oliver Outdoor Pool  
SOURCE: City of Edmonton



There is some positive news as communities reacted to the pandemic. There is evidence that other forms of public spaces are being repurposed, such as roadways, back lanes, driveways, etc., into places to meet, discuss, hold music concerts, etc. These spaces have been turned from sociofugal spaces, spaces that keep humans apart and discourage communication, into sociopetal spaces that do the opposite (Mehta 2020); parks are clearly the latter as well. Existing leisure delivery models were modified, or new business models were created, that supported existing and new leisure activities (van Leewen, Klerks, Bargeman, Heslinga and Bastiaansen 2020). These represent new and different opportunities than ever before, and suggest recreation and leisure will not be shut down even in times of Covid.

## PARKS, PLANNERS, POLITICIANS & URBAN DESIGN

The impact of Covid on parks, recreation, and leisure has been devastating as was enumerated earlier. If there is any silver lining, the data shows how important parks, recreation, and leisure are to their communities, and to the contribution made to the development of a resilient community. Both the general public and elected officials appear to have internalized to an even greater extent their appreciation for parks and recreation services. An increase of 70% in appreciation for parks was seen among the public with 94% of municipal leaders showing an increased awareness of the value of parks to public health and the crisis resiliency during Covid (Park People 2020). Most importantly, parks and recreation by their nature are a natural elixir to help society combat crises like Covid in addition to pre-existing poor economic, health, wellness, stress, social, and ecological conditions. Covid however has also shined a light on underlying problems and inequities in society such as racism, and poor mental and physical health, and all made

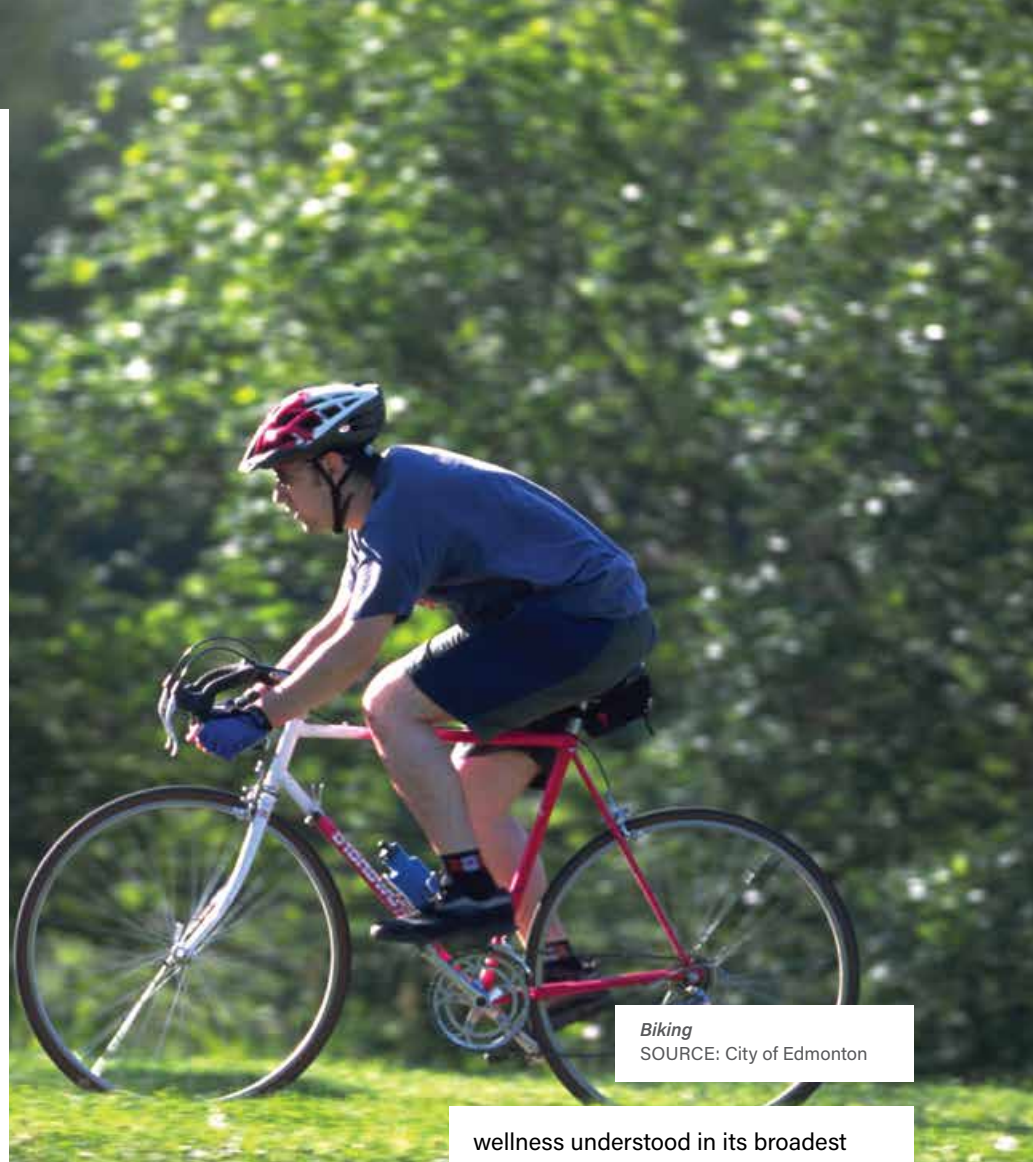
worse by the pandemic. Not everyone may have the financial wherewithal to access green spaces, recreation facilities, and equipment. There are park deserts in some of our urban areas.

Where to from here? Urban planners and politicians are the masters of urban design in our governance systems. Captain Obvious would say Covid has left us with a legacy that will likely extend long after the vaccine is effective. In Alberta we saw a remarkable trend where people flooded to their outdoor parks while simultaneously having somewhat more muted negative emotional reactions to the pandemic than other provinces. It is argued here, with that in mind, we need to reflect on and revisit, our strategic processes writ large.

First, the guiding principle for city building should be human health and

wellness understood in its broadest sense. Municipal Development Plans in Alberta invariably generally speak to this, but inevitably provide multiple and competing policy directives that are near impossible for the public and practitioners to interpret. Park lands and recreation could be recast as even more integral in the role of contributing to a resilient community. This may inform different budget choices in times of constraint.

Second, not all populations engage fully in public discourses and civic engagements. Equal access to strategic and land use change processes is not the same as equitable access. Social media and disinformation campaigns in recent years has made effective engagement worse. Some populations have been simply more impacted by the pandemic than others, and includes low income, LGBTQ+, those with pre-existing health conditions, seniors, low income populations, and



Biking  
SOURCE: City of Edmonton





*Heritage Festival*  
SOURCE: City of Edmonton



*Playground*  
SOURCE: Robert Priebe



*Silverskate Festival*  
SOURCE: City of Edmonton



*Edmonton Snowboarder*  
SOURCE: City of Edmonton

others. This uneven engagement of vulnerable populations was a pre-Covid, pre-existing condition, and should be a Covid learning. How can we, at an earlier time, more fully engage the diversity of our populations in park land and other urban design changes? Faster more expedient processes privilege economic interests and outcomes, not the cultural and social setting of the community.

If past is prologue, elected officials may choose to reduce recreation and leisure services and opportunities due to the enormity of funding challenges. This appears to be an inevitable outcome, and in the short-term may be required. However, the near and long-range reductions of public parks recreation and leisure choices represent a policy choice. The community mobility data evidence suggests this may not be the time to make those reductions with the health and wellness of the community at stake.

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Robert attained his undergraduate degree from Brock University in 1979, a graduate degree from Queen's University School of Urban and Regional Planning in 1985, and a PhD from the University of Alberta in 2019. His PhD dissertation focussed on park land decision-making using institutional theory. Robert's expertise also includes 32 years as a professional planner including 29 years as a parks, schools, open space and recreational facility planner in the Edmonton region. He retired from full time public practice as the Director of Parks Planning with Edmonton but provides on-line park consultative services ([planningparkadvice@gmail.com](mailto:planningparkadvice@gmail.com)).

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Ben has concurrently held several positions in the Alberta Parks and Recreation Association (ARPA) where he currently serves as program coordinator, furthermore, he has served as the secretariat coordinator for World Urban Parks (WUP) since 2017. Ben graduated summa cum laude with his bachelor's degree in kinesiology and exercise science from LeTourneau University (Longview, TX) and obtained his graduate degree from the University of New Brunswick (Fredericton, NB) in sport and recreation studies.

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Jason is an innovative parks and recreation planner with over 20 years of experience in the municipal sector, covering the full 360 degrees of service delivery, from program delivery to long-range planning. He is currently a parks and recreation planner with Quantum Recreation and the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association vice-president. Furthermore, Jason understands the importance of parks and recreation as he has managed numerous needs assessments, strategic plans and often uses the process as a vehicle for community development. He obtained his degree from the University of Manitoba (Winnipeg, MB) in Recreation Management and Community Development.

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# AFTER THE PANDEMIC

SUBMITTED BY: Rylan Graham PhD, RPP, MCIP | Nikita Kheterpal MPlan | Fabian Neuhaus PhD



Third Avenue SW Office District  
SOURCE: Laurie Kimber



Third Avenue SW Residential Area  
SOURCE: Laurie Kimber

## STAKEHOLDER PERSPECTIVES REGARDING THE IMPACTS OF COVID-19 ON DOWNTOWN CALGARY

### ABSTRACT

This research explores the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on downtown Calgary. To better understand this relationship, 21 semi-structured interviews were completed with key informants who have varied interests in Calgary's downtown. The analysis of informant interviews revealed three distinct themes between COVID-19 and the downtown: 1) working from home introduced a dramatic shift in activity patterns; 2) the value of public space and support for local business changed; 3) new challenges with respect to the future of transit have emerged. We consider how these impacts might drive change in the function and activity of downtown Calgary.

### INTRODUCTION

Over the last several years, Calgary and more broadly Alberta, have been challenged by an ongoing recession. The city's boom-bust cycle is a familiar pattern given the city's economic dependency on the oil and gas sectors. As Canada's administrative hub for the industry, the sector is well represented in Calgary's downtown core (Sandalack, 2006). However, the impacts of the ongoing recession have been numerous and significant including job losses, company consolidations and office vacancy rates approaching 30%. The devastating effects of the COVID-19 global pandemic have had localized impacts on Calgary's downtown, such as a reduced number of people entering the downtown, which has further exasperated an already difficult situation.



The city, especially the downtown core, is not a single entity, but instead, reflects the collective efforts of countless stakeholders each with unique circumstances and agendas. While the pandemic inflicted societal impacts, individual responses to it are more specific. How did individual stakeholders react? And more specific to this research, from their perspective, what is the future of downtown Calgary?

We sought to better understand these perspectives by completing interviews with key stakeholders who represent the downtown. These informants offered insight on what they perceive as the long-term impacts on downtown Calgary as a result of the pandemic.

## INTERVIEWS WITH STAKEHOLDERS OF CALGARY'S DOWNTOWN

The objective of the research is to better understand stakeholders' perceptions regarding the implications of COVID-19 on Calgary's downtown. Given the unprecedented nature of the situation, the research, while drawing on established research methods, is of an explorative nature. There is no comparable event in living memory. Core to our approach is putting the stakeholders' perspective at the centre of the research. While the research initially concentrated on the future of the downtown more broadly, inevitably, the scope changed greatly with the turn of events that ensued in March 2020. As a result, the study captured the unfolding discussion and action surrounding COVID-19 and what respondents believed may be the 'new normal' for the city's downtown core.

It is important to note that out of all the stakeholders contacted for the research, nearly 75% agreed to participate in the interviews. This high response rate reflects that most of the stakeholders - whether decision makers or concerned resident groups - were willing to be involved around the topic of Calgary's downtown. In total, 21 stakeholders were interviewed. The interviews were semi-structured and flexible, allowing the interviewees to express an unbiased opinion as it relates to the downtown. The interviews were then anonymized, coded, and analyzed to extract the key themes.

Through the analysis of the interviews, three distinct themes emerged characterizing the relationship between COVID-19 and the downtown: working from home introduced a dramatic shift in activity patterns; the value of public space and support for local business changed; and new challenges with respect to the future of transit have emerged. However, we recognize the limitations of this research in that it represents only a snapshot both in time and perspective. The situation is in flux with daily changes to guidelines and practices and our findings represent the perspectives of a relatively small groups of stakeholders in the downtown. Nevertheless, these findings offer insight with respect to the impacts of the ongoing pandemic on Calgary's already challenged downtown core.

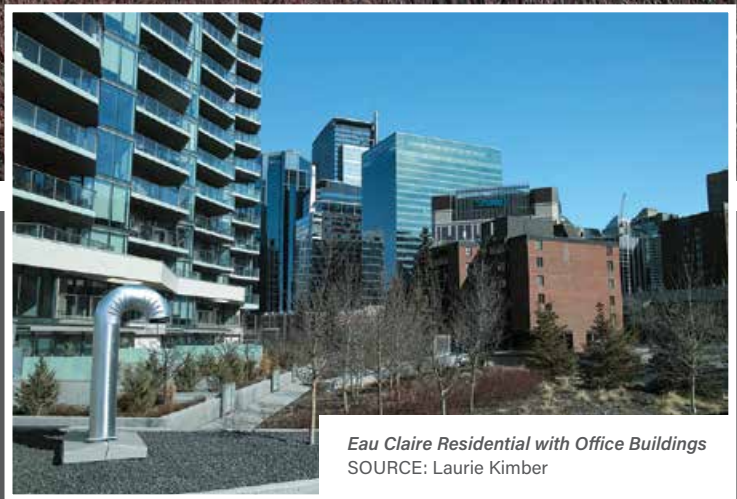




*Downtown Offices from Eau Claire*  
SOURCE: Laurie Kimber



*Future Opportunities*  
SOURCE: Laurie Kimber



*Eau Claire Residential with Office Buildings*  
SOURCE: Laurie Kimber

## KEY FINDINGS FROM INFORMANT INTERVIEWS

Although we present three key findings here, the first theme presents as the most commonly heard amongst informant responses.

**First, the pandemic has forced many to work from home and this has notable implications on the role or function of the downtown.** Although some organizations have allowed staff to return to the workplace, many in the downtown have opted to continue to have to have employees work remotely.

CBRE reported that Calgary's downtown office vacancy rate as of the second quarter of 2020 was 27% (CBRE 2020). Calgary's downtown was already struggling with excess office space and COVID-19 has only further exasperated the issue. One participant from a commercial real estate association stated "Not only did we have this oil patch collapse, which caused the vacancy rate. Now it's got exponentially worse because of COVID." Similarly, as a stakeholder from Calgary Economic Development



noted, “We’re facing a twin crisis, it’s not just the health pandemic, but crashing oil prices.”

Furthermore, the interviews revealed that the work from home model has not just affected the downtown in the short-term but will have far-reaching consequences. Out of the 21 informants interviews, only two had resumed in-office work while only one expressed that their intimate team was hoping to return to the workplace soon as they felt more motivated while working together. The remaining 18 interviewees stated that working from home has not affected their productivity, crediting improvements in technology that allows employees to communicate effectively with the whole team. Moreover, some suggested it allows for an improved employee-employer relationship as managers could no longer monitor each and every move of their team members.

In the long term, the concentration of workers in offices is uncertain as employers become aware of the benefits of working from home, such as the potential to reduce operating costs. A planner from the City of Calgary’s development agency shared, “I think now that we’ve all become used to working from home, it’s become culturally accepted that we can be productive. I think we’re going to see a huge shift now in terms of what we view how to work from home and what is efficiency. Because the efficiency of downtown was that you could have a mass group of people. This clustering was an idea of efficiency. I wonder if that will still be.”

On the other hand, landlords and property managers expressed increased pressure to work with tenants to provide assurances about security, cleaning, access, temperature checks, social distancing in elevators, and other protocols. As per an office property

manager in Calgary, “We spent probably most of the stay home period, figuring out the return-to-work protocol.” However, this opportunity allowed them to revisit their managements strategies to become more efficient. They added, “As a direct COVID-19 response, we said, what programs can we eliminate; and we effectively delivered a 15% cut to the operating costs.”

Another contrasting viewpoint to emerge presents some more positive news for Calgary’s vacant office space. As highlighted from an interview with a stakeholder from a commercial real estate association, a news article from



Fourth Avenue SW  
SOURCE: Laurie Kimber

June 24, 2020 reveals that “Brookfield Asset Management Inc., one of the world’s biggest real estate investors, is seeing higher demand for office space as workers return to socially-distanced buildings.” (Bloomberg 2020)

The findings suggest that the pandemic will have long term impacts as to how organizations consume space. As one informant stated “With COVID, we’re likely going to see a change in the demand for spaces. So, I think there’s going to be new things expected from all these places, social distancing being one of them.”

## **Second, the pandemic has allowed residents to value public spaces and appreciate local businesses.**

In the words of a City Councillor, the “COVID-19 crisis has forced us to look at our public realm differently.”

The pandemic and ensuing restrictions have undoubtedly validated the good planning tenets of creating healthy communities with access to public spaces and active transportation options. Informants admitted to relying on outdoor destinations — from their neighbourhood streets and sidewalks to local or riverside parks and camping sites. Open spaces have provided residents opportunities to take a break from their home-offices, socializing at a safe distance, and exercise, while being able to enjoy warm weather. The pandemic also made residents cognizant of the benefits of supporting their community as they proceeded to acknowledge their local businesses by shopping and eating locally.

Alternatively, the pandemic could be an opportunity for the City to creatively adapt urban spaces in the downtown in service of individual and collective health — whether that means widening sidewalks, creating more bike lanes, or allowing adjacent business to use public space to accommodate patrons. A planner from the City of Calgary expressed that being dominated with concrete office structures, the downtown does not present itself as an attractive destination to local residents. “It’s a wind tunnel with no trees and a bunch of cement. So, if they reduce the width of the roads and added some trees and bike lanes and made it feel more like a neighbourhood maybe people would want to live there.”

## **Third, as COVID presents several challenges to transit use, what will be the role of transit in the cities of the future?**

"In COVID, transit isn't ideal, but in a non-COVID world a little bit better transit, up to the north, down to the south is what we need" a property manager in Calgary shared.

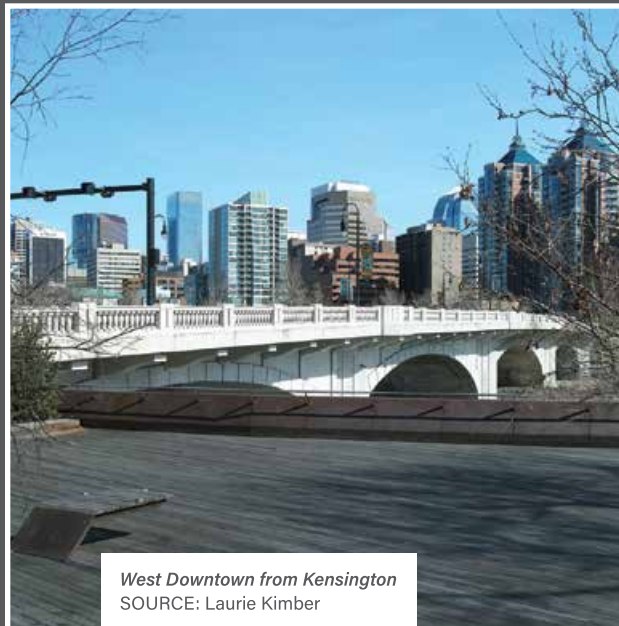
Many Calgarians arrive downtown via the City's transit system and support local shops, cafés, restaurants, and businesses. The closure of all non-essential businesses in March triggered by the pandemic caused a negative impact on both fronts. The pandemic has strained City transit as buses and trains operate at much lower capacities, in part because they are perceived as an unsafe mode of transportation. Ongoing public discourse has revealed questions surrounding the role of transit and plans to expand the network. However, the general sentiment from respondents, is that while the pandemic has challenged public transportation, Calgary's economic rebound and sustainability goals are supported through better transit, and in particular construction of the LRT Green Line.

## COVID-19 AND PLANNING IMPLICATIONS FOR CALGARY'S DOWNTOWN

The informant interviews offer insight regarding the potential long-term impacts of the pandemic on downtown Calgary. For one, many companies once wary of work from home arrangements (associating it with decreased productivity), are now supportive of extending it into the future. A more permanent transition towards this model would likely reduce the amount of office space needed to support employees. It remains to be seen the extent to which companies

located in Calgary's downtown core will adopt such an approach. Many employees might wish for this arrangement to remain permanent. Others, however, likely miss and crave the social interaction that the workplace offers and the buffer it establishes for a healthier work-life balance. Even then, companies may need to expand the amount of space to allow for appropriate measures in social distancing. This runs counter to current trends where companies have swapped out private offices for an open office concept in an effort to reduce costs.

The uncertainty of how office space in



Calgary's downtown will be occupied presents further uncertainty in what was an already challenged market. Pre-pandemic, challenges in the oil and gas sectors had already resulted in the highest vacancy rates in the country. In recent years, the emergence of co-working spaces has helped to absorb some of the surplus office space throughout the city (including the downtown). However, it is hard to imagine the addition of anymore co-working spaces in the near future, as demand has softened with social distancing efforts in place and requirements to reduce one's social bubble. Thus, what was very recently seen as

at least part of the solution to absorb surplus office space, now no longer presents as a viable strategy.

If the critical mass of Calgarians spending time downtown remains lower-than-normal, then it presents ongoing implications in how public space is occupied. On one hand, we can imagine parks and plazas to be less vibrant with fewer people around to enjoy their coffee or lunch breaks outside. Conversely, much of the public realm in downtown Calgary has been designed in a way to make life for the suburban commuter easier. Wide one-way streets dissect the downtown

east to west, creating barriers to pedestrians and cyclists moving north-south. With less people and traffic flowing into the downtown during the typical work hours, it presents an opportunity to reallocate space – reallocating space for vehicles to safe and enjoyable spaces for people. Beyond the allocation of space, the effects of the pandemic might lead to broader reconsideration of the purpose of downtown and how it functions. A limited number of public spaces and pockets of storefronts produce the type of environment associated with a healthy and dynamic downtown. Instead, the downtown has long been

challenged to offer an attractive environment beyond the traditional working hours. This is largely a product of the mono-function of downtown Calgary as the city's node of employment. The reduced number of office workers downtown, might make it more apparent and obvious to politicians, policy makers, and the general public the impacts of building a mono-functional downtown. Instead, the impacts of COVID-19 might bring a reimagining of the function of the downtown – what is the role of the downtown, and for who?

The pandemic also presents noteworthy implications for Calgary's public transit network. Amid the pandemic, City



Council was tasked with making a critical decision about the proposed Green Line, an expansion of the city's LRT network and one of the largest infrastructure projects in the City's history. Critics argue that together the pandemic and the ongoing economic downturn have forever altered the need for the Green Line – which will extend LRT from the north, through the downtown and into the southeast quadrant. Alternatively, challenging economic times is an argument for better public transit as transit offers an affordable and equitable way for Calgarians to reach their destinations, many of which are currently underserved by transit.

The core of the problem both economically and socially is uncertainty. A proactive approach that is inclusive and collaborative will enable a broad range of stakeholders to remain active in their area of expertise and continue to creatively contribute to the activation of the downtown. The insight offered by informants in this research offers direction in forging a path towards building a more resilient downtown.

**Rylan Graham PhD, RPP, MCIP** is an Assistant Professor in the School of Planning and Sustainability at the University of Northern British Columbia. His research interests centre around issues related to growth management, neighbourhood change and downtown revitalization, and plan evaluation. Rylan is a Registered Professional Planner with the Planning Institute of British Columbia, a Full Member in the Canadian Institute of Planners, and has practiced as an Urban Planner in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Rylan holds a PhD from the University of Calgary, an MA (Planning) from the University of Waterloo, and a BA (Geography) from the University of Regina.

**Nikita Kheterpal MPlan**, is a Planner with the Peace River Regional District in British Columbia and a graduate of the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at the University of Calgary.

**Fabian Neuhaus PhD**, is an Associate Professor at the University of Calgary in the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape (SAPL). He received his doctorate in urban planning from UCL, UK. His research interest is temporal aspects of the urban environment and co-create planning processes with a special focus on Habitus, Type and Ornament in the sense of Activity, Technology and Memory. Over the past decade, he held teaching and research positions at UCL in the UK and at FHNW in Switzerland. His research output includes journal articles, including in *Urban Planning or Information, Communication and Society*, and books such as *Studies in Temporal Urbanism or Emergent Patio-Temporal Dimensions of the City*. He previously worked with architecture and urban design practices in the UK and Switzerland and on research projects at universities in Switzerland, Germany the UK and Canada. With a focus on physical form, he has worked extensively on typology and its connection to accessibility, aging and participation. Currently, he heads a research project on design pedagogy. He leads the Richard Parker Initiative at SAPL, exploring stakeholders' role in collaborative planning processes, providing thought leadership and a platform for civic discourse more on [NEXTCalgary.ca].

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This research was supported by the Richard Parker Initiative at the School of Architecture, Planning and Landscape at the University of Calgary. The research team would like to thank the stakeholders and experts who took part in the research as participants and collaborators.

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# PRIORITY OF OBLIGATIONS TO THE PROFESSION

SUBMITTED BY: Karen A. Smith Q.C. PARTNER Parlee McLaws LLP

Every year the Alberta Professional Planners Institute (APPI) receives complaints respecting the conduct of its members concerning actions a member has taken while in the course of undertaking employment and/or professional obligations. Some of these complaints arise from actions a member of the public considers to be a breach of a Planner's professional obligations including adhering to the Professional Code of Practice. The member's response is often that they did the questioned activity as part of their job. Unfortunately for the member, if the conduct is deemed unprofessional or unskilled, this reasoning will not serve the member well. Complaints raise the issue of the importance of a member's obligations to the profession where competing obligations are in play. In the professional context, competing obligations can arise from a number of circumstances. Typical types of competing obligations can include: Professional Obligations vs. Obligations to the Client. This most often affects consultants but can also involve a public official acting on behalf of a community agency or other public body. If the client/ employer takes a stance that the Planner must present a position that is in conflict with the best interests of the public or the profession and is unwilling to compromise, then the Planner must discharge the commission. This action is not uncommon among APPI members.

## PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATIONS VS. OBLIGATIONS TO AN EMPLOYER

An employer cannot require a Planner to take any action or position that conflicts with the Code of Professional Conduct. For example, if a municipal manager asks a Planner to proceed with a land use redesignation that violates the rights of a landowner, the Planner must take an opposing position and, if the manager is unwilling to reconsider, then resignation may be an only option. This situation also arises occasionally.

## PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATIONS VS. OTHER LEGAL OBLIGATIONS

Assuming an APPI member is compelled to attend a court or legal proceeding, that member's professional obligation supersedes an employer's position on a matter or an insistence to maintain a certain position.

## PROFESSIONAL OBLIGATIONS VS. PERSONAL ETHICAL OBLIGATIONS (RELIGIOUS/MORAL)

If a Planner has strong moral or ethical beliefs that conflict with professional obligations, this must be considered in light of the professional obligations. If a Planner refuses to deal

with development of a religious institution because it would conflict with their faith, they may be in violation of their professional obligations. From a professional legal perspective, the obligations to the profession must always take priority over other competing obligations. An examination of the nature and source of the professional obligation illustrates this. Independent self-regulating professions are established by legislation. APPI is constituted under the Professional Planner Regulation (the "Regulation"), which is enacted under the Professional and Occupational Associations Registration Act (the "Act"). APPI is granted broad authority to regulate the profession. The standard which a member's conduct will be held against is set out in section 19 of the Act. This section confirms that a member's conduct will be considered professional or occupational misconduct and/or unskilled practice if it is detrimental to the best interests of the public, harms the standing of the occupation generally or displays a lack of skill or knowledge. Following a finding of unskilled or professional misconduct, a member's registration may be suspended or cancelled, along with a publication notice and fines.

## PROFESSIONAL CODE OF PRACTICE

The Regulation now also contains a Professional Code of Practice (the "Code") which further details and clarifies the expectations of each member's conduct. The expectations of conduct outlined within the Code are given significant consideration by the Discipline Committee any time a member's actions or behavior have been brought into question. The Code includes the following:

1. A regulated member must practice in an ethical and responsible manner and their efforts must address the public interest.
2. A regulated member must provide professional services
  - (a) with integrity, objectivity and independence,
  - (b) in a manner that respects the diversity, needs, values and aspirations of the public and encourages discussion on these matters,
  - (c) in a manner that acknowledges the inter-related nature of planning decisions and their consequences for individuals, the natural and built environments and the broader public interest, and
  - (d) with consideration to the cumulative and long-term implications of the member's services.



3. The regulated member must take all reasonable steps to maintain their professional competence, knowledge and skills and must fully comply with the continuous professional learning requirements of the Institute.
4. A regulated member must hold in confidence all client information unless the member is permitted by the client or is required by the Act or another enactment or by order of a court to disclose the information.
5. A regulated member must refrain from engaging in any business practices that detract from the professional image of the Institute or its members.
6. A regulated member must refrain from serving a client under any terms or conditions that would impair the member's professional independence.
7. A regulated member's conduct and practice must enhance the reputation of the Institute and its members, including
  - (a) by providing mentoring assistance to less experienced members of the Institute where possible and by assisting non-regulated members to achieve the designation of Registered Professional Planner (RPP), and
  - (b) by respecting other members in their professional capacity and, when evaluating the work of another regulated member, by doing so with objectivity and fairness, avoiding ill-considered criticism of the competence, conduct or advice of the member.
8. A regulated member must act in accordance with all applicable legislation and other laws.
9. A regulated member must report any illegal conduct of any member to the appropriate authority.
10. A regulated member must report to the appropriate authority any conduct of a member that is incompetent or unethical with respect to the practice of professional planning.

Membership in a professional association is a privilege and not a right. Membership in APPI is at risk if a Planner does not keep his or her professional responsibilities at the forefront. The law governing unskilled and professional misconduct does not allow for "wiggle-room" to excuse a member for conduct that was well-meaning, required by contractual obligations or even where the negative results were unintended.

One's obligations to the public interest and the profession supersede all others. Obligations to a client or employer are both contractual duties. Any contract that required a professional to breach their statutory duty of conduct may be unenforceable due to illegality and could not form the basis for a conflicting duty.

**Karen A. Smith Q.C. PARTNER Parlee McLaws LLP,** is an experienced senior lawyer and partner of Parlee McLaws LLP. Her main area of practice is civil litigation with a strong emphasis on professional regulatory work. Karen has a diverse background working with a variety of clients and acts on behalf of numerous colleges and associations (including the Alberta Professional Planners Institute) as lead legal counsel, dealing with matters as independent counsel and responding on behalf of regulated members to regulatory processes. She has appeared before all levels of court, including Courts of Appeal and numerous administrative tribunals.

# SUMMARY OF APPI DISCIPLINE DECISION AND SANCTIONS

IN THE MATTER OF A HEARING PURSUANT TO THE PROFESSIONS AND OCCUPATIONAL REGISTRATION ACT, R.S.A. 2000, c. P-26, AS AMENDED;

AND IN THE MATTER OF A HEARING INTO THE CONDUCT OF AN ALBERTA PROFESSIONAL PLANNER, PURSUANT TO THE PROFESSIONS AND OCCUPATIONAL REGISTRATION ACT, supra;

AND IN THE MATTER OF A HEARING INTO THE CONDUCT OF A PLANNER UNDERTAKING VIRTUALLY, COVID-19;

AND IN THE MATTER OF A HEARING INTO THE CONDUCT OF A PLANNER PURSUANT TO A COMPLAINT BY A COUNTY REGARDING UNSKILLED PRACTICE AND/OR PROFESSIONAL MISCONDUCT;

A Registered Planner with APPI was employed by a County in Alberta. In his responsibilities as a Planner for the County, he undertook the processing of planning applications presented to the Municipal Planning Commission. In 2018, a developer applied for a series of planning applications. After a public hearing was undertaken, the County issued a development permit for the development. That development permit was appealed by a number of parties. The Registered Planner made submissions to the SDAB on the development permit on behalf of the County. After the SDAB heard the appeal of the development permit, it gave a decision issuing the development permit with varied conditions.

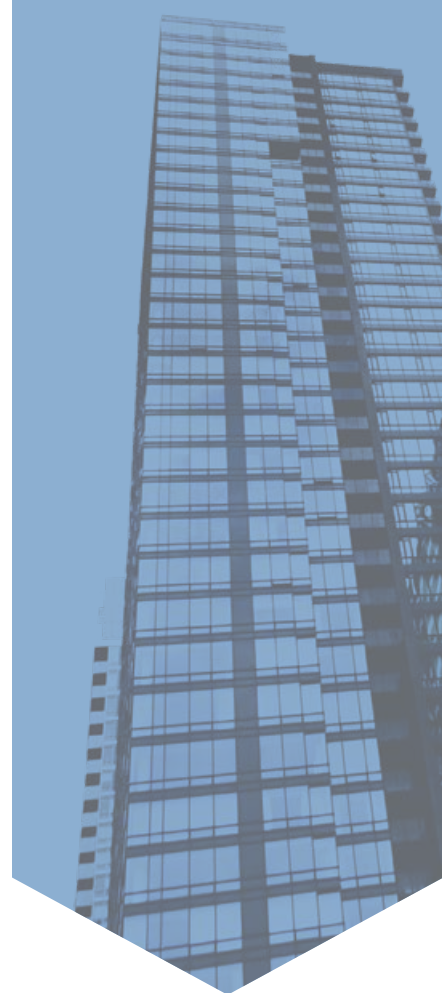
Subsequently, the Planner prepared a critique of the SDAB decision regarding a possible appeal of the decision to the Court by the County. The County subsequently decided not to appeal the decision. The Planner then emailed a copy of his critique to the developer. Subsequently, the developer brought an application to appeal the SDAB decision to the Court of Appeal.

Subsequently the Planner's position with the County was terminated. After termination of his employment, the Planner provided pro-bono advice to the developer regarding submission of a revised development permit for the same project to the County. Later that year when the SDAB heard the appeal of the revised development permit, a document prepared by the Planner for the development was provided to the SDAB as a witness statement. It is noteworthy that the witness statement was provided without the Planner's consent. The Planner attended the hearing but did not participate and ultimately the SDAB issued a decision upholding the deemed refusal of the development permit.

During the course of his employment with the County, the Planner engaged in a pattern of communication by text message with representatives of the development regarding the processing of the planning applications that was inappropriate given the relationship between the developer and the County while the Planner was employed by the County.

DATED at the City of Calgary,  
in the Province of Alberta,  
this 19th day of August, 2020.

Discipline Hearing Tribune  
of the Alberta Professional  
Planners Institute.





The Planner in this instance took responsibility for his conduct and admitted to the following findings of professional misconduct which were accepted by the Discipline Committee:

1. The Planner inappropriately provided the developer with his critique of the SDAB decision (when it had been determined the County would not be appealing the SDAB decision).
2. The Planner inappropriately assisted the developer in advancing its revised Development Permit Application, including preparing materials in support of the appeal from the refusal when he had been involved in the application while an employee of the County.
3. The Planner engaged in a pattern of communication by SMS texts with the developer that was inappropriate given the developer was proceeding with an application for development with the County with whom the Planner was employed.

As a result of the admission of professional misconduct, the parties jointly submitted Orders as to sanction which were accepted by the Discipline Committee as follows:

1. A Reprimand was issued against the Planner.
2. The Planner was required to undertake continuing education within a year of a date of the Order with respect to:
  - a) 10 hours of approved continuing education focused on conflict of interest and boundaries; and
  - b) 10 hours of approved continuing education focused on professional communication.
3. The Planner was obliged to pay costs in the amount of \$5000 within two years of the date of the Order.
4. The Executive Director maintained discretion to suspend the Planner to title pending a hearing should the Executive Director conclude that the Planner had breached this Order.
5. There was publication on the findings and Orders on a "no name" basis.

## WHY IS THERE PUBLICATION OF THIS DECISION?

In this instance a decision was made by the Discipline Hearing Tribunal of APPI to publish the results of the case on a "no names basis". This was an instance of a proposal being presented to the Discipline Committee, on consent, by the Member having legal counsel.

Where a Member's conduct has been found to be professional misconduct or unskilled practice following a disciplinary hearing, the Tribunal is required to consider the appropriate sanctions to address that conduct. One of the most significant sanctions that may be ordered in the planning context is the cancellation or suspension of registration with APPI and/or a consequent prohibition on the use of the title of Registered Professional Planner (RPP). These sanctions are issued for serious misconduct or unskilled practice and in these cases, the approach of APPI is such that the decision is published by APPI on a "names basis", due to the gravity of the offence and the sanction issued. The basis for this policy is that it serves the goal of protecting of the public and deterring members from similar conduct. Details of the offending conduct may be included with the publication to provide notice to other members that the conduct, practice or behaviour is unacceptable to the profession. The inclusion of the name of the suspended or cancelled Member is done in order to protect the public by providing the assurance that such conduct will not be tolerated, and to ensure the confidence of the public in the title of Registered Professional Planner.

In formulating the decision and sanctions on the matter documented in this publication, the Discipline Hearing Tribunal did not deem that the Member's unskilled practice/professional misconduct justified the suspension of the use of the RPP title. The Tribunal recognized the Member's willingness to take responsibility for those elements of conduct at issue in this matter. It also acknowledged that the Member had experienced negative consequences as the result of this matter, and that there had not been evidence presented of other formal complaints during the Member's long career, and that the public interest was protected through the Consent Order. The Tribunal deemed that the Consent Order would deter the Member from repeating the conduct subject of the complaint and the rehabilitation/remediation in the Consent Order would address the Member's unskilled practice and professional misconduct with an educative intent to improve future professional practice. The publishing of these findings on a "no names" basis was deemed to be a sufficient warning for other members of APPI.



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