

## ASSIGNMENT 6 – **Best Practice Review**

GRADE WEIGHT     10% (Group)

DUE DATE            29 OCT: Information Panel Preparation  
                            03 NOV: Best Practice Briefing: Public Meeting Simulation

### BACKGROUND<sup>1</sup> AND PURPOSE

In the recent past, municipalities across North America have adopted and/or tried different types of innovative sustainability plans, programs and projects in the area of land use, transportation and environmental planning. Since the mid-nineties municipalities have increasingly taken on the challenge of developing practices that will ensure the long term sustainability of their communities. There are a variety of approaches that can be used to develop sustainability plans and a multitude of tools that can support the implementation of the plans. For instance, Smart Growth Principles have been widely adopted across Canada, which are used to guide land use decisions towards more sustainable development choices. They promote compact, mixed use development, encourage the provision of a variety of transportation options, advocate for green building and the preservation of open space. Such approach essentially promotes following (but not limited to):

1. *Housing Choice*: Create a range of affordable, quality housing choices
2. *Vibrant, Walkable Complete Communities*: Foster development that creates vibrant, unique, walkable complete communities where uses like residential and commercial are mixed to create attractive places to live, work and play.
3. *Smart Building Design*: Encourage building designs that contribute to the context of a pedestrian-oriented neighbourhood and use green building technologies
4. *Renew Existing Communities*: Direct development away from unsettled areas and encourage growth and renewal in existing communities
5. *Green Infrastructure*: Utilize green infrastructure to save money and protect the environment.
6. *Green Space, Farmland and Ecologically Sensitive Areas*: Preserve and enhance green spaces, farmland and environmentally sensitive areas.
7. *Broad-Scale, Integrated Planning*: Undertake broad-scale planning for cities and towns in adjacent regions and towns in adjacent regions and towns in a way that integrates land use and transportation planning for the entire region
8. *Transportation Options*: Provide varied transportation options and infrastructure for walking, bicycling, car pooling, car sharing, scooters, public transit and others
9. *Community Involvement*: Encourage effective community involvement early in the process to find unique solutions that fit with the community's vision of itself
10. *Focus on Implementation*: Utilize planning processes, tools and incentives to facilitate private sector investment and ease of navigation in achieving smart growth solutions

The **purpose** of this assignment in the Planning Studio is to **identify major best practices in the areas of land use, transportation and environmental planning** that specifically aim to promote sustainability principles in urban and regional planning practices.

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Savelson, Aviva and Buckle, Sarah (2010) "Sustainability Planning: Frameworks: Principles & Management Tools", Discussion Paper 19, City of Edmonton

Since sustainable physical planning has been recognized as one of the key motivators for creating healthier communities, it is expected that at least one group in the Planning studio will focus on evaluating best practices that directly promote increased physical activity, psychological well being and/or healthier outcomes for people.

#### BEST PRACTICE REVIEW

Students should identify “real-world” projects or programs or plans that promote sustainability principles for this assignment. Case studies can be drawn from reliable webpages, published technical reports or planning articles. For example, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) reports case studies for residential intensification and transit-oriented development (among others, see <http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/inpr/su/sucopl/index.cfm>). Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) and the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH) have published – Planning by Design: A Healthy Communities Handbook, which includes review of case studies (<http://www.mah.gov.on.ca/Page6737.aspx#Introduction>), for example:

- a) British Eco-Town Initiative, Leicestershire, United Kingdom
- b) Community Energy Plan, Toronto, Ontario
- c) Cornell – New Urbanism, Markham, Ontario
- d) Constructed Wetland, Cobalt, Ontario
- e) Don River Park, Toronto, Ontario
- f) Eco-Industrial Park, Hinton, Alberta
- g) Green Development Program Pilot, Caledon, Ontario
- h) Green Phoenix Project, Toronto, Ontario
- i) Greening City Hall, Cambridge, Ontario
- j) LED Street Lighting Pilot, Welland, Ontario
- k) Main Street North Redevelopment, Brampton, Ontario
- l) Ontario Food Terminal, Toronto, Ontario
- m) Queensway Community Garden, Prince George, British Columbia
- n) Rapid Transit Initiative, Waterloo Region, Ontario
- o) Rural Sustainability Policy Program, Huron County, Ontario
- p) Strait Area Transit Program, Port Hawkesbury, Nova Scotia
- q) Sustainable Transportation, Peterborough, Ontario
- r) Temiskaming Shores Active Travel Program, Temiskaming Shores, Ontario
- s) Vacuum Systems for Health Care, Turku, Finland
- t) Waterfront Skate Park, Thunder Bay, Ontario
- u) Wheel 2 Work Whitehorse, Whitehorse, Yukon

Students will form a group to research such case studies, assess best practices, and prepare an information panel for this assignment. When reviewing best practices, students must ensure that identified measures could be applicable in the Halifax Regional Municipality or the Province of Nova Scotia (for instance, best practice review of subway systems is irrelevant for the HRM). Essentially, **each group should target a set of best practices that can act as a recipe for sustainable development in HRM (or NS)**, possibly based on the lessons learned from background studies undertaken by the class in previous assignments.

### BEST PRACTICE BRIEFING: PUBLIC MEETING SIMULATION

Based on the review of best practices each group will prepare an information panel for a public meeting. Information panels are often used by professional planners to make their cases to the public. Studio walls should be used to prepare the information panel<sup>2</sup>. Size of the panel may depend on the available spaces in the wall. Students are also allowed to use flip-charts or other forms of presentation materials that can be hanged in front of the designated corner for the information panel (excluding the use of projector). Each group should prepare a **10 minute-presentation** describing their research findings in relation to the information panel prepared for the public event. Additional 5 minutes will be allocated for accepting questions from the public. In preparation of the information panel and the presentation, each group should:

- offer clear briefings of key best practices in the area of interest
- provide summary of key sustainability features (i.e. economic, social, environmental, and/or technological innovations)
- use graphics (such as maps, photo, charts, tables), and highlighted texts for easy interpretation
- conclude by offering suggestions on how these measures could enhance sustainability in the municipal or provincial context.

It is the responsibility of the group to develop a coherent and connected theme for presenting best practices to the public in the selected area of interest. Each group must prepare a **maximum three-page “summary fact-sheet” for the public** (hard-copy must be distributed to everyone in the class at the beginning of the session<sup>3</sup>). The summary fact-sheet may include a brief summary of the research (maximum one-page), and a reading list for the identified theme of presentation (i.e. bibliography, please include URL for web-access if available for the case-studies considered in the research). Note that no report will be required for this assignment.

### SOME LINKS TO BEGIN WITH

Victoria Transport Policy Institute

<http://www.vtpi.org/tdm/tdm12.htm>

Planning By Design: a healthy communities handbook (2009)

[http://www.ontarioplanners.on.ca/pdf/Healthy\\_Communities\\_Handbook.pdf](http://www.ontarioplanners.on.ca/pdf/Healthy_Communities_Handbook.pdf)

BEST DEVELOPMENT PRACTICES: A Primer for Smart Growth

<http://www.epa.gov/dced/pdf/bestdevprimer.pdf>

REVIEW OF BEST PRACTICES IN AFFORDABLE HOUSING

[http://www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/Portals/0/Downloads/SGBC\\_Affordable\\_Housing\\_Report\\_2007.pdf](http://www.smartgrowth.bc.ca/Portals/0/Downloads/SGBC_Affordable_Housing_Report_2007.pdf)

Sustainable Community Planning

<http://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/inpr/su/sucopl/index.cfm>

Sustainable Transportation Success Stories

<http://www.smartcommunities.ncat.org/transprt/trsstoc.shtml>

Smart growth initiatives

<http://www.smartgrowth.org/engine/index.php/resources/>

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<sup>2</sup> Please feel free to use print-outs of multiple documents, hand-drawings and/or photo-collage. Note that composition of the information panel is important. Do your best to enhance aesthetic features of your panel

<sup>3</sup> Please send me an electronic copy or a photo taken for the panel.