

PIRNETNEWS

Building and growing for a better tomorrow

Summer 2007

Volume 3 No. 5

From the Minister

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Minister's message



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Minister's message



I think it was Tiger Woods who said, "No matter how good you get you can always get better."

That's a pretty good description of the spirit that drives our efforts at the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal, and it's a message that we heard from several world-renowned experts at our [Places to Grow Summit](#) in Toronto on May 17th.

We are very pleased to have received two prestigious awards this spring for the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe – the Daniel Burnham Award in April from the American Planning Association, and now, a Canadian Institute of Planners award which we received in early June. (Stay tuned to the next issue of PIR NetNews for more details.)

But, the experts tell us, in a province as diverse as Ontario, one size – or in this case – one plan does not fit all.

And we agree.

On May 17 at the Places to Grow Summit, I joined with our two northern ministers, Rick Bartolucci and David Ramsay, who made similar announcements in Sudbury and Thunder Bay, respectively, to tell Ontarians about our government's [Northern Growth Plan](#).

The focus of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe is managing growth in the fastest-growing urban area in Canada – and the third-fastest in all of North America. But northern Ontario has an entirely different set of growth challenges and our Northern Growth Plan will focus on promoting growth, attracting new investments and creating better education and career opportunities for our youth.

May was also an exciting month for environmental innovation, as our government [announced the](#)

[winner](#) of the Lower Don Lands design competition. This waterfront revitalization project will provide the final link in Waterfront Toronto's redevelopment plans for the central waterfront in Canada's largest city. Ten thousand people will live in a sustainable community that also creates new wetlands and recreational space.

And on May 8, I joined Minister of the Environment Laurel Broten and Minister of Energy Dwight Duncan to announce that our government will begin using [deep lake water cooling technology](#) at Queen's Park and neighboring government buildings. This wonderful technology, which uses water from Lake Ontario, will save nearly 10 million kilowatt hours of electricity annually. That's enough to power 1,000 homes.

The deep lake water cooling initiative helps emphasize the fact that, with every passing day, we understand more about what we must do to address climate change. The McGuinty government is at the forefront of this quest to make Ontario a cleaner, greener place for families to live, and I'm looking forward to sharing with you more about that in the coming months... so stay tuned!

David Caplan
Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal

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Lower Don Lands design winners will plan 'green' city



A new vision to unite Toronto's waterfront was completed with the May 8 announcement that Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates Inc. had won the competition to create a "green" city on the Lower Don Lands.

The New York-based landscape architecture firm, which also designed the celebrated Brooklyn Bridge Park in New York City, presented an ingenious plan for naturalizing the mouth of the Don River while linking together three new waterfront communities.

The East Bayfront, the West Don Lands and the Port Lands will now connect naturally to the new "urban estuary".

"The chosen design will help us to transform the Lower Don Lands into an exciting new part of the city," said David Caplan, Ontario Minister of Public Infrastructure Renewal. Caplan was one of the speakers who addressed an audience of architects, planners and designers at an event organized by Waterfront Toronto at the Royal Ontario Museum, to learn who had won the competition.

Waterfront Toronto, which oversees the Lower Don Lands renewal, is the organization – supported by city, provincial and federal governments – that is responsible for overseeing and leading waterfront renewal. The Lower Don Lands project is a central component of Waterfront Toronto's plan for the city's entire waterfront.

The winning Van Valkenberg plan would also reconnect Toronto "with the tremendous beauty of its natural setting," added Caplan. The plan will shift the Don River's mouth to the south, preserving the Keating Channel as the heart of a new residential community, and will include a flood protection system around the new mouth of the river. Planning has already begun to bring roads and transit into the Lower Don Lands. These will service the residential neighbourhood, and provide access to parkland.

However, a comprehensive process for integrating the various components of the complex plan must still be established.

Twenty-nine design groups from 13 countries competed for the right to design the Lower Don Lands project.

The other three submissions were from: STOSS INC/Brown + Storey Architects/ZAS Architects; Weiss/Manfredi & du Toit Allsopp Hillier; and Atelier GIROT/Office of Landscape Morphology/ReK Productions.

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Summit shares ideas on how to grow



Nearly 400 municipal leaders, planning and land-use experts, developers, and urban planners from across Canada and the United States came together at the inaugural [Places to Grow Summit](#) in downtown Toronto on May 17.

The event was organized by the Ministry of Public Infrastructure Renewal's Ontario Growth Secretariat as a forum for sharing ideas and best practices for accommodating future growth while building livable and sustainable communities.

Keynote speaker [Parris Glendening](#), former Governor of Maryland and a pioneer of the 'smart growth' concept praised Ontario's growth planning efforts.

"As I reviewed the Growth Plan last year, I knew immediately that I was looking at a groundbreaking document that was both visionary and pragmatic," commenting Governor Glendening. "Truly, Ontario is blazing a path that is attracting international attention."

The conference featured sessions on a vast range of topics that included: developing infrastructure to support growth; engaging the public on growth planning; redeveloping underused properties like greyfields and brownfields; planning for smart growth in rural areas and small-towns; transit-oriented development; and planning for future employment growth.

As well, Minister Caplan announced at the event that the government is moving forward with developing a new [Northern Growth plan](#) to achieve and sustain growth. The focus of this Plan will be to create economic and lifestyle opportunities that will encourage youth growing up in the North to continue to live, work and raise their families there.

Former Toronto mayor and current president of the Canadian Urban Institute David Crombie acted as facilitator for many of the sessions, and master of ceremonies for the event.

Ontario Premier Dalton McGuinty also addressed the conference during a lunchtime address. "Let's remember today as a day that we turned a corner," McGuinty urged. "A day when we allowed ourselves to be inspired by noble ideals, when we applied ourselves to the challenge of making a difference for others."

The Premier and Minister Caplan accepted the [Daniel Burnham Award](#) from American Planning Association representative Carol Rhea for the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe. It is the first time a jurisdiction from outside the United States has been honoured with this prestigious award.

The Minister also noted that the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe had also recently been named the winner of a national award for planning excellence from the Canadian Institute of Planners.

"We now have our 'Oscar' and our 'Juno'," joked Caplan, in reference to the American and Canadian planning awards.

Other important guests at the Summit included the participants in the [Places to Grow youth engagement initiative](#). Team members from eight urban growth centres across the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Barrie, Hamilton, Kitchener-Waterloo, Markham, Mississauga, Oshawa, St. Catharines, and Toronto), aged 16-18, demonstrated the projects they have been working on since the initiative launched in March.

Premier McGuinty and Minister Caplan examined the youths' displays, which included scale models of the groups' visions for development in the downtown cores of their home cities, and chatted with the team members about their work and ideas.

In closing, Caplan encouraged the Summit's guests to "remember today as a day we paused, took a look at our way of life, decided what we wanted to change, and went ahead and built something great together."

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North is next on list of Ontario's places to grow



May 17th marked the Places to Grow Summit in downtown Toronto – but it also saw the announcement of another very important initiative that is part of the government's plans for promoting sustainable growth in Ontario.

Northern Development and Mines Minister Rick Bartolucci; Natural Resources Minister and Minister Responsible for Aboriginal Affairs David Ramsay; and Public Infrastructure Renewal Minister David Caplan announced in Sudbury, Thunder

Bay and Toronto respectively, that the next growth plan to be developed under the Places to Grow Act will be for Northern Ontario.

The Northern Growth Plan follows the success of the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe, which was launched almost a year ago and has already won two major planning awards.

Growth plans in Ontario are developed by the government in accordance with the Places to Grow Act (2005), and will help communities in Ontario to address unique regional challenges and enjoy greater economic development in an environmentally sustainable manner.

“The Northern Plan will focus on achieving and sustaining growth, and creating economic and lifestyle opportunities that will inspire our youth to continue to live, work, and raise families in the North,” said David Caplan in a morning speech at the Places to Grow Summit on May 17.

“For our communities to prosper, we need a plan to address regional challenges such as youth retention and the need for improved infrastructure networks,” said Bartolucci.

“We need the North to be able to compete globally by directing investments, planning and development to encourage and support viable long-term growth of northern communities,” said Ramsay. “This plan is consistent with the government's Forest Sector Competitiveness Strategy and will aim to ensure a balance between economic and environmental concerns.”

In addition to the Forest Sector Competitiveness Strategy, The Growth Plan for Northern Ontario will be consistent with other government initiatives, such as the investment of \$1.8 billion over five years in highway improvements through the Northern Ontario Highways Strategy, \$224 million in job creation through the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, and \$124 million through the first intake of the Canada-Ontario Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund. It will build on the Northern Prosperity Plan and the good work already done by northern residents and the Northern Development Councils.

Caplan emphasized that the new Northern Growth Plan will be developed in close consultation with municipal and Aboriginal leaders, as well as business, education, industry and environmental leaders.

"There has already been a lot of hard work done by northern leaders identifying priority areas for action," said Caplan. "This valuable work provides us with the base to build on and develop a Growth Plan for Northern Ontario that will result in a stronger, more prosperous north."

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PIR plays it cool on energy savings



Joined by Minister of the Environment Laurel Broten and Minister of Energy Dwight Duncan, Public Infrastructure Renewal Minister David Caplan made an important announcement in early May about an initiative that will reduce Ontario's energy consumption and lead to cleaner air and a healthier environment in the province.

The three ministers invited media to the basement of Queen's Park's Macdonald Block – home to several government ministries

– where, surrounded by pipes, generators and heating and cooling equipment, they announced that deep lake water cooling, which is already used to cool buildings in downtown Toronto, would now be used at Queen's Park as well.

The announcement is part of the commitment made by the McGuinty government in April 2004 to engage Ontario's 60,000-plus civil servants in a government-wide conservation effort, and to cut back on energy consumption in its own buildings – and buildings it leases from the private sector – as part of a province-wide commitment to reduce its energy consumption by 62 million kilowatt hours over three years.

“Our government is leading by example to clean up our air and build a culture of conservation in Ontario,” said Caplan. “It’s a win-win situation. This project is not only good for the environment – it’s good for taxpayers, too.”

Deep lake water cooling technology uses water from Lake Ontario to provide a reliable, efficient and sustainable source of cooling for offices. By replacing old chillers in its buildings with state-of-the-art, environmentally friendly technology, the government aims to reduce its electricity by just under 10 million kilowatt hours – enough energy to power about 1,000 homes -- in its first year of using the deep lake water cooling system.

“We are proud to have this innovative technology at Queen's Park,” said Duncan. “Deep lake water cooling is a great renewable source of energy that will cool our buildings effectively, while reducing

harmful emissions and our demand on Ontario's electricity grid.”

The government estimates that it will save \$4.5 million in energy costs over the next 30 years by using deep lake water cooling technology.

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