

Faculty of Community Services

Centre for Urban Research and Land Development



CUR Annual Report 2014-2015

Faculty of Community Services

RYERSON
UNIVERSITY

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THANK YOU TO OUR DONORS



MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR



We are pleased to submit this annual report in our second year of the operation of the Centre for Urban Research and Land Development (CUR) at the Faculty of Community Services, Ryerson University. During the past year, the Centre has made progress in meeting its mission by undertaking the funding of research, publishing reports and policy commentaries, delivering seminars, undertaking partnerships and hiring Ryerson students and graduates to participate in the activities of the Centre. All of the above noted activities are consistent with and support the stated mission of the centre.

The Centre has provided funding for eight different principle researchers over the past year and will put out a research call again this fall to provide opportunities for faculty to receive funding for projects that are consistent with the mission of the Centre. The Centre has produced three full research reports, four policy commentaries and one policy backgrounder with several more reports and commentaries forthcoming. In terms of seminars, the Centre has delivered or partnered in six seminars over the past year. The Centre is very interested in partnering with other research organizations. To this end, we have partnered on research and/or seminars with Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, Evergreen City Works Housing Action Lab, the Institute of Municipal Finance and Governance at the Munk Center, University of Toronto, Ryerson's School of Urban and Regional Planning on the annual Hemson Lecture, and most recently the National Executive Forum on Public Property. We are also pursuing partnerships with other organizations.

Throughout all of these activities we have engaged students and recent grads to participate in these initiatives mostly in the capacity of research assistants. These activities provide the students with experience and knowledge to support their careers in planning and policy practice. Over the past year we have employed nine different students and/or recent grads from our Planning School. We have also awarded the Michael Wilson/CUR Major Research Project Award to one of our graduate students, Adam Mattinson. The award was donated by one of our Centre founders, Patrick O'Hanlon.

We have put out a call for a post-doctoral fellow for the Centre. We have had a very positive response with 19 applications.

I should note that the Centre's Senior Research Fellow, Dr. Frank Clayton, has once again played a very significant role in the research agenda and management of the centre over the past year. We are grateful for his contribution.

In addition to building on the accomplishments of the past year, the management team is currently in the midst of a 5 year planning exercise to guide the future activities of the Centre.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "David P. Amborski". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" and last name "Amborski" clearly legible.

David Amborski

Director, Centre for Urban Research and Land Development

ABOUT US

Housed within the Faculty of Community Services at Ryerson University, the Centre for Urban Research and Land Development (CUR) is an expert led research centre, dedicated to formulating policies and solutions to address the challenges confronting urban growth and change within the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) as well as to educating students to take leadership roles in these pursuits. Its orientation is founded on uniting economics and market analysis with the understanding of social and environmental considerations.

VISION

To be a first-rate research centre which undertakes research to provide analysis and recommendations to help urban policy makers' make the best possible decisions.

MISSION

- To conduct research on land use and urban policy issues in an effort to improve policy outcomes.
- To enhance the experiential learning opportunities of our students in order to better prepare them for research and professional practice.
- To organize seminars and research lectures to inform and educate urban public policy professionals and decision-makers throughout the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE

Usha George, Ph.D.

Dean, Faculty of Community Services, Ryerson University

Professor David Amborski

Director, Centre for Urban Research and Land Development, Ryerson University

Frank Clayton, Ph.D.

Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Urban Research and Land Development, Ryerson University

Chris De Sousa, Ph.D.

Director, School of Urban and Regional Planning, Ryerson University

ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Patricia Arsenault

Executive Vice President, Altus Group

Michael Brooks

CEO, REALpac

Derek Burleton

Vice President & Deputy Chief Economist, TD Bank Financial Group

Mark Conway

Senior Partner, N. Barry Lyon Consultants Limited

Richard Joy

Executive Director, Urban Land Institute (ULI)

Richard Lyall

President, RESCON

Patrick O'Hanlon

President, Kylemore Communities

Edward Sorbara

Principal, The Sorbara Group

Bryan Tuckey

President & CEO, Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD)

Michael Turner

Senior Vice President, Real Estate Management, Oxford Properties Group Inc.

Carol Wilding

President & CEO, Chartered Professional Accountants of Ontario

PEOPLE

Principle Investigators

- David Amborski**, Professor, School of Urban and Regional Planning, Ryerson University
- Dr. Umberto Berardi**, Assistant Professor, Building Science, Ryerson University
- Dr. Joseph Chow**, Assistant Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, Ryerson University
- Dr. Frank Clayton**, Senior Research Fellow, Centre for Urban Research and Land Development, Ryerson University
- Dr. Chris De Sousa**, Director & Assistant Professor, School of Urban and Regional Planning, Ryerson University
- Dr. Murtaza Haider**, Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Programs, Ted Rogers School of Management, Ryerson University
- Dr. Carolyn Johns**, Associate Professor, Department of Politics and Public Administration, Ryerson University
- Dr. Darko Joksimovic**, Assistant Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, Ryerson University

Research Associates

- Steven Webber**, Associate Professor, School of Urban and Regional Planning, Ryerson University
- Raktim Mitra**, Assistant Professor, School of Urban and Regional Planning, Ryerson University
- Kyle Rae**, Distinguished Visiting Scholar, Faculty of Community Services, Ryerson University
- Shelagh McCartney**, Assistant Professor, School of Urban and Regional Planning, Ryerson University
- Jaclene Begley**, Assistant Professor, School of Urban and Regional Planning, Ryerson University

Research Assistants

- | | |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| Zach Youngerman | Geoff Schwartz |
| Joey Reeder | Ahmed Amer |
| Colin Wolfe | Nick Hiley |
| Lynn Duong | Rebecca Ke |
| Sam Biglieri | Faisal Shaheen |
| Justin Shin | Thomas Tiveron |

Senior Research Fellow

- Dr. Frank Clayton**

Administration

- Professor David Amborski**
Director, Centre for Urban Research and Land Development, Ryerson University
- Laura Greflund**
Administrative Assistant, Centre for Urban Research and Land Development, Ryerson University

RESEARCH FOCUS

Research is a primary activity of the centre. As specified in the Mission, it will be undertaken to inform urban policy decision-makers regarding the economic aspects of current conditions, policy issues and policy choices. The research themes, topics, and projects will be determined and undertaken based on the advice of the Advisory Committee and under the direction of the Management Committee.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS: RESEARCH REPORTS

Financing of Sewer and Water Infrastructure in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA)*

By: Dr. Frank Clayton

In this report, a comparison is drawn between the pricing and financing conventions of publicly and privately-provided utility services in the GTA and the history of how growth-related infrastructure for water and wastewater services became dependent on development charges for financing while other utilities fund all infrastructure through user charges.

The conclusion of this report is that significant public benefits would be achieved by shifting the financing of growth-related water and wastewater infrastructure to user charges from development charges. The report recommends that the responsibility for providing water and wastewater services in the GTA be provided by business corporations rather than departments of municipalities. It is noted that there is no a priori reason for municipalities to own and operate these utilities.

City of Toronto's Land Transfer Tax – Good, Bad or Merely Tolerable?*

By: Dr. Frank Clayton

This report provides background on the Land Transfer Tax (LTT) which the City of Toronto imposed on real estate transactions starting in February 2008. It documents what is known about the tax including issues where there is disagreement to help the reader come up with an informed opinion on whether the city's LTT is "good", "bad" or "merely tolerable."

¹ Also Policy Commentaries based on Research Report.

The report concludes that the City of Toronto's Land Transfer Tax is a tolerable tax, as taxes go. It produces sizeable revenue (on the upside of the housing market cycle), is transparent, and is efficient to administer. While the LTT is at odds with economic efficiency, economic impacts and urban form impact considerations, the report suggests that the existing literature has exaggerated the quantum of these negative ramifications.

A lack of equity/fairness is a key fault of the tax. In particular, no linkage exists between the payers of the tax and beneficiaries of the municipal spending funded by the tax.

A second flaw of the Toronto LTT is the cyclical nature of its annual revenue stream. The dependence of city spending on an unstable tax source like the LTT complicates fiscal budget planning as the spending tap cannot be turned off quickly in response to lower tax revenues.

Should the City of Toronto continue to levy the LTT, or should other municipalities in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) be allowed to levy this tax? The report's response to both questions is "no". While the LTT is a tax that homebuyers tolerate, the property tax is a much better way to fund municipal expenditures.

Warden Woods: A Case Study of Building Affordable Market Family Housing on Former Industrial Lands*

By: Dr. Frank Clayton

This report traces the transformation of 68 hectares (168 acres) of land in the former city of Scarborough from an under-performing industrial area to the family-oriented residential community now known as the Warden Woods Community.

It briefly describes conditions in the larger industrial area of which the Warden Woods lands were a part of around the year 2000, and provides insights into the numbers and types of housing built and the characteristics of residents occupying the new homes. The bulk of the report provides a chronology of the planning process that led to the conversion of the Warden Woods lands from industrial or commercial uses to a sizable lower-density residential community.

The City's promotion of the creation of a new community with a large component of affordable market ground-oriented housing for families has been a success in Warden Woods, and its intentions were realized. Among the keys to this success were relatively low land prices which

were linked to a mature industrial area which was in decline as an employment area, and the commitment of city planners and politicians to the redevelopment of an older industrial area to create a new residential community of affordable market ground-oriented housing.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS: POLICY COMMENTARY

Why There is a Shortage of New Ground-Related Housing in the GTA

By: Dr. Frank Clayton

This policy commentary argues that a shortage of serviced land is the major contributor to a marked decline in the production of new ground-related homes in the GTA thus contributing to the sharp rise in prices. According to TD Economics this underproduction of ground-related housing is contributing to poorer housing choices and reduced mobility of GTA households as well as contributing to deteriorating affordability.

The shortage has occurred despite the Provincial government requirement that municipalities maintain a minimum three-year supply of serviced and readily serviceable land at all times. Most GTA municipalities are not even monitoring the adequacy of their short-term land supply.

This commentary recommends that the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing immediately undertake to create an inventory of the short-term land supply at least annually and to work with errant regions to accelerate their supply of short-term land.

RESEARCH HIGHLIGHTS: POLICY BACKGROUNDER

Are the Growth Plan Population Forecasts on Target?

By: Dr. Frank Clayton

Fundamental to the Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (the “Growth Plan”) are the forecasts of population and employment for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (GGH) as a whole and for the region’s component upper- and single-tier municipalities. In this report, recently-released population estimates by Statistics Canada for 2011-2014 are applied as a check of the veracity of the population forecasts underlying the Growth Plan in the current five-year period (2011-2016) of the longer-term planning horizon.

The analysis finds that the annual growth for the Greater Golden Horseshoe as a whole has been modestly less than the growth forecast for the Growth Plan. All of the actual shortfall has been in the Outer Ring of the region. For the region's economic heartland, the Greater Toronto Region and Hamilton, the estimated actual growth has matched the growth that is being forecast.

Within the Greater Toronto Area and Hamilton, estimated annual population growth in the City of Toronto and Peel Region have exceeded the forecasts while actual growth in York and Durham Regions fell short. All three sub-forecast areas within the Outer Ring have had lower growth than forecast with the largest absolute difference occurring in Waterloo Region.

COLLABORATIONS

CUR has cultivated relationships with various research organizations for the purpose of building connections, disseminating research, improving outreach and raising awareness on important policy issues. To date, CUR has formed partnerships and collaborated with Evergreen CityWorks Housing Action Lab, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), Ryerson's School of Urban and Regional Planning and the Institute of Municipal Finance and Governance at the Munk Centre, University of Toronto.

Presently, CUR is pursuing partnerships with the Canadian Brownfields Network and National Executive Forum on Public Property.

EVENTS

Over the past year, CUR has held policy seminars on various topics which have brought together members of the public and private sectors, policy makers, academics, students, developers and government officials to generate discussion on pressing urban issues in the Greater Golden Horseshoe.

“Issues and Impacts of the Development Permit System in Toronto Area Municipalities”

October 2014 – CUR hosted “Issues and Impacts of the Development Permit System in Toronto Area Municipalities,” a new planning tool recently adopted by the City of Toronto. As the Development Permit System represents a significant shift in how development, consultation and many other facets of urban planning are managed, this seminar set out to explain how the approach works and to provide a forum for stakeholders to comment on its challenges and opportunities. The session raised many different perspectives and viewpoints in a constructive way, as panelists addressed questions from each other and from the audience.

Panelists included: Joe D’Abramo, Former Director, Zoning and Environmental Planning, City of Toronto; Bernie Steiger, Manager, Development Services, Planning and Infrastructure Services Department, City of Brampton; Bob Blazevski, Executive Vice President, DiamondCorp and Brian Bagley, President, Upper Jarvis Neighbourhood Association. The panel was moderated by David Amborski, Director, CUR.

“What does the Future Hold for Ontario’s Municipal Water and Wastewater Utilities and How They Fund Growth-Related Infrastructure?”

January 2015 – CUR held a policy seminar which posed the question; “What Does the Future Hold for Ontario’s Municipal Water and Wastewater Utilities and How They Fund Growth-Related Infrastructure?” This event included an overview of research by CUR Senior Research Fellow, Dr. Frank Clayton, followed by an expert panel discussion.

Keynote speaker: Dr. Frank Clayton, Senior Research Fellow, CUR. Panelists included: Stephen Stanley, Senior Vice President, Water Services, EPCOR; Bryan Tuckey, President & CEO, Building Industry and Land Development Association (BILD); Chris Loreto, Senior Consultant, StrategyCorp and John Presta, Director of Environmental Services, Regional Municipality of Durham. The panel was moderated by David Amborski, Director, CUR.

“Land Value Capture: Principle and Practice in Canada and Around the World” and “Reshaping Metropolitan America”

February 2015 – CUR partnered with the Institute of Municipal Finance and Governance at the University of Toronto for an event entitled “Land Value Capture: Principle and Practice in Canada and Around the World.” Professor David Amborski delivered a presentation explaining applications of Land Value Capture in Canada.

February 2015 – In the latter part of February, CUR partnered with Ryerson’s School of Urban and Regional Planning for the Inaugural Hemson Simpson Public Lecture Series. Dr. Arthur C. Nelson, Professor of Planning & Real Estate Development at the University of Arizona delivered his presentation, “Reshaping Metropolitan America.”

“How Can the GTA Expand the Supply of Affordable Housing at a Time of Limited Government Support?”

April 2015 – This policy seminar examined ways governments and the private sector can work to provide a significant increase in the supply of affordable housing in the GTA through land use policies, use of vacant or underutilized public lands, and the encouragement of a level of new supply that keeps up with or exceeds underlying demographic growth.

Panelists included: Mark Conway, Senior Partner, N. Barry Lyon Consultants Limited; Hanita Braun, Executive Director of Project Management, Planning and Development, Verdicroc Development Corporation and Heather Tremain, Director of Planning and Development at Options for Homes. The panel was moderated by David Amborski, Director, CUR.

“Understanding the GTA Housing Market Under the Current Planning System”

June 2015 – CUR held a policy seminar on the topic, “Understanding the GTA Housing Market under the Current Planning System.” The focus of this seminar was on how the land use planning system is affecting the supply and price of new ground-related housing in the GTA within a framework of how housing markets operate. Both the demand and supply side of the ground-related housing marketplace were addressed with a specific focus on the supply of serviced land.

Panelists included: Russell Mathew, Partner, Hemson Consulting Ltd.; David Amborski, Director, CUR and Dr. Frank Clayton, Senior Research Fellow, CUR. The panel was moderated by Ben Dachis, Senior Policy Analyst, C.D. Howe Institute.

2015 MICHAEL WILSON/CUR MAJOR RESEARCH PROJECT AWARD

CUR is pleased to present the 2015 Michael Wilson/CUR Major Research Project Award. This award has been established through a generous donation by Patrick O'Hanlon and Kylemore Communities in honour of the late Michael Wilson, a pioneer in the Home Building Industry in Southern Ontario for over 50 years.

This award was given to the best Major Research Project that was of the highest quality and aligned with the Mission of CUR.

Congratulations to the award winner, Adam Mattinson for his Major Research Project entitled: "Dealing with Density: An Evaluation of Density Benefit Incentives in the Metro Vancouver Region."

ANNUAL OBJECTIVES

The annual objectives set out for CUR in its second year were to continue to uphold its dedication to provide analyses and recommendations to address the concerns confronting urban growth and change in the Greater Golden Horseshoe. Additionally, to produce evidence-based research and policy commentaries, engage with students, host events and continue to seek additional funding to meet its fundraising goals. CUR has met most of these objectives and is working to achieve others.

CUR is presently funding nine research projects headed by Ryerson researchers spanning various faculties such as the Faculty of Engineering and Architectural Science, the Ted Rogers School of Management and the School of Urban and Regional Planning. CUR has released three full reports and will release another three by September 2015.

CUR's research has been noted by various media outlets such as Novae Res Urbis, GTA and Toronto Editions, Real Estate News Exchange (RENX), Water Canada and The Toronto Star. CUR anticipates a busy 2015 - 2016 with various events, new research initiatives and collaborations. CUR aims to strengthen its presence in policy making and to continue to uphold the city building mission of Ryerson.

To date, CUR has secured funding from sixteen Founding Donor organizations who have committed a collective amount of 1.6 million dollars. The Centre continues to seek additional funding to ensure its longevity and sustainability.

CONTACT US

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