

# THE EDITORIAL PAGE

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## EDITORIAL

### Creative ideas to cut emissions

Sweeping report shows ways to have more and spew less

Imagine a Canada where only 30 per cent of people live in single-family homes and everyone else lives in a high-density neighbourhood, within walking distance to work. Cars are mainly used for pleasure. Homes run on solar heat and power.

These are just some of the changes envisioned in a national round table report on the environment that describes a major shakeup in every aspect of life as we know it — from where we live and work to the appliances we use, our transportation system, and how we generate energy and produce oil.

While it may seem like the federal task force is bracing us for a dramatic culture shock, the report is worth examining because it outlines how Canada's greenhouse gas emissions can be cut dramatically without serious impact on the economy. This report, released last week, claims we can bring emissions down by 60 per cent between now and 2050.

The answer depends upon two key points: the employment of all available technologies on all multiple fronts, and the magic of time.

If we started now, the prize over 45 years could be cuts that are 10 times deeper than the hotly contested targets of the Kyoto accord, which calls for emissions to be reduced six per cent below 1990 levels by 2012.

Environment Minister Rona Ambrose, and other critics of Kyoto, have said those targets are impossible to meet within the given time frame.

This report takes the short-term time pressure off, and provides an intriguing starting

point for further discussions.

One shouldn't be deterred by the fact the national round table was appointed by the Kyoto-friendly former federal Liberal government. Established in 1994, the 14-member panel includes representatives from business, labour, environmental groups, municipalities and aboriginal communities.

"We are very much on the same page" as the new Conservative government, said the group's chairman, Glen Murray. Ambrose "understands this fully, and I think has been certainly very supportive."

Some recommendations are ambitious, such as converting 26,000 electrically heated homes per year to high-efficiency gas or propane furnaces.

And some parts of the report are pie-in-the-sky. But others, such as cogeneration and carbon sequestration, are already planned or in the works.

Still, the ideas are detailed enough to at least use as a springboard for much-needed further dialogue, especially here in Alberta, which depends on energy markets for prosperity.

Albertans have been told they must wait until September at the earliest to find out what Alberta Environment Minister Guy Boutilier plans to do to deal with the serious challenge of the escalating rate of greenhouse gas emissions.

Boutilier has said his regulations to green up the oilpatch will be the "toughest" in Canada.

We'll see. Meanwhile, he should peruse this report for other emissions-reducing ideas.



**Environment Minister Guy Boutilier says Alberta regulations will be the toughest in Canada.**

### Military priorities take flight

Senior military officials and politicians have had their squabbles over which type of airplane Canada should buy first. But, at least they're arguing on the basis of merit, rather than which contract will prop up Montreal's aerospace industry.

The debate between Chief of Defence Staff General Ric Hillier and Defence Minister Gordon O'Connor is over whether to buy the Boeing C-17, which can move troops and equipment long distances, or to first replace the smaller, tactical Lockheed Hercules.

Meanwhile, Liberal defence critic Ujjal Dosanjh and Quebec economic development critic Denis Coderre are complaining there's nothing in this sole-source contract for Montreal's aerospace industry.

How predictable that spokesmen for the party that effectively gutted the nation's military for 13 years should see military purchases more in terms of domestic make-work projects, than their utility to the Canadian Forces.

That's how the Forces ended up with the Ilitis, a Volkswagen-based runabout built by Bombardier, during a previous Liberal administration.

Tendering is always a good protection for taxpayers, and there's certainly a case for keeping a domestic armaments industry viable.

But there's a place for sole-sourcing, in which a contractor with a unique product is invited to bid alone.

Hence the appeal of the C-17, a proven design that first flew in 1991, and — if a deal can be struck to take over part of a U.S. Air Force production run — with a short delivery time.

Canada's worst-kept military secret is that the Canadian Forces are likely to get both aircraft. (An announcement is expected this week.)

What does matter, is that this government appears prepared to make need the first priority in military procurements, not rewarding constituencies. It is a welcome change.

astrophic event.

By all indications, the seeds can remain viable in the vault for hundreds of years for most major food crops, while key grains can survive for thousands of years.

Now we've thought of everything. Or have we? The seeds may survive nuclear war, disease or any other force great enough to wipe out all the crops in the fields, but what about humans? Without farmers, survival of the fittest is a nutty idea.



### SUNDAY ESSAY

## Urban planners created the 'blight' of East Village

BEV SANDALACK  
AND JIM DEWALD

FOR THE CALGARY HERALD

Recent discussions about the downtown have included the surprising realization that there is urban blight lurking in the East Village, and the sudden call to "do something" about it.

In a city as dynamic and wealthy as Calgary, it is a shock to see this relatively small area of our downtown is the drug-riddled backwater usually associated with the likes of Detroit.

But more surprising might be the fact that the demise of the East Village is directly caused by some radical planning and development moves in the 1960s. It was a product of its moment in time.

Many North American cities are barely a century old and developed rapidly from relatively primitive circumstances to modernity. The first phase of urban development, which would last until approximately 1940, was characterized by the establishment of the patterns of land survey and subdivision, and then by incremental changes to older forms with the introduction of new building and transportation technologies and planning concepts. Street patterns were grafted onto existing frameworks.

In Calgary, the intersection of the rivers, the Canada Land Survey grid, the railway line and the railway company grid determined early town form. The Canadian Pacific Railway Company effectively acted as the first town planner, establishing a grid of streets aligned parallel and perpendicular to the rail line. The railway station and post office marked the town centre, and the downtown commercial district and warehouses developed around this centre.

The second phase of modern urban development corresponds to modernism, corporate development, and the invention of methods for town planning. This coincided with the period of economic growth following the Second World War, reaching its zenith in the 1960s and 1970s. History, tradition, and local and regional identity were thought to be old-fashioned, and huge pieces of many towns, cities, and landscapes were destroyed to make way for progress.

Zoning was the planning tool of choice at this time, and it created a pattern of distinct and separate land uses. The Central Business District became distinct from the suburbs, in terms of relative density and intensity. This pattern of development also contributed

to the need for transportation systems to link the various functions of the city. The 1958 City Zoning Bylaw put into play the processes that would result in the destructive practices of urban renewal of the 1960s and 1970s.

Much early housing still existed in the downtown core, now accommodating multi-family living. The downtown was commonly described at this time as a modern core isolated in a sea of substandard housing, or a "zone of deterioration." These higher-density mixed-use areas were compared unfavourably with the lower-density post-war suburbs.

Urban renewal managed to destroy huge pieces of downtown. It was an approach taken by many cities to get rid of perceived blight and encourage revitalization. The existing network of grid streets and sometimes of civic squares and small parks, were replaced by massive commercial blocks or traffic interchanges.

City planning documents reflected the prevailing paradigm. In 1965, the city, the province, and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation agreed to prepare an urban renewal scheme for the 31 blocks of Churchill Park (which included today's East Village). Urban Renewal Scheme No. 1A was prepared and approved to deal with the area between 1st Street E to 3rd Street E and roughly between 4th and 8th Avenues. Only the Federal Public building (8th Avenue and 1st Street S.W.), the Anglican Cathedral, and the Catholic Church (1st Street East at 7th and 6th Avenues South) were thought to be worth preserving. The rest was slated for "complete redevelopment."

The 1966 Downtown Master Plan recognized the continuing central role of the downtown, and set out strategies to improve its accessibility and simplify its structure. It proposed urban renewal plans to address "blight" in the east end, and it accepted that the

desire of every person to drive and store his/her automobile in the downtown must be accommodated. In emphasized high capacity roads and interchanges.

The 1966 plan reduced the downtown to simple two-dimensional diagrams. Transportation was the emphasis, and the plan's No. 1 objective was to double the number of cars that could enter the downtown.

Two concentric ring roads were intended to double the downtown's vehicle-handling capacity, and a network of one-way couplets would feed several parking structures. The outer ring would include a major east-west freeway, realignment and widening of 10th Street N.W., and upgrading of Memorial Drive with major grade-separated intersections at 14th and 10th Streets N.W., Centre Street N. and 4th Street N.E.

The East Village was described as "skid row," and the plan paved the way for its clearance. Ironically, it became even more derelict after the interventions began.

City plans identified six areas, with varying degrees of "substandardness." Much of the historic urban fabric of commercial and residential buildings was removed in the vast urban renewal program, and lost as well

were many of the amenities and services required to support residential development, including grocery stores, corner stores, and small retail businesses. In the late 1960s, scores of buildings were razed to make way for the school board complexes, Glenbow Museum, Calgary Convention Centre and the municipal complex.

The 1988 Winter Olympics initiated another period of development and optimism. Yet, the redevelopment also resulted in some expedited urban clearance in Victoria Park, Eau Claire, and East Village, and the removal of the Greyhound Bus Depot from its downtown location to west of

14th Street S.W., eliminating what had become a gathering place for the homeless and other marginalized people.

Redevelopment schemes eliminated older housing, converted two-way streets to one-way mini-freeways, and reduced the vibrant mix of uses to one or two uses that function only during the work day hours.

Redevelopment of the East Village is still stalled almost 50 years after urban renewal decimated the area. The area is a disappointing underutilization of surface parking lots. New social service facilities, including the Drop-in Centre and the Salvation Army Centre of Hope, serve an important function.

But, in the absence of balancing residential and commercial developments, this area is broadly considered a backwater for criminal and marginal activities.

Calgary has abandoned many visionary proposals, including the 1914 Mawson plan and a similar 1978 downtown plan. In place of more humanly scaled urban structure with strong connections between the river and the system of city streets, Calgary has settled for a vehicle-centred circulation system, segregated uses, and the destructive consequences of urban renewal. It will take great effort to reinstate the pedestrian and public realm as a focus of city planning and development strategy.

The "blight" in the east end isn't new, and it shouldn't have come as a surprise.

Homeless and other marginalized people need somewhere to go, and a look at the patterns of where street prostitution, drug dealing and vagrancy occur will show that they tend to fill the derelict and abandoned areas of the city.

The East Village is a creation of urban planning ideas of the 1960s. It will take more than just another big plan to revitalize the area. It will likely need a change of paradigm.

Big projects will not necessarily solve big problems. What is required is a rediscovery of the processes that produce a high quality public realm, and a fabric of the mix of uses that distinguish good urban form and urban life.

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