Implementing Walking and Cycling Policy in Ontario

Study Results and Directions

Neluka Leanage
PhD Student + Planner/Designer
Outline

• Project Background
  • Framework & Contexts

• Findings: Toronto & GTA Municipalities
  • Obstacles & Successes

• Some Case Comparisons

• Directions for Improving Implementation
Project Background

- **Dr. Pierre Filion: Leading Expert, Professor**
  - Canadian cities
  - urban form
  - land use-transportation patterns
  - Ontario Smart Growth Panel (nodes and corridors; pre-Places to Grow)

- **Neluka Leanage: PhD student, consultant, CivicAction fellow**
  - policy, plans, designs, behaviour shift strategies
  - active transportation, trails, parks, recreation
  - engagement, user experience, mapping
  - TCAT Steering Committee, 2008-2012

- **2 Other Grad Students**
Project Background

Planning Policies + Movements
(Alternatives to Automobile-Dependency)

1970s-‘80s-
Smart Growth
New Urbanism

1990s-
Transit-Oriented Development
Pedestrian/Walking

Late 1990s-
Traditional Neighbourhood Design

Places to Grow
2005-

2008-
Active Environments (Public Health-Planning)
Active Transportation
Cycling

Equity Approaches
Child-/Age-Friendly Cities
Complete Streets
Active City

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SCHOOL OF PLANNING
Project Background

Policies *not* translating into implementation

1990s- 10+ years  AT  2005- 10 years  2015  Today

Smart Growth

Places to Grow

Institutional Policies Planning Practices Implementation

Obstacles Failures Successes Catalysts Conditions

Ontario, GGH Regions, municipalities Case studies 75+ in-depth interviews Planners, Decision-makers

Do Things Better

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groundSHIFT  SCHOOL OF PLANNING
WATERLOO ENVIRONMENT
Project Background

7 Upper Tier Municipalities
18 Lower Tier Municipalities
5 GTHA Regions
3 Outer GTHA Regions/Counties

Today: Toronto & GTA Municipalities - Big Picture
Findings: City of Toronto

Places to Grow/Provincial Growth Plan & AT?
X Provincial policy not a factor or impetus
• Not a necessary or sufficient condition in Toronto case

• Provincial policy not doing enough; AT = afterthought
  • Specific challenges with MTO

• Federal government absent

• Developers participating case-by-case

People, advocacy groups, private sector “ahead” of governments and policies
Findings: City of Toronto

Obstacles to AT Implementation

- Approach/Status Quo/Lack of Consideration: 29%
- Lack of Awareness/Training: 18%
- Physical Environment: 11%
- Transit funding & AT integration: 7%
- Funding: 7%
- Electorals Politics: 7%
- Other (multiple, single answers): 21%

Most needed to advance AT?

- infrastructure
- transit integration
- political will
- make it feel safe
- education
- supportive staff environment
- supportive land use & street design (not ranked)
## Findings: Toronto Successes

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<tr>
<th><strong>Approach</strong></th>
<th><strong>Street</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>St. George Street approach and road diet</td>
<td>Dundas Street East road diet &amp; bike lanes</td>
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<th><strong>Priority</strong></th>
<th><strong>Parcels</strong></th>
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<td>Yonge-Dundas scramble (with caveats)</td>
<td>Developer: pedestrian link instead of density incentive</td>
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<th><strong>Transit Integration</strong></th>
<th><strong>Connection</strong></th>
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<td>Finch bike station (vs. Downsview)</td>
<td>Waterfront pedestrian access at Jarvis-Sugar Beach</td>
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<tr>
<th><strong>Neighbourhood</strong></th>
<th><strong>Safe Experience</strong></th>
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<tr>
<td>New Urbanist design, Cornell, Markham</td>
<td>Waterfront Trail/Martin Goodman Trail</td>
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Findings: Toronto Conditions for Success

✓ *Pre-war urban form* = enabling environment
✓ Integrate AT *at outset & with transit*
✓ Pilot projects to get something going (but may be temporary)
✓ Leadership at political & senior bureaucratic levels
✓ Designating pedestrian & cycling *priority areas*
✓ *Implement with supportive* councillors & wards (follow the “yes”)
✓ “Right” staff & supportive staff environment
✓ *Collaboration* & flexibility (citizens, private, public, non-profit)
✓ Building new easier than retrofitting
Findings: GTA Municipalities

Places to Grow/Provincial Growth Plan & AT?

✓ Provincial policy was a factor or impetus
  • may have been a necessary timing condition but insufficient on its own

Federal Government absent

Regional Government: significant tensions

Developers respond if clear

Local municipalities trying, policy helps, few supportive mechanisms to implement, challenged on all fronts
Findings: GTA Municipalities

Obstacles

1. Regional municipality transportation planning
2. Inter-regional economy & jobs
3. Lack of transit connecting local to regional/network
4. Physical environment & land use
5. Piecemeal approach – reacting to funding, lobby
6. Public acceptance/resistance
7. Standards impeding professional & bureaucratic change
8. Poor local level mechanisms & tools
Findings: GTA Successes

Awareness & Options
- Smart Commute & Clean Air Commute
- Downtown parking charges
- Pilot seasonal shuttle services between business park & restaurants

Neighbourhood
New Urbanist design, Cornell, Markham

Safe Experience
- Tom Taylor Trail & highway underpass
- Other trails

Transit
Viva

Transit Integration
Bike racks on buses
Findings: GTA Conditions for Success

✓ Places to Grow/Growth Plan directions
✓ Being an Urban Growth Centre e.g., Brampton Queen St. Corridor
✓ Provincial funding (e.g., Smart Commute, bus bike racks)
✓ Regional transit development (with caveats)
✓ Local strategies, official plans, master plans aligned with provincial policy
✓ Local capacity to influence Regional Municipality
✓ Benefits derived from alternative development e.g., Cornell value – example, infrastructure, taxes
✓ Political champion e.g., Ajax mayor
Some Comparisons

**Toronto**

- Early adopter of smart growth principles
- AT implementation & advancements prior to Places to Grow
- Outdated thinking still an obstacle at all levels & in professions
- Needs levers & tools at different scales, even micro-scale

**GTA Municipalities & Suburban Areas**

- Smart growth principles (& Places to Grow) relevant & helpful
- AT will be altered with land use change, transit & economy over time
- Tensions between local & regional municipalities need attention
- Local municipalities need more supports, mechanisms & tools; regional-local scale
Directions for Improving Implementation

Approach & Lack of Systematic Integration

• Policy-to-Implementation Lens & Checklist for systematic integration with horizontal-to-vertical integration e.g., strategic EA

• ensure integration and introduce new thinking to all (e.g., EA & HIA)

Outdated Thinking, Lack of Awareness & Training

• Lens (above)

• Cross-departmental functional teams (within an organization)

• Training & Secondments

• Influencing education and training of professionals & accreditation
Directions for Improving Implementation

Scale- & context-appropriate Mechanisms

- Guidance at micro-scale-to-parcel-to-street-to-neighbourhood-to-network levels and vice versa
- Tools & incentives to deliver contextual, complete solutions (land use-transit/transportation)

Provincial Carrots and sticks

- collaboration incentives
- Provincial teeth? (for lack of progress & accountability)
For More Information

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• **Places to Grow**
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