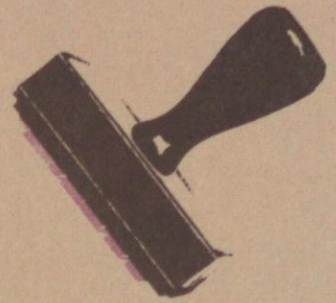




BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH

Suite 306, 2 Toronto Street, Toronto, Canada M5C 2B6 / Tel. (416) 363-9265



#166 - March 1977

DESIGN FOR DEVELOPMENT: WHERE ARE YOU?

I. INTRODUCTION

Two widely held convictions about government institutions are that public bureaucracies are intrinsically inefficient and that politicians, by and large, lack the courage and the will to make tough, long-range political decisions. Some who harbour such cynical beliefs find the history of regional development and regional planning in Ontario to be sadly reassuring. The record of the multi-phased Design for Development, which in 1966 launched the province's regional development program, is an erratic one. It is a record replete with research activity, special studies, committees, regional councils, planning concepts, task forces and an impressive outpouring of policy statements. Yet, after more than a decade of trying to find a satisfactory method for effective large-scale regional planning, the real tasks of regional planning and regional development have yet to be accomplished.

The term "Design for Development" may be confusing unless one understands that it evolved over six years to become an umbrella title embracing three separate but interrelated provincial programs: regional development, regional government and local government fiscal reform. When the policy statement known as "Design for Development" was first introduced by Premier John Robarts in 1966, its central theme was that "all economic regions of the province should share in a purposeful development program." 1. Two years later, in 1968, a second stream of government action, which dealt with the reform of local government structure, was brought under the Design for Development umbrella. Phase II outlined the government's policy of establishing a series of regional governments across Ontario. In setting

1. Design for Development, Statement by the Prime Minister of Ontario on Regional Development Policy (April 5, 1966), p. 1. Note that this was really Phase I, although it was not called that at the time.

. . . 2

out the policy, Premier Robarts explained that both programs were closely associated and complementary to each other. In "Design for Development - Phase III", announced by Premier Davis in 1972, a third prong was added to the policies of regional development and local government reform, namely provincial-municipal fiscal reform.¹ Each was affirmed as a "necessary link" to the success of the others. In addition, important modifications were introduced to both the regional development and regional government programs. A skeletal outline of the major government policy statements and reports which came under "Design for Development" is provided in the Appendix.

The purpose of this *Comment* is to attempt to clarify the current status of "Design for Development". It concentrates on the regional development program, with only brief reference to either of the two related programs of regional government and fiscal reform.

There are three reasons why this clarification is needed:

i.) First and foremost, the fundamental problems which led the Province to embark upon regional development in the first place are still present.² Back in the 1960's, the government's move to a regional development program was a response to three major trends: the increasing tendency of Ontario's population to concentrate in the large urban centres in the central and southwestern portion of the Province (at the expense of rural places and of the north and east), the tendency toward unstructured sprawl³ in the rapidly-growing areas, and the trend toward careless and unwise use of the physical setting (eg. waste of prime farmland, open-pit mining, air and water pollution).

All three of these trends are still creating serious problems. Growth has continued to concentrate in the so-called "Golden Horseshoe" of Ontario. Forecasts indicate that the other regions of the Province will continue to receive a less than proportionate share of this growth. The population of Ontario is now expected to grow by 4 million people by the year 2001, from roughly 8 million to about 12 million. Over half of this new growth will be concentrated in the Toronto-Centered Region, contained within a ninety mile arc around Toronto and stretching from Hamilton/Brantford in the west to Port Hope/Cobourg in the east.

If the expected urban development within this region of Ontario follows the inefficient land use pattern it has in the past, the scenario painted by A.E. LePage's Population, Growth and Planning: Province of Ontario seems inescapable: continued sprawl throughout the Golden Horseshoe area.

1. This was described as a third major stream of Design for Development in Phase III but appears to have been treated as an after-thought subsequent to this official statement.
2. See Richard S. Thoman, Design for Development in Ontario: The Initiation of a Regional Planning Program (1971) for a useful account of the Regional Development Program and its origins.
3. By "sprawl" we mean both continuous low-density urban development with no break and leapfrogging random development.

The wasteful effects of low-density auto-dependent urban development have been spelled out by a number of experts in a variety of forums over the last decade.¹ These conferences and studies have usually linked the negative economic and social impact of sprawl to the larger environmental and ecological concerns arising out of a careless use of our natural resources. (These include the loss of irreplaceable farmland, pollution of our environment, the misuse of energy resources and the destruction of unique landscape features.)

The answer, urge the experts, lies in prudent and effective planning and resource management on a provincial and regional basis. In view of these warnings and recommendations, the fate of the regional development program (which includes regional land use and economic development planning) seems all the more worthy of consideration.

ii) Second, several of the new regional governments created since 1968² are currently faced with the task of preparing their official plans. Each of these plans must deal with the region's long-range development policies, including land use, transportation and servicing. They are supposed to provide the broad framework for growth in the region taking account of the overall distribution of population, housing, jobs, social and health services, as well as major amenities such as parks and recreation facilities. They must also deal with development in rural areas with a view to reconciling conflicts between demands for non-farm uses (such as residential development or waste disposal sites) and agricultural or environmental protection demands. Since these regional plans are expected to conform to and support the policies of the Province's regional development program, it is obviously important that the Province's planning and development strategy be clearly understood.

iii) Third, a significant discrepancy exists between official statements of intentions of the regional planning program and actual accomplishments. The delay in implementing planning schemes which have been publicly affirmed and reaffirmed, most notably the Toronto-Centred Region plan, together with certain undertakings which seem to be at odds with these schemes, has led to doubts about the entire regional development effort. There has been speculation that plans like the Toronto-Centred Region (TCR) plan will never come into effect. The problem is that even as skepticism about the value and status of the regional development program continue to grow, it remains the planning context for Ontario and dominates municipal planning efforts.

This review of "Design for Development" and its approach to regional development and regional planning will:

1. assess the progress which has been made in fulfilling the regional development objectives of Design for Development generally and of TCR in particular;

1. One noteworthy forum was the Man and Resources Conference (1971-73). Also see the recent report, No. 25, of the Science Council of Canada, entitled Population, Technology and Resources (June, 1976).
2. Between 1968 and 1973, thirteen major local government reviews were carried out, resulting in the creation of twelve regional governments. By 1972 opposition to the program was growing. In October 1973 the Province introduced the County Restructuring Program in which the Provincial role was less dominant.

2. examine the present status of Design for Development in the light of recent policy statements and organizational changes.

II REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT: WHAT HAS BEEN ACCOMPLISHED?

In order to evaluate the progress which has been made toward fulfilling the regional development objectives of Design for Development, we must understand the original aims of the program. The overriding concern was that all parts of Ontario would share more equitably in the province's growth and prosperity.

There were two central and complementary thrusts:

- * the dispersal of growth to the regions which were lagging, namely the north and the east; and
- * the containment and structuring of growth in the Toronto Centered Region where the pressures were expected to be greatest and where urban sprawl seemed likely.

Before proceeding to assess the record of Ontario's regional development and regional planning efforts, we should define our terms. By "regional development" we understand the process of guiding the development of the province so that all regions obtain a more equal share of growth. "Regional planning", as we use the term, is the means by which this more rational pattern is achieved; it is not simply planning on a regional scale (and it is also to be distinguished from planning by a regional municipality.) These definitions are based on the original Design for Development statement, presented in 1966. One difficulty in writing this *Comment* has been that the perception on the part of the Province as to what the regional development program is intended and expected to achieve has not been consistent. Naturally, one's evaluation will depend upon the expectations and assumptions one holds about the purpose of regional development and regional planning. For example, if one were to judge the record on the basis of the current perception of regional planning within the government, discussed in section III, one's conclusions might be less critical. In our view, it is fair to judge the program in light of the expectations and goals of the original statement.

Looking at each of the two broad thrusts in turn, we can see the relative lack of success.

1. Dispersal of Growth to Northern and Eastern Ontario

Despite some development initiatives by the Province, the pattern of growth in Ontario has not changed substantially since 1971 when both the status reports for the Northwestern Ontario Region and TCR were published.

It is true that the Province has made a number of new initiatives in the past six years which were attempts to stimulate growth in the lagging regions. Indeed, the Regional Priority Budget was created in 1973 largely to facilitate speedy implementation of development projects in areas like Northern Ontario.

Since the inception of the Regional Priority Budget, the Province has spent some \$70 million in Northwestern Ontario. (Many of the programs were cost-shared with Ottawa through DREE.¹) Funds have been allocated for: community infrastructure; roads; regional projects such as an airport at Geraldton; the development of telecommunications systems in the more remote areas; mining exploration; the improvement of manpower resources; social programs.²

Next year, the Regional Priority Budget will provide approximately \$60 million as seed and leverage money for selected areas of the province. Virtually all of it will be spent in Northern and Eastern Ontario.

Despite these initiatives, the objective of decentralizing economic and population growth to the northern and eastern regions of Ontario is not being achieved. In Northern Ontario, for example, the labour force which is tied to the two primary resource industries - forestry and mining - has been in relative decline, the population growth has been slower than for the province as a whole, incomes tend to be below the provincial average and the level of common social and cultural amenities is acknowledged to be low.³ The most that can be said is that the situation might be worse were it not for these programs and projects.

It is fair to say that the government has not yet made significant inroads in solving the problem of regional disparity. Some will respond, of course, that seven years is too soon to judge the success or failure of those initiatives.

2. The Toronto-Centred Region Concept

As noted, in its regional planning efforts to date, the Province has concentrated most of its attention on Central Ontario - and the Toronto-Centred Region. As this is the "centre piece" of Design for Development, we shall look at this policy in some detail.

The main features of the regional structure proposed in the TCR concept are summarized in the Appendix of this report. The TCR document listed five basic principles and twelve goals for the region which elaborated these principles. For our purpose, we have condensed these to five main goals:

1. to contain urban development along the lakeshore in a ~~corridor~~ or *linear pattern* so that transportation and other facilities could be efficiently provided,

1. The Department of Regional Economic Expansion
2. Eg. funds have been provided for some experimental social service projects involving Natives and justice.
3. See Northern Ontario Development: Issues and Alternatives (Ontario Economic Council, 1976), II.

2. to prevent urban sprawl by maintaining a pattern of *separate* urban communities in two tiers which roughly parallel the lakeshore;
3. to stimulate growth to the east of Metro to balance that occurring in the west, and to restrain development in the Yonge Street corridor;
4. to *decentralize* some of the growth in the region to two areas in the north and east; both (3) and (4) together would create a better distribution of population and employment in Southern Ontario;
5. to *preserve* the best agricultural land and the most attractive recreational areas; with respect to recreation uses, the Georgian Bay shoreline, Lake Simcoe, the Kawartha Lakes and the Niagara Escarpment were priorities.

In its recent Toronto-Centred Region Program Statement (March 1976) the Provincial government states:

The key objectives of the TCR policy remain valid today, and major steps have been taken during the last five years to put it into effect development in the Toronto-Centred Region since 1971 has been generally consistent with policy. (p.3)

Bearing the original TCR goals in mind, we must question the validity of this claim. Let us look at the extent to which the key objectives have been achieved.

1. and 2. *to structure development along the lake so that a pattern of separate communities is maintained.*

* Regional municipalities were established on the perimeter of Metro Toronto (Durham, York and Peel) in order to prevent sprawl and manage growth. They are required to create official plans with these TCR objectives in mind. To date, two have been completed and neither has been approved.

One might ask further whether the new regional governments in terms of their structure and boundaries were correctly drawn to support Design for Development policies. For instance, the regional municipalities of Peel and York, based on an urban centre and large rural hinterland, lack a clear sense of their own identity as regions. This in turn has weakened their ability to plan. 1.

* The most noteworthy step taken by the Province was the announcement of the Parkway Belt System which the government cites as a key step towards implementing the TCR plan. A draft plan for the Parkway Belt West has been prepared and a public review process just completed. However, does the system amount to much more than landscaping? Notwithstanding the political difficulties of creating the Parkway Belt, we must ask: is it a sufficiently large open-space frame to accomplish its four stated purposes

1. See Subject to Approval: A Review of Municipal Planning In Ontario (Ontario Economic Council, 1973) p. 125.

(urban separator, service corridor, land reserve for the future and open space and recreation)? As Tail of the Elephant noted in 1974, even before the latest series of modifications was proposed, "of these four, only the utility corridor function is carried through the whole length of the Parkway." ¹. In some areas, the supposed land buffer will be less than 1,000 feet wide. Moreover, it was recently decided to put the eastern section of the Belt system on "hold".

* The concept has resulted in the cancellation of several subdivisions and rural estate developments in zone 2, north of the intensively developed urbanized area. (Century City and Centennial City are two examples.) Thus, in the sense of preventing certain projects, TCR has had positive impact.

3. *to direct new growth in the TCR to the east, reversing the trend towards the west*

* Growth has continued to concentrate in the area west of Metro. Expectations for eastward growth have not materialized. While the Province has proposed the new town of North Pickering, ² some argue that this proposal is at variance with the TCR concept (i.e., too close to Scarborough). On the other hand, it was quite logical to attempt to capitalize on the potential opportunity for growth east of Metro offered by the proposed new airport.

* The goal of restraining development northward in the Yonge Street corridor may be undermined by the York-Durham Sewage Scheme. This scheme which started partly as an anti-pollution project will be able to provide for some 900,000 new people, roughly half in York. The temptation to develop the land as a result of this infrastructure may prove irresistible and may override TCR principles.

Population allocations for York Region as finally established after Provincial-York bargaining are much higher than originally envisaged under TCR. The original allocation of some 250,000 (1971) has been more than doubled to 557,000 (457,000 in urban population).

* New commuter lines have been built northwest of Metro to Georgetown, and an additional line was planned to Streetsville but has been forestalled by the recently announced withdrawal of promised Federal funds. Some view these GO-transit lines as a major violation of the go-east TCR policy. Others answer that they were a response to existing demand and that TCR was never meant to be a concept imposed on a blank canvas, which would ignore existing needs while it sought to achieve more balanced growth. Also, one might ask why the GO line to the east was terminated at Pickering, rather than Oshawa - a designated major growth pole.

4. *to decentralize some growth to two areas north and east of Metro*

* Although the Simcoe and Northumberland Task Forces have completed their work and submitted final reports, the implementation has not yet begun.

1. Also see "Erosion on the Parkway Belt?" (BMR Comment, September 1973)
2. Planning for the new town of North Pickering has reached the detailed design stage. A specific plan leading to actual development should be coming forward by 1978.

5. to preserve the best agricultural land and recreational areas

* The most important decision with respect to recreational and open space resources has been the designation of the Niagara Escarpment Area. The master plan is due in 1977; meanwhile the interim development controls are intended to limit non-conforming development initiatives. We do not know yet whether it will succeed in controlling development pressures in the area. Current opinion is divided between those who argue that the development control area, which includes some 40 percent of the total planning area, is not large enough and those who feel it is too restrictive.

* The concept has failed to achieve its recreational objectives with respect to the Georgian Bay-Lake Simcoe and Kawartha Lakes system, the three main lakes of TCR. Officials from the Natural Resources Ministry, for instance, have acknowledged that the water quality of Lake Simcoe is steadily deteriorating.¹ Responsibility for the lake is shared by the fifteen urban municipalities around the lake together with six different ministries. The regional planning goals of coordinated development and pollution control are not being met.

* The concept has also failed "to minimize the urban use of productive agricultural land". While this goal is vaguely stated and "minimize" is never defined, the main point to note is that prime farmland in Ontario is going out of production at what many consider to be an unacceptable rate; this is occurring throughout Southern Ontario and particularly in the Toronto-Centred Region. In our companion *Comment* "Disappearing Farmland: So What?" we discuss the many short-and long-term factors that contribute to this withdrawal of farmland from production.

Recently, the Province has stated it intends to act. The Province's Strategy for Ontario Farmland (April, 1976) and the more recently released Guidelines (February, 1977) talk about greater protection via land use control. Implementation will depend upon *municipal* willingness to plan for agriculture, and provincial readiness to support those municipalities which do (and enforce the guidelines if they don't.)

Further, in certain instances, provincial programs such as the Ontario Housing Action Program (OHAP) have conflicted with this objective (eg., in Durham and York) and developments have been allowed on good farmland.

As this summary indicates, most of the TCR hopes have yet to be fulfilled. Some things have been achieved in a preventive way, but in a positive sense, the accomplishments have been less than one might have hoped. The provincial COLUC Task Force, which itself was set up in 1973 because of the need to clarify the TCR concept, concluded that:

The Toronto-Centred region concept, as originally set out in May, 1970, and even after it had been elaborated in some respects in the following year, was so general that important issues arising from it tended to be blurred . . . In fact, since 1970 the provincial government has embarked on a number of undertakings which in retrospect are not supportive of the concept or whose compatibility with it is, to some extent at least, open to question. These include, for example, the Central York Servicing Scheme, the Housing Action Program,

1. See "Fighting Pollution on Metro's Playground", Toronto Star (Sept. 4, 1976)

the Georgetown GO service, new municipal boundaries and even (to the extent that a site further east might have been preferable in TCR terms) the new community of North Pickering. To this list could be added the federally-sponsored Barrie commuter rail service. At the same time, it must be said that in four years little has been done to give substance to the "go-east" policy, except to the extent that North Pickering - still in the planning stage - does so. (p. 48). ¹.

III THE PRESENT STATUS OF DESIGN FOR DEVELOPMENT

1) Ontario's Future: Trends and Options (March, 1976)

In early April, 1976, the Ministry of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs released a number of planning statements under the "Design for Development" label. The most important of these was entitled Ontario's Future: Trends and Options.

This document offers very little that is original in either philosophy or substance. The Introduction acknowledges that the statement draws heavily on the original 1966 White Paper:

The objectives and policies of *Design for Development*, 1966, remain valid and continue to apply. The present statement does not replace its predecessor, but expands and in some ways refines it. It is not, however, a "plan" for Ontario, though it provides the necessary foundation of objectives and policies, and examines the machinery needed to translate such a plan into reality.

The first nineteen pages present a summary of existing trends. The report shows clearly that the basic population and employment trends which spawned the regional development concept in Ontario have intensified.

Although expectations of population growth have diminished substantially since the 1960's, nevertheless, if present trends continue, Ontario's population will be nearly ten million by 1986 and approaching twelve million by the end of the century. The total population of all regions will rise, but the trend towards concentration will be even stronger. Most of the counties in Eastern and Northern Ontario will continue to experience net migration losses. Only Central Ontario will increase its share of the provincial total. (p.11)

These trends demand action, concludes chapter I; the Province "can do a great deal to influence the course of these trends . . . But to do this, there must be integrated strategies aimed at clearly defined objectives and carried out within a unified policy framework". The same themes are repeated in the second chapter.

1. The COLUC report did not discuss the objection of some that North Pickering undermines the go-east policy for growth in the Oshawa-Whitby area.

Chapter III is entitled "New Policy Directions". Yet a careful reading of both the four broad objectives and the more specific policy objectives reveals little that is actually new. All of the objectives have, to some extent, been set forth in the original White Paper, Design for Development (1966) and have been reaffirmed or elaborated in subsequent documents like the Niagara Escarpment and the TCR statement.

Even where the document expands and refines previously stated planning objectives, as in its "urban system concept" (six sub-systems of urban places are described), the basic thrust is again not new. The TCR policy had already rejected the possible alternatives to the proposed concept - which acknowledges continued concentration of growth in the Toronto area and at the same time calls for encouragement of growth to five other regional centres. Above all, the "urban system concept" in this latest document says nothing more about implementation than did earlier statements.

The essential message of the paper appears in the fourth and final chapter:

If these objectives and guidelines are to have practical meaning, they must be matched by a planning system and process which can give them substance.

Trends and Options concludes on the note that current methods will need to be carefully scrutinized and that the total planning system will need to be examined with a view to making some drastic changes.

The obvious question at this juncture is why has the government decided to publish another statement, almost ten years after the original Design for Development White Paper, which for the most part simply repeats earlier policies and objectives? The report had one overriding aim: to show the need for a "coherent integrated planning system". We understand that the document was written to a large extent for the provincial politicians in an effort to extract a political commitment for the regional planning program. Some planners felt that this program had suffered over the decade from a lack of consistent understanding and commitment at the political level. They hoped that the report would be released as an official policy statement.

Despite the fact that it was subjected to a careful scrutiny and modification, the report was put out only as a discussion paper. Therefore, in a very real sense, its basic purpose - to provide a mandate for a revitalization of the Design for Development program - has been negated. If its recommendations for major change in the total provincial planning system are ultimately followed, then the Trends and Options document could come to have positive significance. However, in the present context, we must ask whether it does denote a confirmation of the ideals and idea of regional development as intended. Given its derivative content and non-policy status, the report serves to confirm rather than allay doubts about the future of Design for Development in Ontario.

One must also appreciate that a great internal momentum had been developing within Treasury and Economics since 1970. The Planning and Development Act, 1973, had given the Province wide-ranging powers to implement policies such as TCR. In 1974, then Treasurer John White had spoken in the House of producing a "rudimentary plan" for all of Ontario. In

response to this, a draft major strategy report was prepared by the planners, but it did not receive official sanction and was put aside. Meanwhile, the COLUC, Simcoe and Northumberland Task Forces reported. Some public statement was needed, if only to release some of the steam. The Trends and Options Statement allowed the government to let off some of this pressure and put regional development on the "back burner" at the same time. Briefly put, its publication can best be understood as a "holding action" in a period of rethinking.

2) The Toronto-Centred Region Program Statement (March, 1976)

While this statement offers an update since 1971, when the TCR Status Report was released, it is not very enlightening as to the current status of TCR. On the one hand, it reiterates the goals of the original policy and concludes that it "continues to be sound and workable". Also, it reaffirms the government's resolve "to proceed purposefully to carry out its planning policy for the Toronto-Centred Region". On the other hand, it says that the TCR must be "adjusted to reflect the conditions of 1976" and subjected to regular review.

The document is general in approach and speaks in broad terms about the areas in which these adjustments will have to be made - agricultural land, recreation and transportation. It does imply one important modification. Acknowledging that growth in certain parts of the region will be less than expected, it casts doubt on the need for some of the second tier communities which had been envisaged by TCR.¹

At the same time, the commitment to the "go-east" thrust of TCR seems to be stronger than ever. While "go-east" will necessarily be part of the review process which is currently underway, the feeling that emerges from this document, combined with other provincial actions (like the choice of Kingston for the Urban Transportation Development Corporation [UTDC] test track) is that promoting eastward growth is becoming an increasingly high priority with the Province.²

Presumably, the Central Ontario Strategy statement, to be completed by the end of this year, will tell us more precisely what parts of the TCR policy are still operative.

3) Organizational Changes

Between 1967 and 1971 the research and planning activities of the Design for Development program were carried out within the Regional Development Branch of the Department of Treasury and Economics. In 1972, the reorganization of the provincial government structure led to the integration

1. Also see The Durham Subregion: A Strategy for Development to 1986. Note that Durham's Official Plan (July, 1976) has eliminated all second-tier communities and instead has designated two special study areas. At the same time they have enlarged the lakeshore communities (Oshawa-Whitby and Pickering-Ajax).
2. Another indication is that the government is giving serious consideration to the relocation of some of its civil servants east of Metro.

of the former Departments of Municipal Affairs, and Treasury and Economics into one ministry of Treasury, Economics and Intergovernmental Affairs. The new ministry (TEIGA) was primarily responsible for the initiation and implementation of both the regional development and regional government programs.

Beginning in 1973, an important ministerial realignment was instituted. With the formation of the Ministry of Housing in that year, some of the major plans administration responsibilities of TEIGA were shifted over to Housing. In 1976, the Local Planning Policy Branch also moved across so that now most of the Province's dealings with official plans and local planning are through the Ministry of Housing.

Then, in the Spring of 1976 a mini-reorganization occurred within TEIGA. With respect to regional planning, the most significant result of the shuffle was that the Regional Planning Branch was changed to the Economic Development Branch and moved from the now defunct Urban and Regional Affairs wing into the Office of Economic Policy.¹ This Branch had comprised the central machinery of the Design for Development program and was responsible for preparing the broad provincial policy plans for each of the five planning regions.

What did this change mean? In explaining the internal shuffle to the Provincial-Municipal Liaison Committee (PMLC) in June, 1976, a senior Ministry official stated that putting Economic Policy and Regional Development together in the same area "should make a lot of sense in terms of trying to get regional objectives implemented in economic terms". This line of reasoning seems sound. The concept of regional development, as pointed out in the Introduction of this report, is rooted in the belief that all of the regions of the province should participate more equally in overall economic growth. Provincial economic strategies and decisions are obviously fundamental to the reduction of regional disparities.

In theory, the role of this Economic Development Branch, as it is now called, is to coordinate the work of other ministries with regard to the development strategies for the five planning regions of Ontario. After receiving this input, the Economic Development Branch is specifically responsible for the economic policy component of these strategies. Thus, in addition to the apparent logic of uniting regional development and economic policy, the change allows for greater involvement of the other government ministries in the creation of comprehensive strategies.

The reorganization signifies a major shift in the course of Design for Development. The Branch has been greatly reduced in size, and as TEIGA

1. There were two other main elements in the internal reorganization. The first was the reduction of the administrative hierarchy within the Ministry. The Assistant Deputy Ministers were removed from line responsibilities and made part of the overall corporate management of the Ministry through the Deputy Minister's Office. The second was the gathering of most of the activities of the Ministry which dealt with municipalities into one division; namely, the Local Government Division. This new division combined the former Local Government Organization Branch, the five field offices, the Advisory Services and the Provincial-Municipal Affairs Secretariat (formerly with the Intergovernmental Affairs Office). Provincial-municipal finance remained outside this Local Government Division.

is no longer "in the land use business", its responsibility is limited to the economic component of regional planning.¹ While the other major components, including land use planning, transportation and servicing policies, are to be contributed by the other ministries, one wonders where the sense of leadership and the momentum, which presumably is necessary for an effective regional development program, will come from. One result of the re-organization is that there is no longer a single locus of responsibility for regional planning and development.

The eventual implementation of a regional development policy will require more than research and projections; it will require the establishment of a planning process, the definition of policy objectives and the adopting of specific guidelines and legislation to make the concept operational. Given the new organizational set-up within TEIGA, can the Economic Development Branch provide the needed impetus and coordination? As one branch, within a non-operating, albeit central coordinating ministry, does it have the power to genuinely coordinate the efforts of powerful line or operating ministries? Can regional planning really take place within the present structure?

Those who argue that the Branch will be able to function as an effective coordinating secretariat to the other ministries point to the forthcoming Strategy for Northwestern Ontario, where the new strategy preparation process is being tested first. (This report has been prepared but has not yet been presented to Cabinet.) They say that, while the Economic Development Branch may not have the power, it can coordinate successfully since it fills a need which makes the coordinator-broker role acceptable to the other ministries. Time will tell whether this new process will work.

The recent organizational changes - notably, the separation of regional land use planning from economic development planning together with the relegation of the latter to a truncated branch within the Office of Economic Policy - leads us to ask: how high a provincial priority is regional planning and development?

4) Design for Development, 1977 - A New "Phase" or the End of an Era?

It is evident, in our view, that a significant swing in provincial policy with respect to regional planning and development is underway. The organizational changes and recent provincial gestures towards a larger municipal role in planning contrast sharply with the words in the 1976 statements, published under the Design for Development label - the Trends and Options document and the TCR Program Statement.

Officials within TEIGA acknowledge that Design for Development is shifting its course and entering "a new cycle". This "new cycle" is characterized by a cautious view of the possibilities of regional planning

1. Of the over 100 people in the Regional Development Branch, only 40 are left in the new Economic Development Branch. About 20 others are doing somewhat related work in other parts of TEIGA.

and development. The planners talk about the need to be "realistic" and to recognize the limitations of large-scale planning. They accept the notion that the general course of economic development can, at best, be affected by public policies only at the margin. The confidence in the Province's ability to decentralize growth, which had characterized the Regional Development Branch in the late 1960's and early 1970's, has been replaced by a more limited and hard-nosed economic approach. The notion of a "grand plan" for all of Ontario has apparently been abandoned.¹ Although we are still in the transition period, this shift does not seem to be just another "phase" in the evolution of Design for Development but rather, more like the end of an era.

A number of factors help to explain this turnabout in provincial policy. Some of these are as follows:

- the change in the economic climate has confronted politicians with the problem of stimulating growth, not containing it; the first decade of regional planning reflected the optimism of the 1960's when Ontario was riding high on a prosperity boom.
- the change in the demographic picture with reduced expectations for population growth in Ontario. As a result of the declining birth rate, more restrictive immigration policies and altered migration patterns within Canada (i.e., the lure of the Western provinces), Ontario can no longer count on 13 million people by the end of the century as originally predicted by TCR planners. Even the latest estimate of nearly 12 million may be high.
- the role of personalities of both politicians and senior bureaucrats. The fluctuation in the Province's commitment to and enthusiasm for the regional development program over the past decade can be related to the differing personal philosophies of the Premiers and Treasurers and the high-ranking civil servants in TEIGA.²
- a disenchantment inside the government with regional planning and the long-term goal of an overall provincial plan. There was some feeling among the politicians by the mid-1970's that the planners were overstepping their professional bounds in pushing for implementation of the regional development program and in their criticism of political decisions (e.g., COLUC Report).
- resentment within some ministries of TEIGA's dominant role in regional planning. Other ministers and senior civil servants, tired of their essentially reactive role, wanted to take a more direct part in planning. On the other hand, in Treasury itself there was

1. The debate over the limits of planning is an old one. Those who believe in the idea and ideals of regional development would argue that it is only "unrealistic" when the political commitment is lacking. They point to the success of population distribution policies in other Western industrial nations as evidence. (e.g. Britain, France, Italy, the Netherlands and Sweden) See James L. Sundquist, Dispersing Population: What America Can Learn From Europe (Washington: 1975).
2. See analysis by Robert Williamson, "South Cayuga: A Symbol of White's Lost Influence" (Globe and Mail, March 8, 1977).

a feeling that its central policy advisory role was becoming diffused by its involvement in specific projects and detailed planning, some of which could better take place at the municipal level.

- the widespread conviction, encouraged by Toronto-boosters and the media, that Toronto is an ideal place to live. The need to structure and contain growth seems less urgent and the fear of a future Los Angeles in Southern Ontario, conjured up by the MTARTS Study, has eased. (This may be a false sense of security.)
- the creation of the Ministry of Housing in December, 1973, meant that there was a ministry to which some of TEIGA's direct planning responsibilities could be conveniently passed.
- the election of a minority government in 1975 made the government more sensitive to criticism and strengthened the feeling that it would be best to avoid new, bold planning initiatives. Regional planning was thought to have contributed to the government's election losses, particularly in the north end of the Niagara Escarpment Planning Area.

IV CONCLUSION

This *Comment* has drawn attention to the gap between the original objectives of Design for Development and the present land use and economic growth trends in Ontario. The two major regional development thrusts of Design for Development were the dispersal of economic growth and population to the lagging regions of Ontario and the containment of sprawl by sound structuring of growth in the TCR area. Neither of these has been achieved in large measure, although some constructive steps have been taken.¹

We have also emphasized that the original concept of regional development and regional planning is now being seriously questioned within the government. However, it is not clear what the new strategy approach will mean.

Ontario's planning system is a hierarchical one: local or area municipal plans are supposed to complement and support regional plans, created under regional governments, and these, in turn, are supposed to conform to provincial plans for the five planning regions. The problem is that, except for the TCR concept, there are no provincially-developed regional plans in which the lower-tier plans can nest. The intent in this *Comment* has been to draw attention to the fact that the key to the hierarchical planning system - namely, the framework into which the building blocks of the planning system are required to fit - is still missing. Hence, the question and the title of this *Comment*: Design for Development - Where Are You?

1. One might respond that it is too early to judge the real effects of the program after only ten years.

As we have seen, the 1976 statements contain reassuring pledges of commitment to past Design for Development policies and familiar expressions of concern for making planning more effective. At the same time, provincial politicians and planners no longer speak of *plans*, but *strategies*. We're told that, while a plan is static, a strategy is *dynamic*. A strategy is *short-term* rather than long-term and more *remote* from detailed land use and transportation planning. And, unlike a plan, a strategy concentrates on *economic analysis*, not spatial patterns.

Such definitions are obviously inadequate. By posing the question: Design for Development - Where Are You?, we hope to encourage the Provincial government to clarify its current approach to regional development. It may be that the new policy planning route - which sets out objectives first for programs affecting development (as it has just done for agriculture) and then proceeds to define planning responsibilities - will be effective. Still, we have questions about what the new process will lead to:

- * If we can no longer expect five provincial plans for the five planning regions of Ontario, what can we expect?
- * What kind of policy backing will the government provide to make its new, so-called "realistic" strategy process more effective for social and economic development in Ontario than the former approach?
- * Given that the Province has affirmed its faith in the goals and objectives of regional development, what is the practical significance of its new approach to regional planning?

APPENDIX

Regional Development in Ontario Since 1966: A Summary

The following is a skeletal outline of the major government policy statements and reports which came under "Design for Development".

- 1966, April - The original policy statement, "Design for Development" established the regional development and planning program.
- 1968, June - The Metropolitan Toronto and Region Transportation Study (MTARTS), initiated in 1962 to devise a transportation program for the Toronto region underscored the need for regional planning and presented four "regional goals plans" as alternatives. Goals Plan II, with some modifications, provided the main features of TCR.
- 1968, November - "Design for Development, Phase II" linked the restructuring of local government in Ontario to regional economic development. The two programs were at once distinct yet overlapping.
- 1970 - Design for Development: The Toronto-Centred Region Plan, May, 1970, was the first plan to emerge from the regional development program. Note that the present Central Ontario Region, made up of the eighteen counties and regions centred on Metro Toronto, is larger than the original TCR area. (It is one of the five current economic development regions in Ontario.)

In brief, the TCR concept envisaged three zones:

Zone 1 was the Lakeshore Urbanized Area, an area of intense growth along the lakeshore;

Zone 2, the Commutershed area to the north of this band, was to be preserved mostly for agriculture, recreation and open space; a small urban axis extending northward from Metro Toronto along Yonge Street was proposed;

Zone 3 was the Peripheral area beyond easy commuting range of Metro; growth would be encouraged in selected areas to relieve the development pressure in the urbanized area. The two main growth areas would be Barrie-Midland and Port Hope-Cobourg.

- 1971 - Design for Development - A Status Report on the Toronto-Centred Region contained some modifications of the original concept as a result of public feedback, but reaffirmed most of the original proposals. (A status report was also done for the Northwestern Ontario Region which made minor modifications resulting from public and written discussion. By April, 1972, the so-called Phase I reports for all ten economic regions were completed.)

- 1972
- Design for Development - Phase III was presented by Premier Davis. It attempted to link provincial-municipal fiscal reform with regional development and regional government in a "triangle of interrelated policies". This document introduced a new system of planning regions for Ontario, reorganizing the system of ten economic regions which had been adopted in 1954 into five larger units (Eastern Ontario, Central Ontario, Southern and Western Ontario, Northeastern Ontario and North-western Ontario).
- 1973
- The Parkway Belt West, June, 1973, was a major structural element of the TCR concept. The Parkway Belt was intended to serve four purposes: to act as an urban separator between the various lakeshore communities; to provide a transportation and utility corridor; to provide a land reserve for the future; and to keep land for open space and recreation facilities. The Draft Plan was completed in January, 1976, and the Hearing Officers' Report on the Parkway Belt West, February, 1977, has recommended acceptance of this plan with some changes.
- 1973
- The Niagara Escarpment - designation of the 2,000 square mile Niagara Escarpment Planning Area, a corridor stretching from Queenston to the tip of the Bruce Peninsula, with the basic goal being the preservation of this unique landscape feature. This policy statement set out the objectives and planning framework. It also established interim development controls which are intended to limit non-conforming development initiatives.
- 1974, December
- COLUC Task Force Report - In 1973 a special task force was established to refine the TCR concept for the central parts of the region into a more specific structure plan. The Central Ontario Lakeshore Urban Complex (COLUC) report showed some 23 urban centres in a roughly triangular area, with most of these grouped along an east-west axis from Hamilton to Oshawa, and to a lesser extent along the north-south Yonge Street axis. Five centres were seen as forming the framework: Hamilton, Mississauga, Toronto, Oshawa, and North Pickering. The centres along the lakeshore are in two tiers, about five miles apart and separated by the parkway belt. Toronto was to remain the prime centre of the region. The population for the COLUC area when fully developed (between the years 2000 and 2050) was projected at between six and eight million people.
- 1975
- Northumberland Task Force Report of a provincial-municipal task force made suggestions as to how development should proceed in Northumberland County.
- 1976 -
- Simcoe-Georgian Task Force Report - the results of a provincial-municipal task force which made recommendations as to future growth in the Barrie area.
- 1976
- Design for Development - Ontario's Future: Trends and Options, updated the 1966 White Paper, reaffirming and refining the original policies.

- 1976 - Design for Development - Toronto-Centred Region Program
Statement reaffirmed the government's resolve "to proceed purposefully to carry out its planning policy for the Toronto-Centred Region".
- 1976 - Design for Development - Durham Sub-Region Strategy contained the government's suggestions for increasing development to the east of Metro in the Region of Durham.

The above select chronology offers only a bare hint of the effort and activity that marked the Design for Development regional planning program. The evolution of regional development in Ontario, which can be traced back to the post-war period, cannot be reviewed in detail here. Several instructive accounts already exist.¹

-
1. For example, see Richard S. Thoman, Design for Development in Ontario, op. cit.; The Tail of the Elephant: A Guide to Regional Planning and Development in Southern Ontario (Toronto: Pollution Probe, May, 1974); Lionel D. Feldman, Ontario 1945-1973: The Municipal Dynamic (Ontario Economic Council, January, 1974); Norman Pearson, "Regional Government and Development," in Donald C. McDonald, ed., Government and Politics of Ontario (Macmillan Co., 1975); Regional Planning in Southern Ontario: A Resource Document (Social Planning Council, 1976). Also see the Design for Development documents themselves, which contain summaries of previous policies and "accomplishments".

Charles K. Bens, Executive Director
* Anne Golden, Research Co-ordinator
Pamela Bryant, Research Associate

© Copyright - Bureau of Municipal Research
March 1977.

* Principal Author