

BUREAU OF MUNICIPAL RESEARCH

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UPCOMING STUDIES

The following studies are currently under way or under consideration. Comments and suggestions are welcomed during every stage of research.

Disappearing Farmland: So What?

This **Comment** will be a background paper for the Bureau's Spring Conference: "Food for the Cities". The purpose of the study is to clarify the issues in Ontario's farmland debate so that unresolved points are highlighted.

Design for Development: Where Are You?

This study will provide a second background paper to the BMR Spring Conference. The purpose is to clarify the status of the Province's "Design for Development" after the decade-long effort to establish a framework for regional development planning.

Vandalism in the Schools

What are the root causes of the growing trend toward vandalism of our schools? What, if anything, have school systems been able to do to stem this expensive wave of vandalism?

Planning at the Harbourfront

The proposal to develop a STOL commuter service at the Island Airport has raised many issues regarding overall planning of the Toronto Harbourfront. Our study will attempt to place these many issues in perspective.

Maximizing Financial Resources at the Local Level

Provincial fiscal restraint is causing municipalities in Ontario to look for better, less expensive ways to provide municipal services. This study examines the full range of possibilities for municipal programme evaluation.

Cooperation Among London Transportation Agencies

This study looks at the need to improve communication and cooperation between and among various agencies providing transportation-related services in the City of London, Ontario.

THE FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES: IN SEARCH OF CREDIBILITY

The purpose of this **Comment** is to assess the potential of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities as the national spokesman for Canadian local governments. Among the questions addressed are: What role is the FCM currently playing? What should its role be in the future? How can it improve its credibility and effectiveness?

The report reviews the history of the FCM, formerly called the CFMM (Canadian Federation of Mayors and Municipalities), looks at its present objectives and functions, and analyses the arguments for and against its assuming a role as a national municipal spokesman.

In evaluating the FCM, we play particular attention to its role in the evolving trilevel process. This **Comment** therefore may be useful to those interested in intergovernmental relations generally as well as to those concerned about the right of Canada's municipalities to enjoy increased status and autonomy.

This **Comment** suggests that the FCM does have a valuable role to play as a national municipal spokesman. A primary consideration was that the alternatives to a national federation, such as an organization composed solely of provincial municipal associations, are not likely to be more effective.

While Canada's constitutional framework logically suggests that municipalities should concentrate their efforts on provincial-municipal relationships, rather than lobbying Ottawa or on an elusive tri-level process, the evidence suggests that municipalities cannot always depend on the provinces to serve as their advocates in Ottawa.

The **Comment** concludes with suggestions as to how the FCM can be strengthened.

RESTRAINT WITHOUT HARDSHIP: HOW DO WE KNOW?

This **Comment** is a response to the provincial government's restriction on funding for municipal social services programmes.

The April 1976 Budget held municipal social services transfers to an effective increase of 5.5% over the previous year. Several months later, claims as to the success of this financial restraint programme were being made.

The **Comment** addresses three questions: Why were social services singled out in the overall provincial restraint programme to receive one of the lowest increases? How was the effective 5.5% limit on transfers to municipalities chosen? What are the impacts? The report reviews the provincial government's rationale for its action in regard to social services and then examines the impacts in one regional municipality, (Hamilton-Wentworth). It discusses in detail the reduction in the municipal welfare case-load.

The argument that restraint has been implemented without causing hardship is criticized on the grounds that it is premature; there is not yet sufficient information that would support this contention. Because the ends of social services programmes are less tangible than other programmes, it takes time to develop indicators of "good" impacts and of "bad" impacts. And, while the visible and immediate consequences of restraint (on budgets or administrative efficiency) might seem benign, or even positive, we must anticipate the possible hidden or future results of financial restraint policies.

The **Comment** concludes by identifying specific types of information that are required inputs for a proper monitoring and evaluation of the costs and benefits of the restraint programme. The report suggests that both the provincial and municipal levels of government have a responsibility in this regard.

IS METROPLAN A GAMBLE WORTH TAKING?

This **Comment** is a response to the Metroplan document **Concept and Objectives** which was published in 1976. The document itself is the most recent stage of a programme which began over four years ago to prepare an official Plan for Metropolitan Toronto. It sets forth a proposed set of goals and policy directions for the future development of Metro.

The **Comment** addresses itself to the primary concept of the document that the new Plan should seek to create a multi-centered urban structure. Specifically, it asks a direct and simple question: what are the prospects for making decentralization as envisaged by Metroplan work?

The Bureau report is critical of the Metroplan document for not explaining how the proposed urban structure can be implemented. It focuses on a number of practical disadvantages of the two proposed mini-downtown locations (North Yonge and Scarborough Town Centre) and sets out the kinds of decisions that will be required if we are to overcome these obstacles.

While the **Comment** raises questions about the feasibility of the proposed urban structure, it states that it is sympathetic to the goals of Metroplan to create a more balanced development pattern. By raising specific questions about transportation, densities and growth projections, the report clarifies the extent of the positive commitment that is needed to make decentralization work as proposed.

BE IT EVER SO HUMBLE: THE NEED FOR RENTAL HOUSING IN THE CITY OF TORONTO

This **Civic Affairs** examines the short-term need for adequate and affordable rental housing in the City of Toronto. It was undertaken as part of a broader housing needs study co-ordinated by the City's Housing Department and is concerned mainly with identifying, in a systematic way, the client groups for assisted rental housing.

The report draws together and analyzes existing information rather than generating new data. The analysis is based on three questions: Who is housed in the private rental sector now? How has this changed and is it likely to change over the next two to three years? What evidence of need is there and whom does it affect?

Because this study has a technical focus, it will likely be of primary interest to planners, students and municipal decision-makers who are interested in developing a housing policy for their area.

This **Civic Affairs** estimates that about 8,200 out of 137,000 tenant households in the City of Toronto live in housing that is physically inadequate, and that between 25,000 and 30,000 now likely live in housing that con-

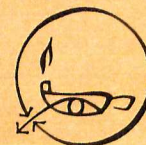
sumes too much of their income. For the most part this need group is comprised of households on fixed incomes or on low incomes with little prospect of future improvement. The need group includes older households, and family households, particularly single parent. The study indicates that the opportunities for these tenants to improve their housing situations within the private rental market are narrowing.

While this study is an analysis of need and not a programme evaluation, the findings do have policy significance for the four levels of government involved in housing in Toronto. The report shows that there is a strong rationale for the continuation of efforts to provide low and modest income rental housing, through repair or rehabilitation and through new construction. It concludes with suggestions for the City, Metro, Provincial and Federal roles in those efforts.

UPCOMING EVENTS

On March 30th and 31st the Bureau will host a conference entitled 'Food for the Cities: Disappearing Farmland and Provincial Land Policy'. Representatives from the three major political parties will present their platforms. Three working sessions will examine the extent of the disappearing farmland problem and the options for future action.

The Annual Meeting of the Bureau is tentatively planned for May 12 at 12 noon in the Dominion Room of the Sheraton Centre in Toronto. We are not at liberty to announce the guest speaker at this time, however, using the Bureau's past few annual meetings as an indicator, it should be obvious that the individual will be a prominent and interesting speaker. Please make reservations early for the above events.



BMR in Review is published every 3-4 months and summarizes reports completed during that period. Copies of these reports may be obtained by writing or calling the Bureau. The cost of reports is \$1. for Comments and \$3. for Civic Affairs.

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