

PERSPECTIVES

PRESENTED BY THE MUNICIPAL INFORMATION NETWORK

Issue 7 – February 2019

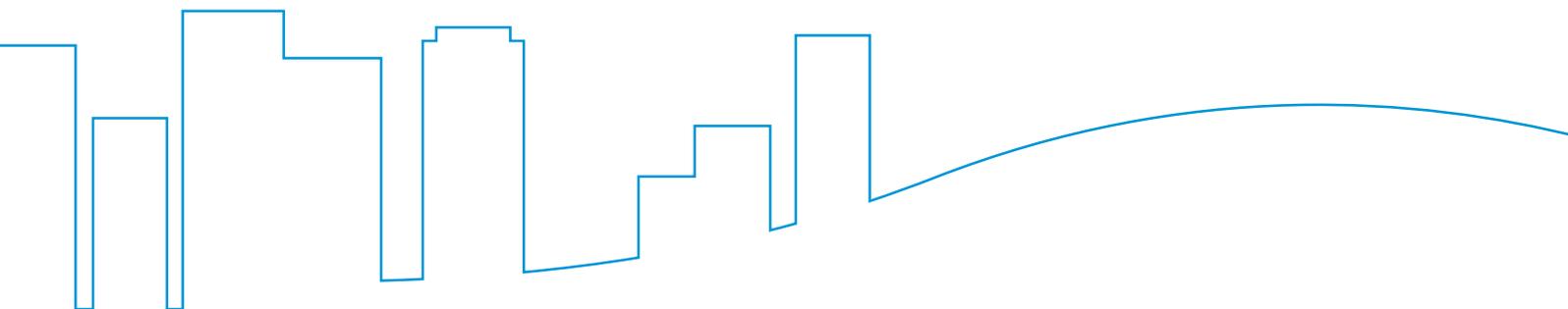


New Councils, Old Issues



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From the Editor's Desk

GORD HUME

Budget debates are in full swing across the country as municipalities of all sizes wrestle with their operating and capital needs for the upcoming year (or years, in the case of a multi-year budget process).

At the same time, many towns and cities are also contemplating a new Strategic Plan—particularly those local governments that were elected last fall. Combined, these actions should set a clear path for the next few years for municipalities.

Both of these events identify local needs and issues, opportunities and challenges, and paths forward. Newly-minted councillors and mayors bring their ideas and enthusiasm to these processes, which can make for fresh and lively discussions.

In keeping with these two important local government functions, this edition of PERSPECTIVES offers thoughtful commentary on a number of issues that touch city halls.

Caledon Mayor Alan Thompson is a veteran local politician, and his candid views of local government and the challenges it faces are an important thought-starter for locally elected officials.

London City Clerk Cathy Saunders conducted Canada's first "Preferred Ballot" election last October. (I note that an historian from Saskatoon chastised me for proclaiming that in my last column... Saskatoon had a sort of preferred ballot election in 1924 but didn't retain the concept). As there is growing interest across Canada in a Preferred Ballot-type of

election, this article will be of particular interest. Also, Bev Buckway offers her thoughts on the recent Yukon elections.

Veteran journalist Pat Moauro has authored an exclusive piece for this e-magazine about issues for seniors—a growing concern for municipalities of all sizes. In addition, we've presented a side-bar from the Canadian Association of Retired Persons (CARP) on housing for seniors, and how municipalities can work better with this growing segment of our society.

In addition, we've got interesting articles on the asbestos situation in British Columbia, and a very provocative commentary on Leadership from our colleague Mark Funkhouser in Washington, DC.

Enjoy this edition of PERSPECTIVES.

And let us remind you that we welcome ideas for commentary, reports on interesting new initiatives from your municipality, or OP ED pieces on anything from government relations to new policies and procedures for municipalities. By sharing ideas and initiatives, all Canadian municipalities can be strengthened.

Contact us anytime at: perspectives@municipalinfonet.com

GORD HUME



Municipal Government, Current Challenges and Future Opportunities

ALLAN THOMPSON

When I began my second term as Mayor of the Town of Caledon, Ontario, I took a hard look at the current challenges and future opportunities that would affect how we govern into the future:

1. Adapting to a changing political climate

A new Provincial Government presents significant changes in policy and as municipalities we need to learn how to quickly adapt and respond to them. There is a collective “holding our breath” in the municipal sector with rumours of changes in how municipalities are organized and govern. But, so far, I’ve experienced only cooperation and collaboration from this new government.

For example, we saw tremendous engagement with the municipal sector on the proposed Bill 66 and it appears the Province listened. In Caledon, we led a fight against discriminatory legislation aimed at penalizing double hatter fire fighters. Again, the Province has listened and acted by strengthening the legislation to allow for double hatter firefighters to volunteer in their home communities; this was a big win for us.

I’m hoping that this cooperation and collaboration will extend to the issue of the Regional Government Review the Province is currently undertaking. We are hoping for a “Made in Peel” plan that will respect both the urban and rural

character of our Region. My concern is that the timelines are tight. The province wants some answers by this spring and this issue is complex and with a potentially big price tag. Still, we are planning and preparing for every possible outcome as best we can.

2. The funding shortfall

The Municipal funding shortfall is nothing new, but it has been exacerbated by the Province pressing pause on funding while they do their line-by-line audit.

In the meantime, municipal infrastructure is aging and our only option at this point is to raise taxes. Ontario already pays the highest property taxes in the country and as a local politician we are bearing the brunt of public discourse for a lack of funding from the both the provincial and federal governments. We need every level of government to understand that there is only one tax payer.

If you add up all the taxes you pay to each level of government, the municipal portion equals just nine cents on the dollar. For that nine cents we must provide the day to day essentials such as roads, bridges, policing, fire services, ambulance and community and human services such as parks and recreation. To keep taxes at a reasonable rate Municipalities must have a sustainable, predictable funding mechanism.

Photo © Geoff Wade. (Source: <https://flic.kr/p/ME5M2j>)



As many challenges as there are facing local government today, there are also tremendous opportunities:

1. Citizen Engagement

A real community is one where citizens feel engaged and I see citizen engagement as having huge potential. I know that public officials can get a little nervous when politicians want to give greater decision-making authority to the public because it doesn't fit in the risk mitigation model we have created over the years. But, I see the talent and passion of our residents as an untapped asset waiting to be utilized. It may be tough at first, but with the right guidance and structure set out by our municipal professionals, citizen-centered decision making can build a greater understanding and ownership of local matters in our communities.

Here in Caledon for example, we are exploring ways of better engaging our youth. Each year we hold a youth summit and invite young people ages 13 to 18 to gather and share their ideas on what the future might look like and their place in it.

Seniors are another valuable community asset. They make up the majority of our local volunteer base and they are the largest voting demographic. Local governments need to look at opportunities that will help seniors connect with people, programs and possibilities.

2. Innovation

Fostering innovation and creating smart, connected communities will help attract employment, stimulate local economies and create future sustainability. Local governments need to stop relying on the upper tier governments to lead this work because no one knows communities and residents like we do. If we're not at the table, decisions will be made for us.

By adapting, engaging and innovating, local governments can lead into the future!

Mayor Allan Thompson

Mayor Allan Thompson is serving his second term as Mayor of Caledon. He brings a unique brand of passion to public service and a strong commitment to citizen centered local government.

He was first elected to Municipal Council in the fall of 2003 as Ward 2 Area Councillor, then as the Ward 2 Regional Councillor in 2006 and 2010 and in December 2014 he was first sworn in as Caledon's seventh Mayor.

Mayor Thompson is a proven leader at home in Caledon, in the Region of Peel and across Ontario. Mayor Thompson champions and supports many local and community driven initiatives. He is currently serving as Vice Chair of the Region of Peel Planning and Growth Management Committee and is a member of the Government Relations and Greater Toronto Airports Authority Liaison Committee. As the Chair of the Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) he is the voice representing rural municipalities across Ontario.

Mayor Thompson is a proud father, lifelong resident of Caledon and member of Peel's agricultural community. Together with his wife Anne he raised their two children on their families fourth generation farm.



City of London – Municipal Election 2018

CATHY SAUNDERS

The City of London conducted the first municipal election in Canada using a Ranked Ballot.

The Province of Ontario undertook a number of changes to the Municipal Elections Act, 1996 (MEA) through the Municipal Elections Moderation Act, 2016 (MEMA). One of the most significant changes was the provision to permit municipal councils the opportunity to use ranked ballots for the election of municipal council representatives as an alternative to the first-past-the-post system.

On May 1, 2017, despite the City Clerk's recommendation to the contrary, the City of London Municipal Council passed a By-law, after undertaking public consultation, to provide for the 2018 Municipal Elections and future Municipal Elections to be conducted using a ranked ballot. A ranked ballot allows a voter to rank candidates in order of preference (1st choice, 2nd choice, 3rd choice) instead of just voting for one candidate, with the winning candidate requiring to achieve 50% plus one of the votes cast through a transfer of second and third choice selections contained on the ballot.

This decision left the City Clerk and the election staff with very little time to prepare for the October 22, 2018 Municipal Election. A number of challenges faced us, including the late release of Provincial regulations related to a ranked ballot election in the fall of 2016, leaving approximately one year to consult with the public and prepare the by-law and procedures governing ranked ballots in addition to sourcing a technical solution.

The challenges included;

- ▶ No proven technology for voting equipment to conduct a ranked ballot election in an Ontario legislative context resulting in no vendor submitting a response to our Request for Proposal. Instead, we reached out to vendors we had previously contracted with to understand the challenges before them. In late 2017, we were able to enter into a contract with a vendor for the provision of vote count tabulators and software complete with an algorithm to conduct a count in accordance with Provincial Regulations. The degree to which the technology was tested was enhanced additional testing phases which included holding of a mock election in the spring of 2018, the acceptance testing all tabulators in July of 2018 to ensure the equipment was in good working order and testing again of all tabulator for logic and accuracy with respect to the count results in September 2018.
- ▶ Communicating with and educating the public to ensure to the best of our ability, that the candidates and the community were aware of the change in the voting process. In response, elections staff held two candidate information sessions, attended over 160 community events throughout March to September 2018 and conducted demonstrations for the media. An enhanced communication effort through the media, the City's website, billboards and bus advertisements throughout the City was also undertaken with the assistance of a seconded member of the City's Communications staff who was dedicated solely to the election for a year.



➤ Setting expectations as to how the results would be released in a ranked ballot election also had its challenges as the media and the public were frustrated that the results would be slower. Many assumed that results would be released in a similar manner to that of a first-past-the-post election where results are provided as Polls report in. However, in ranked ballot election, all results must be counted in order to determine the 50 percent + one vote threshold therefore making poll by poll reporting not possible. In addition, given that it was important to be transparent and clear how the transfer of votes occurred in subsequent rounds, the City Clerk chose a single candidate elimination process. For example, in the Mayor's race, we had fourteen candidates, resulting in fourteen rounds of counting. To address these concerns the elections staff met with the media to provide detailed information on what to expect on election night and the day after. We also increased our presence on social media platforms throughout the count process to update the media and the public on what was happening and what to expect next. Our information sessions held throughout the community also addressed the timing of results.

In order to address some of our challenges, election staff reached out to municipalities in the United States who had conducted ranked ballot elections and in particular Minneapolis, to learn from their experience and we are extremely grateful for the advice given.

We also determined that retaining an Auditor with experience auditing a ranked ballot election would be helpful. The Auditor observed and commented on our processes and procedures, assisted with the functional testing of the ranked ballot voting system and observed Election Day activities and counts.

From a Returning Official's perspective the election matters related to the ranked ballot process was successful. The tabulators and the voting system functioned in accordance with Provincial legislation and regulations with no issues. Whether or not the public fully understands the ranked ballot process is still up for debate, but it was evident from the comments received at the Polls and the election results that generally speaking the public understood there was a change in the election process, with some electors choosing to rank their candidates.

Cathy Saunders has been the Clerk of the City of London since November 2009. Much of Cathy's career has been in municipal planning with the City of Barrie, Town of Caledon, City of Brampton and the Municipality of Middlesex Centre, where she also served as the Clerk and the Chief Administrative Officer. Cathy is a graduate of the Master of Public Administration from Western University in London. She continues to be an active member of the Ontario Professional Planners Institute. She is also a member of the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks & Treasurers of Ontario. Cathy and her husband John reside in London with their two Havenese dogs (Oscar and Rori) and Rag Doll cat (Emma) and are active members of a local Dog Agility Club.



Yukon Leads in Election Parity

BEV BUCKWAY

Fifty-two percent. Did you catch that figure? Indeed, you did, as Yukon leads the pack after October's municipal elected where 52% of the elected officials are women. Yukon reached, and exceeded, parity in gender balance in 2018. Applause welcome, as this is a success story to share.

Recent election discussions across the country, and elsewhere, included the desire to have more women elected to municipal councils to achieve a better gender balance. Women's groups have organized to encourage more female candidates, and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) Toward Parity in Municipal Politics program is "dedicated to developing a pan-Canadian strategy to address systemic barriers to women's participation in municipal government. This program brings together Canada's municipal sector with women's organizations at the national, regional and local level, to co-create a strategy dedicated to overcoming the barriers women face when running for office."

FCM also offers two scholarships related to women in politics. The Canadian Women in Municipal Government Scholarship is aimed at secondary school students who contribute to their schools' leadership team or student council—a possible forerunner to the Council Chambers. The Mayor Andrée P. Boucher Memorial Scholarship asks for research submissions related to women in politics. Encouragement for this program is wide spread.

When I am asked how Yukon achieves such good results, an astounding answer does not come to mind. Women take their places in strong leadership roles here, and the municipal arena is an obvious step up from an elected position with an organization (Yukon has about 600 NGOs to choose from). Our gentlemen support women candidates and are not afraid to cast their votes accordingly. After all, it is their mothers, grandmothers, sisters, children or coworkers looking to represent the constituents. Perhaps it suffices to say it is the Yukon culture to lean toward gender balance in their municipalities.

A noticeable change for the Yukon is the lower age bracket of elected representatives, with younger people taking their seats behind the council tables. While exact ages are not available, it is obvious by looking around the room that the retired people now are in the minority at about 10%. With a younger mind set on board, it is probable that differences of

opinion will occur on some issues, particularly on those that can be classified as social issues and stray from the basics of asset management, garbage and dog control.

The capital city of Whitehorse again used tabulators to read paper ballots, following on the success of the 2015 election. Tabulators were deployed at each polling place to scan ballots marked manually by the electors. The tabulators read the marked ballots and recorded the votes. When the polls closed, the tabulator provided the results in a matter of minutes.

There was a minor glitch with one polling place, where there was an issue with starting the tabulator. In order to allow the poll to open on time, the first approximately 100 ballots were stored in a ballot box until the tabulator was activated. These ballots were scanned by the tabulator after the polls were closed, causing a delay in the results from that one polling station. Otherwise, no issues were reported.

Assistant City Clerk/Returning Officer Norma Felker noted, "For an election where there are many candidates on the ballot and an elector may mark the ballot for up to six candidates, the tabulator is THE answer for quick and accurate results. I would recommend the system to anyone, and also suggest that an election in Whitehorse should not be conducted without the use of tabulators." She also reflected that the tabulator worked so well in 2015 that the municipality did not even consider not using tabulators for the 2018 election. Another Yukon success story.

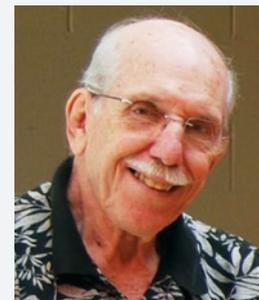
The next municipal election for Yukon is scheduled for 2021 as three-year terms are mandated by the Yukon Municipal Act.

Bev Buckway came to the Association of Yukon Communities in 2015 as its Executive Director after 30 years of self-employment coupled with two terms of office as the mayor and one term as a councillor for the City of Whitehorse. Her nine years of public service enabled her to gain a broad appreciation of Yukon, its people and places, and many perspectives on the challenging community issues.

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Affordable and Shared Housing

PAT MOAURO



Newly elected councils and municipalities across the country in 2019 are grappling with the perennial issues of affordable housing. Affordable residential housing is becoming increasingly scarce, resulting in longer waiting lists and higher prices for single-family homes and rental apartment units.

In London, Ontario more than 3,000 families are waiting to get into public housing, and many more Londoners are in desperate need of more affordable places to live. The backlog in needed repairs to the area's public housing stock, operated by the London and Middlesex Housing Corp., runs to \$228 million.

In late December, Peter Fragiskatos, Member of Parliament for London North Centre, announced, on behalf of Jeani-Yves Duclos, Minister of Families, Children and Social Development and the Minister responsible for Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the construction and funding of 69 new rental housing units in London to help more middle-class families have an affordable place to live. The units are scheduled to be built in 2019.

Located at 356 Dundas St. in downtown London, the project will provide affordable housing options close to public transit, schools and services for modest and middle-income households. Through CMHC's Rental Construction Financing initiative (RCFi), the federal government is investing more than \$4.9 million for the construction of the six-storey building. All units will have rents at or lower than 30 per cent of median household income in the area, and 17 per cent of the units will be accessible.

The Ontario Non-Profit Housing Association (ONPHA), an independent association funded and directed by its members, says on its website: "We believe that secure, decent and affordable housing is a human right and fundamental social determinant of health. It has the power to change lives and is the foundation of vibrant and successful communities. As advocates, we raise awareness of the critical role that affordable rental housing plays in Ontario."

ONPHA is home to more than 700 non-profit housing providers from Windsor to Cornwall, Toronto to Thunder Bay, that house more than 400,000 people in 170,000 homes in 220 Ontario communities.

"Senior housing is a significant issue," says ONPHA member Mary Huang of Ottawa, an engineer who builds planning and forecasting systems as well as data warehouses for large companies. "There is a push, both by people and government, to age in place. More options are needed by some than just LTC (Long-Term-Care) with a long waiting list and expensive private retirement homes, while other seniors would need the help of affordable housing."

Huang is proposing an Age-well National Impact Challenge, an architectural design competition for co-housing or supported housing. This would provide a library of foundational designs that can be purchased for a reasonable cost.

"Governments are recommending aging in place in the community, but there are few concrete plans on how that can be managed successfully for the growing population of aging seniors," she says. "From 1965 to 2015, the average life expectancy has increased by 10 years to 82.14 years. There are over 564,000 Canadians living with dementia today. The early baby boomers at 70 are hitting a four-to-eight per cent dementia rate, and there are increasing numbers of young onset dementia, currently at 16,000. The current systems are not able to accommodate those numbers in terms of aging seniors, nor deal with the increasing tsunami of dementia".

Shelley Raymond of the Haliburton area, President of Solterra Co-Housing Ltd., said "shared housing and shared ownership is the next new and exciting venture for the housing market in Canada."

She searched for other options and found numerous retirement housing models in Denmark, England and New Zealand that, while not perfect, were the inspiration behind the Solterra Concept...the Solterra model allows seniors the opportunity to 'age at home'. Each co-owner purchases a percentage interest in a shared home and they are able to maintain financial independence, stability, safety, dignity and self-respect.



Raymond stresses that this particular model results in “substantial savings, both financially and emotionally for the private individuals involved, the families and the public health care system in Canada. As the baby boomers move into their retirement years, shared housing, co-housing, and co-ownership for seniors will take off across North America and provide the solution for economical, independent living.”

She argues that affordable senior housing solutions improve housing options available to seniors. Ownership is simple: each co-owner is registered as Tenant in Common on the title/deed. Co-owners control all aspects of operating the entire home, and each resident contributes to, and is accountable for household decisions. Multiple owners are in one residential dwelling unit, or some people refer to it as a single-family home. Either way, it is one home with multiple co-owners, and each interest can be sold on the open market.

“Shared home ownership is growing in popularity, both abroad and throughout North America,” Raymond said. “At Solterra, we have adapted this concept to the unique requirements of senior citizens, people with disabilities, students and anyone else who wishes to create an inter-generational home.”

Each owner in a shared home has a private bedroom, sitting room with en suite, and everyone has access to the home’s common area. Shared amenities often include a kitchen and dining room, workshops, guest rooms, home office, arts and crafts area, laundry, and more, depending on the home’s design.

“Today’s seniors are re-evaluating their priorities, seeking housing options that balance their wish for independence, with an increasing desire or need for day-to-day support,” Raymond said. “A Solterra shared housing solution provides support similar to an ‘Assisted Living Facility’, combining personal privacy with the advantages of shared resources and community living.”

Various cohousing models (without the hyphen) found around the world are somewhat different than the Solterra model, Raymond noted. While all the cohousing models mirror the original model developed in Denmark, the cohousing models in Canada and the USA are based on the purchase on one large property, and the construction of multiple 30 to 50 single-family homes.

“Shared housing and shared ownership is on the cusp of becoming the next exciting venture for the housing market in Canada,” Raymond said. “Buying and selling a home is a primal right of every Canadian.”

Mary Huang of Ottawa, also a strong proponent of the co-housing and shared housing concept, stressed that “in view of the crisis on the horizon, we need to have more creative solutions and options for our aging population and groups that need housing. We need to do things better and faster, since our current systems are not going to scale to the numbers that will need support, at a price point that is affordable.”

Municipalities and government need to deal with barriers to developing more new housing for seniors and others

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Barriers to getting new housing supplies on stream in the London area have been identified by the London-St. Thomas Chapter of CARP (Canadian Association of Retired Persons).

These include the unusually lengthy time it takes for development projects to get approved.

Some options suggested by CARP:

1. *One* department is needed to deal with, and procedures need to be streamlined;
2. Establish a resource team of architects, engineers, and contractors to provide information to the public;
3. Provide a website with designs to help people decide or configure what they need or want.

The right mix of housing needed:

Currently, too many restrictions are placed on what can be built to get the right mix of housing where it is needed.

Options:

- Examine and evaluate the city's master housing plan;
- Evaluate the current zoning legislation in place.

Development costs are too high because of high land prices and government-imposed fees and charges.

Options:

Re-evaluate costs and determine what value people are receiving from the government's charges.

Rental units: It is difficult to be a landlord in Ontario, and tenants need to be protected.

Options:

1. More protection is needed for the small landlord who owns only one or two properties; and
2. More taxable benefits are needed to encourage people to be small landlords.

Innovation:

Other concerns, opportunities and innovations to help increase housing supply could include the following:

1. Re-furbish existing older buildings into apartments for seniors as well as students;
2. Make the process and costs easier to bear to build "granny suites" in basements or tiny homes in back yards for seniors or their caregivers;
3. Provide better tax concessions for seniors to hire caregivers, whether they are family members or friends or professional RNAs (Registered Nursing Assistants), etc.

Other housing issues:

1. Seniors need to be educated about the benefits of downsizing and/or sharing facilities – they need to know what is in it for them;
2. Housing needs to be located close to high density areas with good transportation and access to services, such as hospitals, doctors' offices, physiotherapy, shopping, and also access to social activities for seniors;
3. Incentives need to be in place for contractors to build smaller homes or multi-unit dwellings;
4. Currently, many parts of Ontario have a shortage of available contractors to renovate existing homes; and
5. A current shortage of handy men to provide services for renters and seniors is also a barrier in providing more affordable housing for seniors and others.



Asbestos – the Hidden Health Risk of Home Renovations

AL JOHNSON

A survey conducted earlier this year by a Canadian bank found that nearly 40 per cent of B.C. homeowners were planning on renovating their homes. And while that's great news for the construction industry, it's important to be aware of the health dangers that asbestos-containing building materials in older homes pose to contractors and their crew.

For workers in B.C., asbestos-related diseases are the leading cause of death, and the number one cause of death in the construction industry. Between 1996 and 2017, there were 1,101 deaths due to historical asbestos exposure, and about one third of those were construction workers.

Today, the number one way workers are exposed to asbestos is through unsafe practices during demolitions and renovations in residential construction.

WorkSafeBC's Asbestos Initiatives Program is addressing this issue through ongoing outreach, education, consultation and enforcement activities directed toward employers, workers and industry associations. The goal is to save lives by preventing exposure to asbestos.

Asbestos is an odourless, colourless, naturally occurring mineral that can be found in more than 3,000 building materials used in many homes built before 1990.

Some common asbestos-containing materials include vinyl and linoleum flooring, loose insulation, roof shingles, stucco, pipe insulation, gypsum-board filling compound and deck under-sheeting, to name a few.

In most cases, asbestos-containing materials are safe if left alone. But when disturbed by sanding, cutting, scraping or tearing, asbestos fibres can be released into the air and breathed in. That exposure can cause serious health concerns, including lung diseases and cancer.

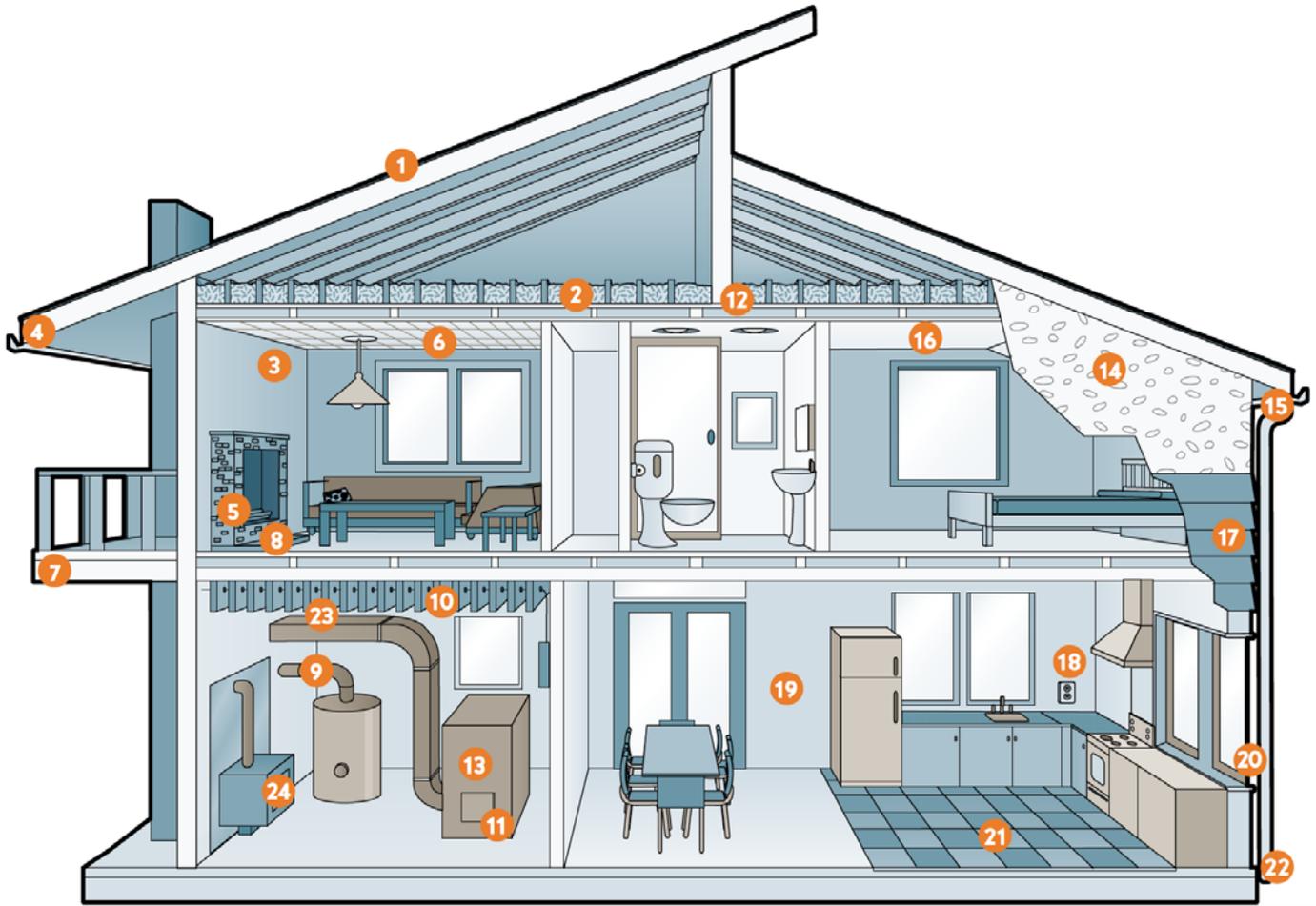
If you're a general contractor, you have a responsibility to your workers to ensure a safe workplace. Before work begins that may disturb asbestos, you must ensure that a qualified person carries out an inspection to identify the location of asbestos-containing materials. You must also ensure that hazardous materials are safely removed or contained by a qualified asbestos-abatement contractor before work begins or resumes.

Workers, too, have responsibilities for their own health and safety and that of their co-workers, including following safe-work procedures, refusing work they believe may be dangerous or could cause an undue hazard, and reporting the issue.

Handling asbestos improperly can result in stop-work orders and fines, which could affect your business through lost hours, missed deadlines and cancelled projects. And if word gets out that you don't take asbestos seriously, it could harm your professional reputation and your bottom line. Don't take the risk.

For more information on asbestos, visit worksafebc.com/asbestos.





Source: WorkSafeBC

- 1. Roof felt and shingles
- 2. Loose, blown-in insulation, such as vermiculite
- 3. Incandescent light fixture backing
- 4. Roof gutters can be made of asbestos cement
- 5. Artificial fireplace logs and ashes
- 6. Acoustic tiles
- 7. Deck under-sheeting
- 8. Asbestos pad under the fireplace hearth
- 9. Pipe insulation
- 10. Main panel and fuse box; each fuse wire has an individual asbestos flash guard
- 11. Door and gasket covers
- 12. Backing behind recessed lighting
- 13. Boiler and furnace insulation
- 14. Asbestos can be found in stucco
- 15. Soffit boards can be made of asbestos cement or asbestos insulating board
- 16. Textured or stipple-coated walls and ceilings
- 17. Asbestos cement (transite) board siding and undersheeting
- 18. Outlets and switches
- 19. Gypsum board filling compound, and patching and joint compound for walls and ceilings
- 20. Window putty
- 21. Flooring: vinyl tiles and linoleum sheet flooring; flooring adhesive
- 22. Downpipes can be made of asbestos cement
- 23. Insulation on electrical wires
- 24. Heat reflector for wood stove



In Government, There's a Big Difference Between Power and Leadership

Anyone can learn to lead. Not everyone has the courage to do it.

MARK FUNKHOUSER

When I hear or read an invocation of the term “leadership” or, even worse, a call for “bold leadership,” I tend to roll my eyes. The words are often used in ways that are so vague as to be virtually meaningless, a kind of wishful, magical thinking. When someone writes that what is needed in a given situation is a list of attributes, the first item on the list is usually bold leadership. Right, that and world peace and an end to poverty.

Most of what is taught and written about leadership focuses on the private sector. I believe that leading in government is far more difficult. Government has to solve problems that industry cannot solve. No one makes a profit trying to fix the opioid crisis or homelessness. Getting things done in government involves managing powerful, often conflicting interests.

So where does government go to get some bold leadership? Many believe that it is some sort of inherent quality that people either do or do not have. I disagree. In my view, leadership is mostly learned. We can find the fundamentals within ourselves. Over time, we can strengthen our ability to lead, just as we can strengthen our muscles. Leadership isn't mystical. At its core, leadership is enabling a group of people to achieve a goal that none of them could accomplish on their own.

The primary tool real leaders need is communication. I'm not talking simply about making speeches or giving direction, but about listening and speaking in ways that make others feel heard, understood and valued. It starts with learning. Martin Luther King Jr. spent an enormous amount of time studying philosophy and theology; he also listened closely to the sermons of the leading preachers of the day. King was an accomplished communicator by the time he was thrust into the leadership role of the Montgomery bus boycott in 1955.

There is one inherent quality that is fundamental to leadership: courage. We value and even admire people who work hard and play by the rules, but leadership requires something different. Leaders take on the problems of others and are willing to risk ridicule, derision and the loss of position or reputation to overcome those problems. That generally means disrupting a system; some current winners

may become losers. There will be pushback by people who benefit from the existing order and have the power to inflict pain. In guiding Rhode Island through two rounds of badly needed pension reform, first as treasurer and now as governor, Gina Raimondo endured plenty of pushback and pain, but she pressed on relentlessly.

It is this test of moral courage that separates real leaders from those who merely hold positions of authority. Somebody needs to be in charge of every organization, of course, but power and leadership are not the same things. My shorthand for all this is to talk about love, hope and mission. People have to know that you care about them. They have to have hope that if they stick together and stick with you, their circumstances will get better. And they have to believe in the mission -- not only that you are competent, but also that you have a plan and the plan is going to work.

The world is filled with serious challenges, most of which threaten in some way those we love. These challenges can be overcome only by effective collective action. You can't have that without leadership, however you define it.

Mark Funkhouser is the publisher of *Governing* magazine. He served as mayor of Kansas City, Mo., from 2007 to 2011. Prior to being elected mayor, Funkhouser was the city's auditor for 18 years and was honored in 2003 as a *Governing* Public Official of the Year. Before becoming publisher of *Governing*, he served as director of the Governing Institute.

Funkhouser is an internationally recognized auditing expert, author and teacher in public administration and its fiscal disciplines. He holds an interdisciplinary Ph.D. in public administration and sociology from the University of Missouri at Kansas City, an M.B.A. in accounting and finance from Tennessee State University and a master's degree in social work from West Virginia University.

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Civic Comment

GORD HUME

The recent announcement by the Ontario provincial government of a review of regional government surprised many municipal officials.

It shows once again the power and unilateral authority that provinces have over towns and cities in Canada.

Regional governments were established several decades ago in several parts of Ontario to facilitate things like Policing, Transportation, Planning and other broad-based municipal functions.

There is good reason for wider planning, servicing and shared operations in some areas. The concept is not limited to Ontario—for example, the Edmonton region functions with its Capital Region Board (recently renamed the Edmonton Metropolitan Region) which is a conglomeration of 24 municipalities in Alberta that surround Edmonton. There are other examples across the country.

The typical format is one large city surrounded by several smaller, often rural, municipalities. Concerns that spark the regional thinking usually include fear of a shotgun marriage with the larger city; concerns about traffic and transportation issues; planning (both the sprawl of the large city, and the smaller municipalities trying to ‘cherry-pick’ industries or development because of lower taxes), and the belief that some services such as Policing can be better and more economically provided on a regional basis.

As some of you know, I now live in central Florida for part of the winter. There are perhaps 20 small cities within a fifteen minute drive from my home. Each city is a few thousand permanent residents (and a few thousand more Snowbirds and tourists in the winter). Each has its own city hall, city council, mayor, fire department, planning department, and so on. Some have their own small Police Department and some have an agreement with the County Sheriff to provide policing. Each city has its own street names, bylaws on parking and building, differences in council policies and procedures, and so on.

Is that an efficient system? Probably not as much as it could be. Is it likely to change? I don't think so. (The egos of sitting politicians being the first big issue). And, unlike Canada, US states don't have the unfettered authority over towns and cities, so there is no “Big Daddy” in an oversight position.

Thinking on a regional basis for larger issues like Economic Development, Transportation and so on has always made eminent sense to me. Whether such an arrangement is formalized or not depends on local circumstances. I don't think there is a standard formula that can be imposed.

There is always going to be tensions between adjacent municipalities. There will always be disagreements over some planning, development, servicing or other policies and practices.

But smart local officials are realizing more and more that regional thinking is a progressive and practical way of doing business today.

If one municipality attracts a new business, it is likely that surrounding municipalities will also benefit from employees purchasing housing, going shopping and so on. Equally there are costs to be born for development, transportation and servicing.

Surely there is merit in approaching some issues on a broader basis than parochial concerns alone. Whatever form that may take—formal, defined, informal, loose, letters of agreement, whatever—we shouldn't lose the collective strength of towns and cities that come together in a larger economic (and even political) unit.

As municipalities increasingly assert their independence and importance, across Canada we will have to carefully consider new ways of governing and financing our municipalities. Reviewing local governance from time to time can be a healthy process.

What should be avoided is the imposition of politically-based provincial dictates on towns and cities. No one knows the local possibilities and problems better than our locally elected officials. They must be at the table. Their voices must be heard.