

Visioning Exercise

In May 2014, the Provincial EAC Symposium was held in Brampton to discuss the topic of “community engagement”. During the day, EAC members took time to explore a vision for Ontario communities. The symposium vision touched on many municipal elements, including: community, relations between people, housing, society, governance and attitude of business towards the environment. See below for some of the ideas that came out of the exercise. We wholeheartedly encourage you to do this exercise with your EAC or community organization.

Ontario EACs Vision 2014

Community

- Walkable communities
- Active transportation with the necessary infrastructure (biking, roller blading, walking).
- Province-wide - easy affordable transit
- Micro-communities - work and live in one place→ eliminate commuting. Almost everyone works out of home
- Schools – multipurpose learning
- Community and recreational community gathering areas
- Beautiful architecture
- Role of citizens – grass roots
- Diversity – age, gender, culture, activities - addressing everyone’s interests, hobbies and talents
- Community as an ecological system
- Swim in lakes, eat fish and drink
- No lawns
- More parks; Trees, shrubs and gardens everywhere
- People having veggie gardens
- Local food production + support local food businesses (farmers’ market)
- More community gardens and people growing their own fruits and vegetables
- Regional waste management
- Use of ‘Earth Ships’ (a type of passive solar house made of natural and recycled materials)
- Permeable surfaces

People Relations

- People know their neighbours and have a sense of community

- More open and transparent to people in community

Housing

- Houses and buildings have low carbon foot print - Net zero energy (use alternatives)
- Ontario Building code changes – support for 'Earth ship' homes Smaller homes, gardens and roofs
- Everyone has own solar panel
- Every person leads by example - practice reduce and reuse
- Compost and blue box
- Recycling rain water

Society

- Carbon tax
- People more aware of energy – measure energy use and people compete with their usage
- Everyone uses peak saver program
- Less use of energy overall
- Renewable energy used widely
- Incentives for business to lower energy use – awards for those that use the least
- Earth hour is all year-long
- Incentive for water conservation
- Lifestyles change to reduce reuse and recycle.
- Sustainability does not cost more - paradigm shift in thought
- Look beyond the price tag
- Environmental education – meaningful curriculum at school and by publicly funded organizations
- Opportunities for leadership and learning
- Food security addressed
- Less meat consumption
- Removing fear of density
- Retaining biodiversity

Governance

- Interconnectivity between government levels (federal, provincial, regional, municipal) around environmental goals
- Continuity across electoral cycles

- Open data & sharing in governance
- Early meaningful public consultations - consult with persons impacted
- Bottom up approach
- Citizens engaged in planning and policy - continuous engagement
- Knowledge- based informed consent
- Based on scientific data collected over time
- More community decision making on key issues
- Participatory democracy
- Community & grassroots engagement driving policy
- People in charge of projects
- Community forums
- Community long range planning is 'citizen led'
- Dealing with the challenge of growing populations
- Less individualism – special interest groups
- “The vocal majority” does not rule the majority
- Relationship with community – by necessity – a lot friendlier
- Local champions and political will

Business

- Foster corporate stewardship beyond public relations
- Manufacturers with end of product life responsibility
- Revitalization in downtown cores
- Co-operative, engaged proper democracy\engaged business community
- Common ground - “we can grow together”