Visioning in Strategic Planning:
Theory, Practice and Evaluation

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Visioning in Strategic Planning:
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by
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Abstract

"Vision" is a term that has been increasing found in planning documents during the late 1980s and 1990s. "Visioning" is the name given to a number of techniques that have come into use in connection with strategic planning during the same time period. A fair amount has been written about how to do visioning and how to create visions but almost nothing has been undertaken in terms of a critical analysis. This research began with a thorough examination of available literature on vision and visioning both within planning and beyond. The principal methodological approach to the literature involved content analysis. A survey of municipalities in the Province of Ontario was conducted to determine how widespread the practice of visioning has been and what was the nature of the plans produced. Forty-four case studies are cited. In depth interviews were conducted with a dozen key informants. These were public and private sector practitioners who had conducted visioning exercises. A pluralistic methodology was used which involved program evaluation, emergent evaluation and naturalistic approaches. Initially it was discovered that there is not one meaning of the terms vision and visioning but as many as twenty different meanings. It was found that while present proponents of visioning claim to be part of a long tradition, there is little similarity between what was done in the past and what is being done today. There is little or no commonality in the various forms of visioning techniques. While it was found that practitioners of visioning often possess good intuitions about their work, the underlying philosophy on which the practice of visioning is based is seldom articulated and not at all well understood by professional planners or by the public. Some of the assumptions made by proponents of visioning can be substantiated by independent research. Many of these assumptions, however, are either contradictory, unfounded and/or unprovable. The effective planning use of the vision concept, that is of having a clear picture of the future, depends on achieving a much better understanding of the theory behind the approach and of having a much better understanding of the meanings of the terms in use than is presently evident in the planning profession.

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The second category of people who made this work possible were the many planners, public officials and consultants that I contacted, interviewed and surveyed. They are too numerous to mention here although some of the names of principal contacts are contained in the thesis itself. The responsiveness and helpfulness of these people is a testament to the great tradition and professionalism of the public service and planning vocation in this province.

Finally, I want to thank my family and friends who may not always understand my motivations for subjecting myself to things like graduate school but who have nevertheless been supportive in many ways.

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Chapter 1

...She has intelligence and wit - which means she has an independent mind. She can have any life she wants - and the longer she has to dream up the future, the better off she'll be.

This was the Ede - still *dreaming of her future* - who walked into the Queen's Hotel with her brothers and her sister that Saturday afternoon in September, 1889.

Timothy Findley, *The Piano Man's Daughter*, (1995).

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 How this Research Came About and the Reader's Contract

When I decided to undertake doctoral research in Urban Planning I asked a number of people, academics and planning practitioners, the same couple of things. "What is the most important question right now in this field?" "If you could drop what you're doing and explore whatever you wanted, what would it be?" From their collective response I fashioned the research which follows.

The thing that most of these people talked about in 1993 was ***vision***. "We lack vision," some said, or "we need vision," or "there aren't visionaries the way there used to be." So I began to investigate but the more I talked to people and read about vision the more two things became clear. First of all, everyone seemed to know what vision meant - for them - and secondly, it seemed to mean something either slightly or even wildly different for just about everybody. That made it both easy and difficult to discuss with people. It was easy to get them started and difficult to get them to consider any notions about vision, other than their own.

In the 1990s the terms vision, visioning, visionary, envision and visualize, seem to appear virtually everywhere one looks. Referring to success in business , psychologist Martin Rutte says, "a true leader must see himself or herself as warrior bringing vision into the world" (Newman P.C.1993). In politics we read about, "a flap over 'visioning' hits Hillary Clinton" (McDonald 1996). It seems the US First Lady was criticized for taking part in an exercise intended to "conjure up images of characters from history." The article concluded, however, by saying that, "this is all pretty mainstream," and that the report didn't embarrass the Clintons who positioned themselves, "like millions of other baby boomers, on a suddenly trendy spiritual quest." An economist says that organizations, "are often founded by visionaries - and end up being run by drudges" (Howard 1995). We even find the terms used in regard to the law. When Guelph University student Gwen Jacobs was acquitted on charges of indecency for walking down the street bare breasted, a caller to a radio station said she, "had courage and vision" (CBC Dec 13 1996).

Planning was no exception to the trend in using the vision terms. Where the word vision itself is not used then often another noun, visionary, or the verbs visioning and envision, are found. The words are found in books. The advertising flyer from Gage Educational Publications that circulated in February 1997 was entitled *Visions for the Future.* It is difficult to pick up a professional journal from the mid 1990s and not encounter visions. For example in the American Planning Association magazine *Planning*, April 1995 issue, the concepts of vision or visioning are featured in at least four items. The words are used in many different countries. In the British publication *Planning Week*, April 6, 1995, vision figures in two articles. In the *Australian Planner*, January 1996, the planner's role as "visionary regulator" is discussed. The Canadian Institute of Planners publication, *Plan Canada*, September 1995, has three out of the eight feature articles involving vision while two others deal with yet another variant, visualization. It is both an urban and a rural

phenomenon and includes technical planning as well as that ever present planning connection to politics. "Poor land use planning wrecks towns," said an unnamed writer in the American journal *Small Town* (Jul/Aug 1992), "so decision makers need to develop a community vision." Mayor Pierre Borque's municipal party is called *Vision Montreal.* And now, vision related terms are not only the topics of discussion among many practicing planners, they are beginning to appear in official policy (Abbott 1995, Roberts 1996, Thomas 1995).

A couple of observations can be made about all these uses of the vision words. First of all, current writers seem to imply that the terms have always been with us and second, that their meanings are clear and universally understood. As a result the words are seldom defined or when provided, definitions are unclear. For example, "...visioning is the process by which a community envisions its preferred future" (Chandler 1994). Often the terms are used quite emotively as in the case of "...such lack of vision is endemic to the state of contemporary planning..." (Cohn 1988). Writers seem to assume that the terms are self-explanatory. "Planners should be visionaries, and a little encouragement can persuade them to be so..." (Allinson 1995).

In reality notions about vision are complex, diverse and often contradictory. While the recent writing on the practices of vision and visioning in the planning journals and books is manifold, reflection on the underlying philosophy and any critical analysis of the approach is lacking. For example, *Planning Theory Newsletter*, the *Journal of Planning Research and Education* and the *Journal of the American Planning Association* have not critically examined the concept of vision. In order to proceed with such an analysis we might first consider a number of questions. In all these uses of the same set of words, is there anything in common? If there are common meanings, is it just about words - that is, semantics - or are there substantive issues that can and ought to be explored? Is this a

suitable topic for planning research, and finally, if it is, how can such research be shaped to add something useful to the practice of the profession?

In order to answer these questions, there first needs to be a pact with the reader. When a person begins to read a novel or watch a play they tacitly enter into a contract with the writer. This is what Samuel Taylor Coleridge called *the willing suspension of disbelief.* To truly enjoy and understand fiction, readers must leave their natural doubt and suspicion about story-telling aside and abandon themselves to the web of fantasy that the novelist or playwright weaves. In the case of this research into the nature of vision, visioning and visionaries, readers are invited to engage in *the willing suspension of belief.* In order to enter into the spirit of the research it will be almost essential for readers to set aside their own knowledge of what vision means to them and join in exploring the way the term is used by many other people in many widely different ways.

In my approach to this subject I have not predetermined what vision and visioning are. I have gone into the field and whenever I found the terms being used I have examined what it was that was being said and done. From that start point I have attempted to fashion an evaluation that measures visions and visioning against the stated claims and goals of the people using the terms. When the people undertaking visioning and creating visions have claimed descent of their ideas from historic precedent, I have explored their pedigree. Finally I have compared what is being done to alternative approaches.

At this point, at the very outset of writing about this subject, I need to acknowledge that some people may not like some of the things I'm going to report. In the course of undertaking this work I have generally found dedicated planning professionals in both the public and private sectors. I believe they are genuinely trying to do their best. Many of them are enthusiastic and even passionate about the processes they have been engaged in

around the ideas of vision and visioning. Any challenges to their assumptions or questioning of the effectiveness of what has been done that is contained in the following discussion is not in any way intended as negative comment on anyone's good intentions. Rather it is aimed at improving planning practice and is based, I believe, on sound methodology, thorough research and carefully considered evaluation.

1.2 Is Vision a Valid Inquiry for Planning Research

Where are we in the study of planning today? Many would say that we are presently in a time of urban crisis. The resources that we have relied on to sustain growth and prosperity are running out. There are signs of potential failure, or at least fault lines, in the social structures that have maintained urban life. The very nature of the economy on which our development has rested is changing at an unbelievable rate. Former Toronto mayor John Sewell expressed this when he said:

> Most of us share a crisis of confidence about society and its directions. What is the crisis about? Is it our lack of sense of purpose? Or that socially we have not shared goals? (Regional Municipality of Waterloo 1990)

Many of us also feel that we are hurtling toward tomorrow's urban form on a limited access freeway. We seem to be either guided in this race by outdated social and planning paradigms or, conversely, subjecting our decisions to crude and mean ideologies (Saul 1995). We are being pulled right and left by fragmented and competing interests and constrained by old and tired political and administrative structures. It is possible that we are just about out of control with only the momentum of the past propelling us and short term needs determining the daily direction.

How did we come to be in such a state? Sandercock says that at least some of our dilemma as planning researchers is of our making: "There is no scrutiny of the ideology... that equates planning with progress - not just in terms of subject matter, but also in terms of method" (1995). With that in mind it seems to me that there are at least two broad aspects to consider. Any given point in our historical condition can be said to have resulted from a combination of forces. Some of these are beyond human control while others are matters of human volition. The forces outside the control of people are considered natural or even cosmic and are classified into such fields of study as geology and astrophysics. Societies are affected by earthquakes and sun spots but can do virtually nothing about them. While other natural phenomena such as climate and the state of the biological environment, are not exactly controllable by people, we have come to realize that they are certainly affected by human actions. We can pollute lakes and rivers and upset weather patterns by burning fossil fuels. Still other forces that shape history, such as economics and politics, involve human activity but are thought by many to operate according to their own dynamics. People, individually and in groups, are the agents and sometimes objects of supply and demand, revolutions of rising expectations and so on but in these regards their actions, so the argument goes, are seen subject to definable sets of laws. Politics is studied as a science, economics as a grim science.

Certain aspects of the human condition, however, are neither beyond people's control nor subject to predictable patterns. Some things, at least, people do purely by choice (Hinsz 1991). These are acts of will. Various thinkers will choose to draw the line in different places between the forces that shape human situations and the acts of volition with which people respond to those forces, but there is no doubt for most of us that individual and collective choices do play a part. Let us consider an example of this. In the last two or three hundred years climatic conditions altered, plant diseases spread, economic patterns

changed and political power shifted. All of those things are true and are studied by social and natural scientists, but one day some of our ancestors decided to get on a boat and by that decision took a major step in shaping their own future. Others of course were put on the boat against their will and still others watched those people getting off the boats and for the latter groups these were forces of change over which they had no control but with which they then had to deal. It is clear that some people, those with greater power, make decisions that can affect others disproportionately. We all, however, continue to make decisions and act on them and those acts contribute to creating the social and physical environment in which we live.

Much of planning study has concerned itself with understanding the forces at work on humans and their environment, how to measure them, predict them as well as how and when to intervene in their functioning. For a long time, at least since the 1930s, planners have thought that this measuring, predicting and intervening was their main function. They have operated as though they could "fix" things either by the invocation of science or the considered application of policies. As Ziegler has put it: "The past 40 years of scientific futurism," has been, "an attempt to generate hard forecasts with the quality of scientific prediction, i.e. suitably quantifiable - and of technical planning - an attempt to control the future or at least reduce the range of uncertainty to manageable proportions" (1991). But that preoccupation of planning has begun to change. There has been a resurgence of interest in the part played by human agency, not just in the sense of physical functions such as consuming resources, polluting or procreating, but in the part played by acts of will. Ziegler continues, "in this last decade of the 20th century," the tradition of technical planning "gives way to the more generous, humane, accessible and ambiguous enterprise of wishing, hoping, dreaming, imagining, yes, and fearing about the future which the next century will bring. In the late 1970s and throughout the 1980s, the idea of vision began to

receive a great deal of play among political and organizational leaders in democratically inclined societies."

Ziegler's statements seem to have a ring of truth but what exactly is meant by "the idea of vision?" If we accept that at least part of what guides human actions are people's aspirations, dreams and ideas of what the future could be (Maslow 1968) and if vision is a term that is now widely used to describe that concept (Oregon 1993), then it is something that can and should be examined in the context of planning. Visioning has become a planning and a social program that needs evaluation. Meyers says that "evaluation is the effort to understand the functioning and effects of a program, which is a planned sequence of activities intended to achieve some goal," and that "even when social programs are seriously intended, the nature of modern society is such that a large proportion of social programs function counterintuitively; that is their results are quite different from the expectations of the program planners" (1981). Whether there is any degree of consistency in the use of the vision terms and how they relate to substance, are matters discussed in later chapters when the various complexities and conundrums surrounding this concept are discussed.

If it can be argued that the idea of vision or images of the future, is one of the principle elements of planning in the general sense (Rademan 1995), and is therefore a suitable topic of research, it can also be pointed out that visioning as a planning technique has become so wide-spread in practice that it deserves attention for that reason as well. In fact the visioning approach has swept over urban and regional planning and related areas in a wave (Bryson 1988). The origins of the practice, which will be explored in detail in Chapter 3, are to be found partly in the visionary and utopian traditions of town planning itself (Corn 1986, Fishman 1977) and partly in other fields such as business, health and sports (El-Namaki 1992, Simonton 1978, Smith 1990). Visioning also owes more than a little to the

influences of such "new age" movements as self-actualization and modern mysticism (Maslow 1987, Pearce 1992, Barker 1990).

While apparently engaged in by a wide range of governments, public agencies and institutions, however, visioning seems not to be well understood. There appears to be neither a body of tested theory behind it nor is there an empirical record of monitored successful applications of the approach. Reported success stories are most often written by proponents; that is by people who conduct visioning exercises as part of their professional consulting business (Klein 1993, Wilson 1992, Simpson 1990). While there is great enthusiasm for visioning in many quarters there is also a growing resistance to its use and scepticism about its value (Kiechel 1989). If visioning has genuine value, as it may well have, then planners need to understand it better and must be able to apply it appropriately and effectively. Otherwise its misuse will ultimately relegate it to the garage sale of fads past.

1.3 Scoping and Focusing the Research

One of the difficulties with what I set out to do was the very scope of the concepts involved. The larger or meta-question toward which the present research is directed might be stated in this way: "*what is the relationship between the process of articulating visions or images of the future and planning outcomes?*" As with most big questions, however, that one is beyond the capacity of a single research undertaking, so I have attempted to divide it into manageable parts and to discuss them in as logical a sequence as possible.

To begin with I don't think anyone claims that vision and visioning are concepts that stand alone. There is general acceptance that they belong under the more general heading of

strategic planning (Kiefer 1983, Wilson 1992) or as it has been called more recently, strategic thinking (Mintzberg 1994). That means that visioning must be considered and understood within that broader category of ideas. As one municipal document describes it, a community vision "is the 'guiding statement' for the Strategic Plan. As such, it embodies the key principles and ideas for the future of the community and articulates the aspirations of... residents" (City of St. Catharines 1995).

Although visioning is carried on in a wide range of contexts from business, through human resource development, arts organizations and so on, I have concentrated on its application in urban and regional planning. Even in that realm there have been numerous applications of visioning including economic development agencies and district health councils so I further focused my attention on examples of visions created for or by municipal government. These included such undertakings as Official Plans, Strategic Plans and Community Development Strategies. The geographic area on which I focused for the purpose of field research was the Province of Ontario.

In terms of examining relevant literature I allowed a broader scope both in terms of geography and subject matter. While it might be argued that planning is very contextual, that is likely to be very different in nature in different places and without any strong universal theory or principles, it is nevertheless the case that planners do transfer ideas, practices and approaches from divergent jurisdictions. The examination of applications of vision projects, therefore, was extended to literature from most parts of the English speaking world: The United Kingdom, Australia, New Zealand, The United States, Canada and beyond. In terms of crossing disciplines it became necessary to go well beyond planning for three reasons. First of all, most of the ideas about vision were borrowed from other areas and therefore those subjects needed to be explored to find the roots of the practice. Second, there was simply not enough written within the bounds of planning and

third, some of the assumptions and claims made concerning the efficacy of visioning could only be understood and evaluated with reference to such fields of study as organizational management and social psychology.

This look at vision and visioning proceeded with two main suppositions in mind. They were that a practice can be scrutinized in either or both of two ways: in terms of the testable strength of its underlying philosophy or theory-like basis, or by the demonstrable effectiveness of its outcomes compared to alternative approaches.

1.4 The Primary and Secondary Research Goals

The principal goal of this research was to establish some useful information and advice for practicing planners that might help them determine whether it is useful to attempt to create a vision as part of their strategic planning and, if they decide to do that, what are the best ways to proceed.

The secondary goal was to see if a base line information context might be established for evaluating the long term outcomes of planning that is "vision based" or has a "vision" component. In addition, the question was considered of what sorts of methodologies might exist for undertaking such an evaluation.

1. 5 The Objectives Pursued in Support of the Research Goals

In order to achieve the primary and secondary research goals I identified seven main objectives. Several of the objectives have a number of components.

1.5.1 What Are the Origins and Background of Visioning

By examining the literature in the field the objective was to learn about where the ideas of vision came from and about how visioning has been practiced and used. In talking to practitioners who have undertaken visioning, the objective was to determine where they got their concepts and training and what it was they understood of the origins of these ideas.

1.5.2 What Is the Conceptual or Philosophical Basis for Visioning

The intention was to determine, from writing in the field of visioning and from other sources, if there are any theory-like underpinnings for the practice as well as how visioning relates to strategic planning or long range planning and about what the relationship is between visioning and participative planning, with which it has been widely linked.

I have tried to carefully avoid the use of the term "theory" with regard to visioning, unless others have brought it into the discussion, since there is probably nothing robust enough in the field to be tested in a way that would justify the term theory. I have opted instead to talk about philosophy or theory-like concepts in the sense that Conrad uses them in defining "program philosophy" as "a system of beliefs, values and goals to define the structure, process and outcomes of a program" (1987).

A further objective was to find out if the people who undertake visioning could explain how it worked and/or whether they thought it was important to articulate a basis for the practice.

1.5.3 To What Extent Is Visioning Being Done

The objective was to determine how widespread the use of visioning is and has been in urban and regional planning among municipalities in the target study areas of Ontario.

1.5.4 Who Is Conducting Visioning Exercises

The intention was to determine who has been conducting the visioning exercises. This was both a general question in the sense of what kinds of professionals, volunteers, politicians and consultants were involved as well as a specific one in terms of identifying potential people to interview as key informants.

1.5.5 What Is It That Is Being Done

The objective here was to establish what constitutes the actual practice of visioning and what differentiates it, if anything, from other practices such as citizen participation and strategic planning. The terminology used was also examined in an effort to define the terms in general use. The techniques used by practitioners were scrutinized to determine who participates, the goals that are set for visioning exercises, the uses to which the outcomes are put, the facilitation techniques and approaches used and how outcomes are monitored. Through this means it was hoped to determine whether there is: a) a common definition of practice and definable sets of techniques; b) definable schools of practice, or c) little or no commonality in practice.

1.5.6 What Can Be Learned From What Is Being Done - Evaluation

The evaluation took four forms. First of all visioning exercises have been examined to see if they are meeting the goals they set for themselves. Second an appropriate framework for evaluating the success of vision based planning or planning with a vision component has been set out and case studies measured against those criteria. Thirdly, vision oriented or vision based plans have been compared to plans produced before the vision terms were used and evaluated as to whether they are demonstrably different and in what ways. Fourthly, the relationship between vision exercises and stated underlying philosophies have been examined to see if there is evidence that supports the efficacy of the claims made about the practice.

1.5.7 What Are The Keys To Success - Analysis

The objective was to analyse the evaluation to determine what conclusion can be drawn and what recommendations can be made regarding the efficacious use of vision and visioning.

Pursuit of the goals stated above will reveal a rich tradition of visions and approaches to creating visions. The conceptual basis for these activities, however, will be seen as dangerously weak. While the practices will be shown to be widespread, little commonality will be demonstrable. In conclusion a number of cautions will be outlined but also some guidelines for the more effective use of the best aspects of vision-based planning will be offered.

Chapter 2

> One of the tricks which makes this sort of closet delusion possible is that the very size and prosperity of the elite permits it to interiorize an artificial vision of civilization as a whole.
>
> John Ralston Saul *The Unconscious Civilization, (1995).*

2.0 METHODOLOGICAL APPROACHES TO THE STUDY OF VISIONING

2.1 General

In the broadest sense this research is phenomenological in that it identifies, as its subject matter, a set of terms in common use and a related occurring practice. The work has elements that are both formative, dealing with ongoing feedback on the practice of visioning, and summative, commenting on outcomes, insofar as these are able to be seen (Kosecoff 1982). Within these general categories an appropriate research strategy, as outlined in Chapter 1, Sections 1.4 and 1.5, has been devised.

At the start of his book *The Language of Planning*, Guttenberg writes that "a vision of planning begins to unfold" (1993). He goes on to say that "the starting point is the ambiguity of words: in the literature of planning one notes a bewildering change from one context to another in the meaning of the key terms." But the words seldom, if ever, have just one true meaning. So the task of the researcher then is to, "aim not at uncovering truth but at deciphering value, especially uncovering 'the significance of the affirmation of certain values within social praxis'" (Moore-Milroy 1989).

In order to unravel the complexities of a hitherto ill defined planning technique such as the use of visioning, a multi-faceted approach is required . Palfrey and his associates suggests that a pluralistic approach is one "which combines a number of views in a way that is appropriate to the particular case" (1992) They go on to say that this, "allows a methodological triangulation [that] can be complicated but realistic [and provides the] best chance to be independent and neutral." More will be said about this pluralistic approach in Section 2.4.1 below. The seven research objectives described in Section 1.5, therefore, each require specific styles of investigation. The terminology and concepts presented here draw heavily on Neuman's *Social Research Methods* (1991).

The first section, 1.5.1, deals with the origins and background of visioning and is descriptive of ideas and concepts. Temporally, the portion dealing with practitioners is cross sectional as it is intended to give a picture of actual attitudes at the time of the interviews. The literature search is, for the most part, retrospective.

The second part, 1.5.2, looks at the underlying ideas of visioning, or what Conrad calls the program philosophy (1987). It is partly descriptive of the practitioners' perceptions and partly an analysis of proposed and possible theory-like concepts put forward in various writings and in the interviews. Once again, the practitioner portion is cross sectional and the literature search retrospective.

The third part, 1.5.3, which deals with the extent to which visioning has been practiced, is descriptive and temporally both cross sectional and retrospective. It is intended to give a picture of actual involvement at this time and in the fairly recent past.

The fourth part, Section 1.5.4, looks at who generally and specifically conducts visioning exercises. It is descriptive and temporally cross sectional.

Section 1.5.5, which examines practice and techniques, is descriptive of content and temporally cross sectional. It is intended to give a picture of actual practices at this time including who participated, the intended use of the outcomes of visioning, the facilitation approaches and the measures of success.

In the sixth part, Section 1.5.6, various forms of evaluation are employed. These are explored more fully in Section 2.4 below. The responses to recent exercises were cross sectional but a model will be proposed for longer term monitoring of vision based planning and this is longitudinal in temporal terms.

The seventh part, 1.5.7, consists of analysis of the observations made in the pursuit of the previous research objectives and undertakes to draw conclusions in order to fulfil the principle goals of this work. Those goals are intend to be practically and directly useful to practicing planners.

2.2 The Literature

2.2.1 Material Surveyed

In order to fulfil the research objectives concerning the origin of visioning (1.5.1), its philosophical underpinnings (1.5.2) and to some degree the extent and nature of the practice (1.5.3 and 1.5.5), a range of literature was explored. The written sources examined in this research are of four different types. There is periodical literature,

municipal and other government or public documents, manuals or materials that are instructional in nature and general sources (primarily books).

The periodical literature surveyed was mostly from the fields of planning practice, planning research and planning theory (see Appendix G). The search began with the journals of the major professional organizations in North America, the United Kingdom, Australia and New Zealand. Among others these included the American Planning Association's two publications, *Plan Canada* and *Town and Country Planning* from the British Town and Country Planning Association. In these publications the issues that concern planning throughout the English speaking world are discussed by the profession. Some of the surveyed professional journals are more physically and spatially oriented, so that in those such as *Places*, *Built Environment* and *Ekistics*, a more design and architectural view is represented. A perspective from beyond the English language realm was sought by reading journals such as *Third World Planning* but it can also be noted that reference to more international experience is quite often included in the journals that were studied.

A number of journals which concentrate more on planning research were also surveyed. These included *Regional Science and Urban Studies, The Journal of Planning Education and Research* and *Planning Perspectives.* The third category of journals searched are those which have a more theoretical approach and include *The Planning Theory Newsletter, Environment and Planning B* and *The Journal of Planning Literature.*

Two methods were employed in the survey of periodical literature. All of the journals were searched using indexes not only for references to the main terms such as vision and visioning but also for items on such topics as strategic planning, the future and images. However, the main professional practice journals in Britain, the United States, Canada and Australia were read in detail, that is all articles were scanned, in search of references to

vision and visioning that may have been embedded in articles on other subjects. That intensive search covered the ten year period from 1986 to 1996. Beyond that time frame, articles were examined as far back as the 1930s (Peets) when references to the vision terms were found.

The second type of written materials examined were municipal and other government or public documents. For the most part these items were submitted in response to requests for information that were sent to the municipalities targeted in the study (see Section 2.3.1 below). The material consisted of official plans, strategic plans, community development strategies, vision statements, consulting reports, summaries of public submissions and similar items. As well as finished reports and officially tabled documents there were also items such as terms of reference issued in the process of soliciting proposals to undertake visioning. Documents of that nature were helpful in establishing intent, expectations and assumptions. Along with the municipality specific material there were also some policy documents such as the Regional Planning Guidelines (RPGs) from Great Britain.

The third category of written documentation surveyed were manuals or materials that are primarily instructional or informational in nature. Among these items were publications such as *A Guide to Community Visioning*, prepared in 1993 by the Oregon Chapter of the American Planning Association and distributed by APA's Planners Press in Chicago. Other 'how to' guides included Kemp's 1992 *Strategic Planning in Local Government: A Casebook* also published by the APA, Ziegler's "Envisioning the Future," Senge's *Fifth Discipline* and material from the Institute for Cultural Affairs.

Included under the heading of general information were primarily books useful in shedding light on the topics of vision and visioning. These cover an extremely wide range of subject matter from those closely related historically to the core topic such as works on utopianism,

to others related by inference such as psychology texts dealing with the study of mental imaging. The various titles were discovered either by following up bibliographical references found in the preliminary search of periodical sources, through index searches of the same subject headings mentioned above, or by secondary referencing, i.e. following bibliographical leads from the initial books and journals found. In some cases the books examined were mentioned in the course of interviews with key informants. In all cases the path of discovery was a logical one beginning with earlier research and continuing until no further useful information emerged. One of the signals that the limit of an effective literature search has been reached is when the majority of references made in a particular work are already familiar to the researcher.

2.2.2 Content Analysis

On one level, things written about a subject such as visioning can simply be quoted, discussed and in some way evaluated. When someone is commenting directly on an issue at hand, in a journal article for example, that approach is sufficient. On the other hand, when documents making various claims of efficacy, originality and interpretive power are being put forward, say in the form of a proposal to undertake consulting work or in public relations material aimed at attracting investment, then some other method of understanding them must be found. Content Analysis is an approach that has been used for some time. Back in the 1950s, Pool introduced the idea of looking at written material in both its representation and instrumental modes (1959). By representational he meant what was important about the communication in terms of what is revealed in the meanings of the words themselves. By instrumental he meant what is important not in what is on the face of it but what is conveyed given the context and circumstances. Since we find the terms vision and visioning used in such different ways in different circumstances this distinction becomes significant in our ability to decipher meaning.

Although it has a long history in scholarship, the technique of content analysis has continued to develop. A more up-to-date definition is that:

> Content analysis classifies textual material, reducing it to more relevant, manageable bits of data. Social scientists who must make sense of historical documents, newspaper stories, political speeches, open-ended interviews, diplomatic messages, psychological diaries, or official publications - to name just a few - will find the technique indispensable (Weber 1990).

Early advocates of content analysis, such as Pool, divided the technique into quantitative analysis, which concerns the frequency of occurrences of words, and qualitative analysis. The qualitative variety has many meanings but one is "the preliminary reading of material for the purpose of hypothesis formation and discovery of new relationships and an impressionistic procedure for making observations about content characteristics" (1959). Weber further defines this qualitative use of content analysis as "a research method that uses a set of procedures to make valid inferences from text. These inferences are about the sender(s) of the message, the message itself, or the audience of the message" (1990). He gives a list of eleven possible purposes for which the technique might be used of which the following four apply to this research on visioning. It is an audit of communication content against objectives; it is a reflection of the cultural patterns of groups, institutions and society; it reveals the focus of individual, group, institutional and societal attention; and it describes trends in communication content.

Let us consider three of the specific ways in which content analysis can be used in the scrutiny of the practice of visioning. It is generally accepted, and often stated in planning documents containing visions, that these are statements about the future. In *Vaughan Vision*, for example, it is asserted that "visions are statements of destination... possibilities, desired futures..." (City of Vaughan 1996). Since that future orientation is stated, it is

interesting to look closely at the vision statements, to see whether their grammar concurs. Are they in fact statements about the future or are they really about the present? Is this a mere representational matter, that is, just about words, or is it an instrumental matter, that is, about substance? In Weber's terms this is a case where content analysis helps us with a possible hypothesis formation.

Within planning documents, say official or strategic plans, there may be preambles which set out the intent of the vision statements. Examples can be found in London, where it is stated that the vision is to help guide future decisions, and King, where the vision is to be a "clear and powerful message" (City of London 1996, Township of King 1995). In the pursuit of what Weber calls an audit of communication content against objectives, it is possible to consider whether the subsequent statements in these documents are judged capable of guiding decisions or whether they are in fact clear and powerful.

A third example is the claim of innovativeness or novelty. Many proponents of visioning state that it is a new technique. Some of these claims are made in periodical literature (Klein 1993, Anderson 1987, Bass 1990, McClendon 1993) while others appear in public documents (City of Ottawa 1994). In Weber's terms we can undertake to describe trends in communication content by comparing the texts of recent visions with older forms of planning statements to ascertain whether they are in fact different.

It will be shown in Section 2.4 below how the techniques of content analysis have been used to formulate the criteria on which information, both verbal communications through interviews and documentary sources, has been evaluated.

2.3 Field Research

2.3.1 Municipalities Surveyed

The research objectives concerning the extent to which visioning is practiced (1.5.3), who is doing the work (1.5.4) and the nature of the exercises (1.5.5), were addressed through a field survey. The primary target group were Regional Planning Offices in the fifteen (15) Regional Municipalities in Ontario. Other major municipalities with populations over 50,000 such as Guelph, North Bay, Sault Ste. Marie and London, which are not part of regions, were also included. The total number of municipalities, upper and lower tier, included in the survey, was one hundred and six (106).

That sample represents jurisdictions containing just over 75% of the population of Ontario. The areas included using this criteria consist of highly urbanized communities, smaller urban centres, rural municipalities, metropolitan fringe areas and relatively remote settlements. Although concentrated in the southern part of the province, as is the majority of the population, this sample did include some northern communities. While it might be argued that planning can be a very contextual practice, owing more to local conditions and traditions that to any universal or widely applicable principles, the case can be made that the sample of communities found in this survey are as representative a group of planning jurisdictions as might be found anywhere.

A short letter was sent to planning offices in each of the fifteen (15) Regions and to each of the unattached cities. Telephone calls followed the letters. In the case of the Regions it was asked whether they or any of their constituent municipalities had undertaken visions. In the case of the unattached cities the question was simply addressed to them. It was explained that the survey was focussing on municipal planning initiatives of the type related

to official plans, strategic plans and community development plans. It was explained that while of interest, vision plans for related agencies such as district health councils or economic development agencies, were not part of the present survey. A couple of the visions subsequently included as case studies were corporate plans, i.e. having to do with the internal operation of the planning department or of the municipal administration, but most were related to official plans or strategic plans.

When it was determined which places had been involved in visioning they were requested to provide any pertinent information on a) the processes involved, b) the resulting vision statements or documents and c) identification of who had conducted the work. This survey began in March 1996 and continued until November of 1996. In most cases the response was professional, prompt and helpful. In a number of cases several additional phone calls, letters and faxes eventually produced the requested information. In a few cases there was no response. At the end of this effort a total of forty-one (41) municipalities and one other agency had supplied documentation (see Appendix A for list and Appendices B and C for summaries of process and documentation). This survey provided forty-four (44) case studies that were examined and the potential list of key informants. The agency included in the analysis that is not a municipality is the Niagara Parks Commission. Their plan was included for three reasons. First of all the Parks Commission operates much as a municipality does in planning terms and has similar responsibilities. But while that may be true of other agencies that were not included, such a First Nations Bands, the Parks Commission's 100 Year Vision was considered important because it was the earliest project on this large a scale in Ontario and because it can be seen to have influenced many subsequent strategic planning efforts. Two of the municipalities surveyed had done two different vision exercises.

While this is not offered as a statistically rigorous exercise it can be argued that visioning in municipal planning is a significant factor when over a third of the communities in the target sample have undertaken it in one form or another.

2.3.2 Selection of Key Informants

A number of practitioners of visioning, people who had conducted, facilitated and/or worked on vision plans, were identified in the course of the survey of municipalities. Five criteria were developed in order to help select a number of individuals who would be approached and asked for interviews. The first consideration was to talk to a mixture of public sector and private sector people who had done visioning. Both kinds of people had been involved and, with a few exceptions discovered later in the research, everyone identified who had done this sort of work was a professional; that is, paid for the work and not undertaking it as a volunteer. The second consideration was to find people who had worked in urban and others who had worked in rural situations. There were, of course, people who had both kinds of experience. The third point was to find people who had a great deal of experience, having done many visioning exercises, while locating others whose experience was more focussed, having worked only in their own communities. A fourth consideration was to establish a regional spread both in where the people lived and where they had worked. Finally, a gender balance was seen as desirable factor.

It was decided that twelve interviews would be a reasonable number in order to meet the criteria developed. A range of possible interviewees was selected and in the event, only one of these interviews proved to be impossible to arrange while all of the other people contacted agreed readily to participate (see Appendix F). Twelve people were interviewed in ten different sessions. Two of the interviews involved talking to two people at the same time. There were eight private sector and four public sector respondents (criteria 1). Their

experiences reflected a justifiable split between urban and rural settings with the majority having worked in cities but a significant minority having been involved in countryside communities (criteria 2). Four of the practitioners had been involved in numerous visioning exercises. Two had done a few and four others had worked only on one visioning project (criteria 3). The person not accounted for in the previous total had not worked directly on any of the municipal exercises but was included in the interviews for a couple of reasons. First of all he had a wide experience in other applications of visioning and secondly he was identified as having been instrumental in the development of the ideas which influenced several of the other respondents. In other words he was the origin of their concept of visioning practice. Two of the interviewees had worked in Northern Ontario (although they live in the south), one worked in the east, five had had their experience in the southwestern part of the province while the rest worked primarily in the central region. Several had undertaken work in various areas (criteria 4). Five women and seven men were interviewed and there were men and women equally divided between the public and private sector samples (criteria 5).

2.3.3 Interview Approach

All of the interviews were conducted in the work places of the interviewees except for one, which was conducted in a private library conference room. Interviews ranged in length from one to two hours. They were taped and summaries prepared using the tapes and notes (see Appendix E). The interviews took place between July and September 1996. Some of the interviewees requested the opportunity of reviewing the summaries while others did not. Those who were sent copies of the summaries generally made only minor corrections. In a couple of cases, while not disputing the record of what they had said, the interviewees wanted, on reflection, to make minor changes to the substance of their

comments. In these cases the original and the changed comments are both recorded. The only conditions placed on any of the interviews was the desire to be informed about the outcomes of the research.

The interviews were guided by an outline which was prepared in advance and which was freely shared with the interviewees (see Appendix D). There were seven topics each with a lead question and with subsidiary questions that were asked if the person did not cover all the pre-identified points of interest in their response to the general question on the topic. The method of developing the interview outline and the rationale for the questions will be discussed in the following section on evaluation. The only variation between the interviews, other than the fact that every talk is always a unique experience, was that some of the questions were specifically aimed at those working in the public sector.

While twelve key informants were formally interviewed a number of informal discussions took place with planning professionals in the course of gathering information from municipalities. Comments from some of these accidental interviews have been quoted when they were particularly insightful. Because of the confidential, sensitive or personal nature of some of the information that was conveyed in this way, the sources have not always been identified by name, nor has the municipality involved always been identified.

2.4 Evaluation

2.4.1 Pluralistic Evaluation

Naturally, the most critical part of this research is the evaluation component. It has already been noted in 2.1, above, that a pluralistic approach was adopted in undertaking this

research. Palfrey describes the origin of this technique in the United Kingdom where there was seen to be a growing need to find ways of evaluating the effectiveness and cost effectiveness of various public programs at a time when the deployment of resources was critical (1992). He also says that it can be a "safeguard against the new," referring to the proliferation of supposed innovations which have no proven record. According to Palfrey and his associates a program that grows out of public policy "can have a theoretic content/ideological commitment or it can be a process where proposals are changed into activities and policy shaped at all stages." It is important to explore whether visioning, which does seem to grow out of a general policy need for strategic planning, is more like "a theoretic content/ideological commitment" or a "process where proposals are changed into activities."

In adopting this pluralistic evaluation approach, therefore, a number of different techniques and concepts have been used in order to achieve methodological triangulation, which is to say, a fix on the subject by seeing it from different angles. A number of other evaluative approaches now need to be discussed and their relationship to the study of visioning explained. These include program theory, emergent evaluation and naturalistic evaluation.

2.4.2 Program Theory

One of the main objectives of this study involves a search for the philosophical basis for visioning. This has led to an examination of the connection, or lack of connection, between possible philosophies or what have been called theory-like concepts, and results. Program theory has been employed as an evaluative tool. The need for this kind of examination has been noted by a number of theorists:

> Although there are a variety of theoretical approaches to the conduct of evaluation, there has yet to be serious consideration of the relationship between the evaluation itself and the theoretical underpinnings of the program. A successful evaluation can produce some short-term results and possibly local change, but without considering the theory underlying the program, neither evaluators, program developers, nor program implementers can hope to produce generalizable findings (Bickman 1987).

Any evaluation of visioning that has been done to date, which mostly consists of practice journal articles written by proponents that are often in the nature of "infomercials," have fallen into this trap (Barczak 1987, Burns 1991, Byrd 1987, Klein, 1993, Nanus 1990, Steiner 1994). They tell us about short term successes, about how people feel good after they take part in a vision exercise and about how this technique will solve many planning problems. However, they do not address the substantive questions of how vision is supposed to work, whether those notions have been systematically tested or their results observed over time and about whether there is internal consistency in the practice.

The way in which program evaluation has been used in the investigation of vision and visioning involves the application of another approach described as emergent evaluation.

2.4.3 Emergent Evaluation

Since we are faced with the double dilemma of asking ourselves 'what exactly is visioning' and 'can we in any way evaluate how it works,' we need to find a defensible way of taking on these questions systematically. Smith provides us with an approach when describing how, "evaluation in recent years has become more investigative (seeking out the hidden)" (1992). Smith goes on to talk about how:

THE USE OF VISIONING IN URBAN PLANNING - PH.D. Thesis Research

Robert Shipley - University of Waterloo School of Urban and Regional Planning

METHODOLOGICAL APPROACH TO THE STUDY OF VISIONING AS IT IS USED IN MUNICIPAL PLANNING IN ONTARIO

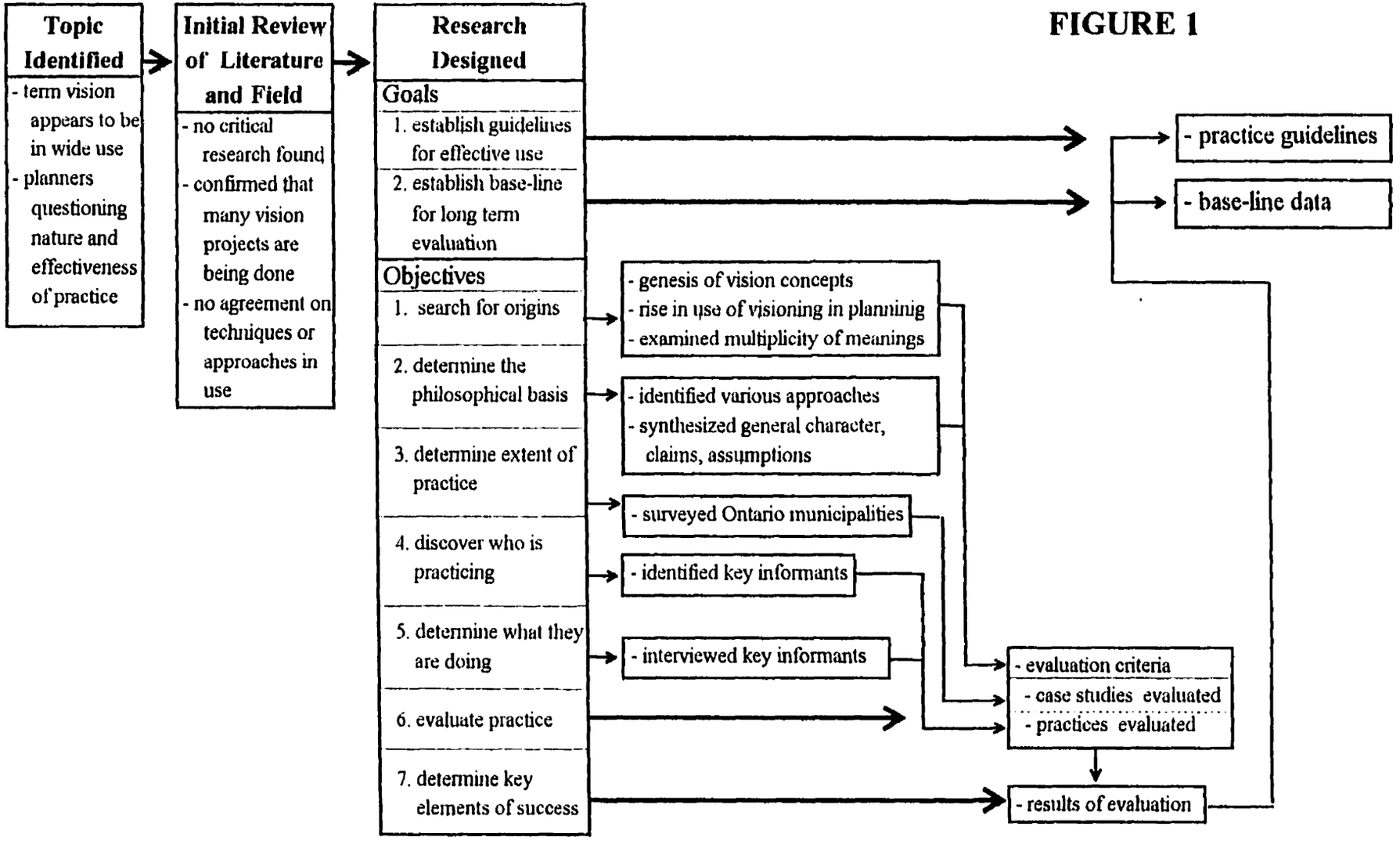


FIGURE 1

> ... an investigative study reflects an *emergent design*. Although there may be likely strategies or heuristics for uncovering hidden elements, one cannot determine a priori which techniques will be effective... investigative inquiry often involves phenomena that are less known, more hidden, intractable, and methodologically less accessible. When methodological tools and procedural guidelines are insufficient or unavailable, our reliance on mental powers, on our expertise rather than on our methods, is more evident (1992).

In Smith's terms visioning can certainly be seen as "intractable and methodologically less accessible," so the way of studying it is to rely on our "mental powers" and let the evaluation criteria "emerge" from the study process. The way of approaching the connection between visioning's underlying assumption, articulated or otherwise, and the results of the practice, was to build up the understanding of the philosophy as the investigation proceeded. Therefore, the characterization of the practice and the underlying philosophy were initially formulated from the review of the literature. Not all of the people writing necessarily subscribed to all of the claims, analogies, images and theories put forward. However, a careful amalgamation of ideas on visioning led to the formulation of the seven main questions that guided the interviews with the key informants (see Appendix D). A measure of the efficacy of those questions was evident in the responses from the interviewees. Firstly of none of them objected to any of the questions, secondly they often commented that the questions were good and provocative ones, and finally, they often responded that the questions brought up issues they had never considered. Their responses to those questions and their insights, in turn led to the establishment of the criteria that were used to evaluate the forty-one case studies (see Appendices B and C). The patterns that emerged from that evaluation led finally to the set of concepts that were used to state conclusions about the practice of visioning as a whole.

A couple of examples will illustrate this process. In writing about vision many proponents urge that the statements about the future ought to contain very specific images or word

pictures. The more vivid and precise the picture, goes the argument, the better your chances of actually achieving that imagined state. Burns and Brutton talk about visioning as "helping to define a richly imagined future for the organization by means of visual support" (1991). This call for specific visual images of the future is found not just in journals but also in public documents. "Picture yourself travelling over the Region of Waterloo in the Year 2021 in a hot air balloon," reads the introduction to a planning exercise, "imagine what you would like to see when you look down" (Region of Waterloo 1991). This concept from the literature on visioning prompted the inclusion of certain questions in the interview outline. Practitioners were asked what the balance was between concrete images and abstract ideas about the future in their particular experience and approach to visioning. Their responses were very interesting and will be discussed below in Section 5.2. This line of questioning subsequently led to the inclusion of comments on the degree of visuality contained in the vision statements of the case studies. Through the first stages in this aspect of inquiry there was no judgement about whether the use of visual images in visions was right or wrong, good or bad, better or worse, there was just observation. However, in conjunction with other factors it was possible in the final evaluation to make comments about a) the relation of visualness to pertinent experimental evidence from areas such as psychology and b) how the question of visuality related to the potential effectiveness of visioning as a planning technique.

A second example of how emergent evaluation worked in shaping this research can be found in the matter of comparing the visioning process with the vision or product. Once again the literature, including books, articles and public documents, suggested the importance not just of having a statement of desires for the future but of going through a dynamic interaction with people in order to arrive at that vision. Senge says in trying to capture this idea, "it's not what the vision is, it's what the vision does" (1990). The question that was asked of visioning practicioners was to describe the relationship between

process and product or which is more important. In the evaluation of the case studies this led to the splitting of comments into two different groupings (see Appendices B and C). As with the case of visuality it then became one of the factors considered when looking at related research and in making considered judgements about the potential effectiveness of visioning in planning.

2.4.4 Naturalistic Evaluation

A term that has been applied to the type of research that has been pursued in the study of visioning is naturalistic evaluation. Williams says this approach has evolved through disciplines such as anthropology and sociology and has various other names such as ethnography and qualitative research (1986). Williams goes on to explain that "the focus of naturalistic inquiry is in describing human processes and using the views of the participants being studied to guide the generation of hypotheses and the development of theories about those processes." A couple of question arise out of applying this method. The first concerns whether it is reliable and the second deals with whether it is an effective approach, i.e. is it applicable to the work at hand.

Lincoln and Guba, both in their section of William's book and in other work (Guba 1981), consider the matters of rigour and reliability in naturalistic evaluation. They point out that "the real-world conditions of social action programs have led to increasing relaxation of the rules of rigour, even to the extent of devising studies looser than quasi-experiments" (Lincoln 1986). They argue that the conventional criteria for rigour: internal validity, applicability, consistency (reliability and replicability) and objectivity can be replaced by measures they have designed for trustworthiness and authenticity. These are not just parallels to traditional tests for rigour but are methods adapted specifically to this kind of research. It is suggested that the present study meets these measures.

The second and last point concerned whether this research is a good application for naturalistic evaluation. To address this Williams poses sixteen questions with the intention that they serve as tests for applicability. Of the sixteen questions six are not applicable to this particular work, the answers to three would count against the use of naturalistic evaluation in this case while seven would confirm the appropriateness of its use. In William's methodology that would justify the approach (1986).

Chapter 3

> Physically cities are made from concrete and asphalt and brick but mythical cities are made from the dreams and desires and disappointments of those who grow up there or move there to find themselves. These imaginary cities are in part the creation of writers, who must invent the city before we can be satisfied to inhabit it.
>
> Robert Fulford "City of Imagination." *Maclean's* Mar 17, 1997

3.0 ORIGIN AND BACKGROUND OF VISIONING

3.1 Rise in the Use of Visioning in Planning

3.1.1 The Historical Uses of the Vision Terms

Before the late 1980s, vision and the related words are rarely found in planning periodical literature, books on planning or related material such as works on strategic planning. Hellman doesn't use the word in *The City in the World of the Future* (1970). Major and influential writings of the stature of Lynch's *Good City Form* do not mention vision or visioning although he does discuss the importance of utopian thought (1981). In none of the five editions of Hall's *Organizations: Structures, Processes & Outcomes* stretching from 1972 to 1991 is the concept of vision discussed.

Where the word vision does appear, as in the *Town Planning Review* of May 1933 (Peets), or in the 1960 document, *Goals for Americans* (President's Commission) the connotations,

as we shall see, are quite different from the present use. There are examples of the vision terms being applied in retrospect. An article about Philadelphia written in 1988 describes William Penn's seventeenth century "greene countrie towne" as his vision (Cohn). In a retrospective look at the development of the English new town Milton Keynes, a commentator in the British journal *Town & Country Planning* says that the project "... depended on strong visions about the future and strong civic leadership..." (Percy 1996). While he was talking about 1967 he was making the statement in hindsight. There is no indication that the term vision was used in the 1600s or the 1960s when the events described actually took place. Similarly, the American journal *Places* looks back at a century of history in St. Louis, Missouri, and talks about the persistence of vision among the community leaders but the comments are made from the perspective of 1990 (Martinson). There are also more current examples of this retrospective use of vision. Writing in 1995 authors Nelessen, Howe and Young refer to Alexander's vision of friendly neighbourhood transit but when you read what Alexander wrote in 1977 the word vision does not appear.

3.1.2 The New Era for Vision

At the 1995 joint American Planning Association - Canadian Institute of Planners conference held in Toronto, consultant Gianni Longo claimed during a panel discussion that he had undertaken the first community vision in Chattanooga, Tennessee, in 1984. The origins of the approach can of course be traced back further than that time. In the 1979 Final Report of the Civic Literacy Project in Syracuse, New York, citizen participation in projects to invent the future were described in detail (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare). In the same year the Toronto architectural firm of Moriyama and Teshima prepared a plan for the Meewasin Valley in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan. It contained the same approach that they later called a vision but in 1979

the term was not used (see Interview 10, Appendix E). It appears, therefore that Mr. Longo does have good grounds for his assertion that he first applied the term vision to a strategic planning process.

By the late 1980s the vision family of terms became common in the planning lexicon. In the United States articles briefly mentioning vision and visionaries first appear with any regularity in about 1986 (Schwab 1986, Zotti 1986/1, Zotti 1986/2). In 1988 Moriyama & Teshima's *100 Year Vision* for Ontario's Niagara Parks Commission appeared with word vision front and centre in the title. By the early 1990s there are whole stories of planning visions in Issaquah, Washington (Zotti 1991), Des Moines, Iowa (Gallagher 1991) and in the states of Maine and New York (Naylor 1992, Greene 1990). It is possible through that period to see the incorporation of vision into existing projects. Mary Means is credited with developing the Main Street revitalization program for the US National Trust for Historic Preservation (National Trust 1988). In the early 1990s she outlined her seven step approach and creating a vision was first (Steiner 1994). While the Main Street program had operated over the previous fifteen years, vision had never appeared in any prior description (Skelton 1990, National Trust 1988). In Australia the 1992 plan for Sydney included both a vision and goals but the 1988 version of the city's plan made no mention of vision (Newman J.1993). There was virtually no use of the vision terms in Britain in the 1980s but by 1990 a few articles began to appear (Challis 1990, Hall 1990).

A survey of the annual awards given out by the American Planning Association is useful in plotting the rise in currency of the vision terms. In 1989 *The Vision 2005 Plan* for Forsyth County, North Carolina, was given the ribbon in the Comprehensive Planning, Large Jurisdictions category (*Planning*, March 1989). The vision had been prepared over the previous three years. In 1990 Portland, Oregon's *Central City Plan*, with its vision component, was recognized by the APA for Implementation (*Planning* March 1990).

Vision was absent from the 1991 awards but Cleveland, Ohio's *Civic Vision 2000* took an honour in 1992 (*Planning* March 1992). In 1993 it was Philadelphia's Edmund Bacon who got the Pioneer category award in part because it was said of his 1967 book *The Design of Cities* that people were "hungry for the vision it provides" (*Planning* March 1993). Vision did not appear in any of the 1994 nominations but in 1995 it figured in a total of three of the APA awards. The winners included Santa Clara, California's Vision and the vision inspired Official Plan of Ontario's York Region. As well the Oregon Chapter of the APA was honoured for the publication of their *Guide to Community Visioning* (*Planning* April 1995). Two of the 1996 awards involved vision, the *New York State Canal Recreation Plan* and the Professional Planner prize presented to Daniel Varin (*Planning* April 1996).

The Canadian Institute of Planners Awards also featured visions as seen from the 1993 honours when both *Vision of the Future: Land Use Development Scenarios for the Rideau Canal Shoreline* and a vision based plan for the Halifax Common were given prizes (*Plan Canada* November 1993). Other mentions also show up in professional planning journals. Rademan reports that when ten planning experts were asked by the APA what single thing would most improve 21st century cities, two of the ten referred to vision (1995).

The change in a text book from edition to edition can be instructive in establishing when a new term or use of a term finally becomes established. Gerald Hodge, in the 1986 version of his *Planning Canadian Communities*, quoted Gordon Stephenson, a planner who worked and taught in Canada in the 1950s. Stephenson said, "I do not believe we can make plans without having ideal conceptions." Some would say that an 'ideal conception' is what we now call a vision (at least one of its meanings) but the word was not used in that

edition. Hodge did add the phrase "creating a vision" in the 1991 version of the book (Hodge, 1986 & 1991).

3.1.3 Visionaries

The word visionary is the term that perhaps has the longest history in modern planning periodical literature. In 1986 we find people like Chicago architect Bertrand Goldberg and urban commentator Jane Jacobs referred to as visionaries (Zotti 1986/1, Zotti 1986/2). The way the term is used at that time gives two fairly clear impressions. The first is that vision is something that is possessed by or expressed by a special type of person. This can be seen when the British journal *Planning Week* asked its readers to suggest who would make an ideal, all-time President for the Royal Town Planning Institute. There were four candidates named. One was Jane Jacobs. Another was Isambard Kingdom Brunel, the 19th century engineer, because it was said he "could have given a vision and leadership." Sir Robert Grieve was another and he was described as "a man of outstanding vision" (*Planning Week* March 2, 1996). There is no vision in this context without a corresponding visionary.

The second point is a connotation that these visions of visionaries, while interesting, are somewhat insubstantial. Jacob's "vision of city life" is called "romantic" (Zotti 1986/2). The article on Goldberg is entitled "Dreaming of Density." In the same year and in the same journal there is a story about a vision for the Iowa town of Guttenberg (Schwab 1986). The implication of ephemera is there in the title of the piece, "Small Town, Big Dreams." Another writer referred to "the popular perception: most executives equate visionary with impractical" (Wilson 1992). While visionaries continue to be referred to from time to time throughout the 1980s and 90s, the suspicion of impracticality has

lingered until quite recently. In 1994 a Canadian planner admitted that her vision was "hopelessly nostalgic" (Grant).

3.1.4 Transforming the Concept of Vision

Over a period of time a number of transformations in the use of the vision family of terms began to occur. The article about Guttenberg, Iowa, is a an example (Schwab 1986). It represents one of the first instances of the term vision used without reference to a single visionary. Instead it talks about a group of teachers from the local collage, who serve the town as "a highly educated faculty that can provide a core of community leadership and vision." Vision is still seen as the preserve of individuals but not of one special person. A key example of this transformation jumps out of the pages of *Planning* in September 1988 (Cohn). A new plan for the city of Philadelphia was vigorously attacked by former city planner Edmund Bacon. Bacon had been the author of Philadelphia's 1963 plan and is strongly identified with the visions contained in that document (Barnett 1983). The new plan was a group effort without a single identified champion and Bacon said it was "not a plan at all but a grab-bag of miscellaneous items" and that it "purports to be a vision but isn't" (Cohn 1988).

A second transformation occurred when vision came to be modified by the word strategic. It changed from being the special view of either a single visionary or a select leadership group to become used in the sense of the goal-like statement or statements that serve as the focus for a long range or strategic plan. Up to this time a visionary plan in the sense that it was used by Peets (1933) to describe L'Enfant's Washington or Barnett (1983) to refer to Bacon's Philadelphia, meant a detailed spatial representation with maps showing street layouts and building placements. In other words, the vision was the master plan. In Oregon's *Guide to Community Visioning*, vision is described as the answer to the

questions: "Where are we going?... What does it want to look like?... Where do we want to be?" (Oregon 1993). British writer, Roberts, said a strategic vision is "clear guidance that set[s] the context for development based upon a clear vision of the future..." (1996).

Underlying these ideas is the notion that, "if humanity is to change its ways, it must first have some sort of vision of the better world it wants" (Challis 1990). In this transformed role as a part of strategic planning, vision was no longer the spatial master plan nor was it the somewhat suspicious thing it had been when attributed to visionaries or ascribed, usually in retrospect, to great civic leaders. Instead it began to acquire the status and acceptability of a formal planning technique. Vision has become part of anagrams after the fashion of contemporary planning methods: ETV for Empowering the Vision (Wheeland 1993) and FSV or Future State Visioning (Stewart 1993). "Vision, therefore," said David Hall, "has both strategic and operational dimension; it has national, regional and local dimension; and it has social and political dimension" (Hall 1995).

By 1989 the use of vision in the sense of a focus for strategic planning became firmly established. From that time the usage in official documentation began to grow steadily. In the Puget Sound region of Washington State a document entitled *The Northwest Vision* was released in 1991 (*Planning* March 1991). To the south in the town of Gresham, Oregon, a vision was begun in 1986 and competed in 1991 while Little Rock, Arkansas, completed a vision plan in 1992 (Klein 1993). Various regions in Canada adopted plans that began with visions. Ontario's Hamilton-Wentworth Region published their's in 1991, Waterloo Region in 1992 and Haldimond-Norfolk Region in 1993 (*Plan Canada* September 1995). The Greater Vancouver Area undertook a vision which appeared in 1993 (City Profile, Greater Vancouver Regional District).

3.1.5 Literal and Metaphorical Meaning

In its strategic context vision came to be further sub-divided into two distinct usages, literal and metaphorical. The description of a visioning workshop in Calgary, Alberta relates that "... as the community's new vision of itself poured out, the artists sketched and the ideas took visual shape." (McDowell 1988) The technique being reported on is "Co-Design" as used by consultant Stanley King. This approach involves a concept similar to Visual Preference Survey, a term for which the American consulting firm, Anton Nelessen & Associates, hold copyright (Nelessen 1994). These practicioners contend that vision and visioning ought to be about things as they are actually seen. A 1995 *Planning* article explores the visual and particularly the movie images that have shaped the way Americans think about their ideal urban spaces (Dercle). Anthony Downs recent book *New Visions for Metropolitan America* outlines "five components of the American Dream." In these applications vision is used in the literal sense; that is, meaning a picture, a concrete image of physical objects in the future. Interesting current work in the field of visualization is assisting planners to help people see what various development option will actually look like (Southworth 1985, Gosling 1992, Jamieson 1995).

A different approach is seen in Sydney, Australia's 1993 vision. The city is to become "... a dynamic, sustainable and diverse community built on the region's prominent position in the New South Wales, Australian and Asia-Pacific economies... " (Newman J.1993). Vancouver, British Columbia's vision is to be "... the first urban region in the world to combine in one place the things to which humanity aspires on a global basis..." (Greater Vancouver Regional District 1993). While these may be fairly clear statements of desired end states, the way in which the term vision is being used is quite different from the literal sense. In the case of both Sydney and Vancouver, vision is used not as a "fixed visual expression of the places," but rather "having a clear idea of the quality of life..." (Hall,

1995). In other words vision is being used as a metaphor (Verma 1993). It is not a physical picture of the future but rather a description of social, cultural and perhaps emotional attributes.

3.1.6 Product and Process

The next manifestation of new meaning for vision appears to have begun about 1989 or 1990 just as the strategic vision concept was gaining wide acceptability. This new variation saw the emphasis shift from a vision as a product in the form of a plan component or a statement, to the process of vision-ing. The award winning plan for Forsyth County, North Carolina, emphasized "consensus building" and was said to be a "people plan" (*Planning* March 1989). In Arkansas it was asserted that, "FUTURE - Little Rock has achieved its most important goal. It has caught the imagination and energy of the citizens and created a forum for decision making" (Klein 1993). This new approach or use of the term vision grew from the movement toward citizen participation in planning. The roots of the trend go back at least as far as Forester's classic 1982 article, "Planning in the Face of Power," but are really part of the age-old struggle to achieve genuine democracy (Hsing 1991). In this attempt to apply democratic principles to planning it is said that, "proponents of visioning believe that plans that resonate with citizens' deepest aspirations and values have the best chance of being implemented" (Klein 1993). This effort has taken on considerable magnitude in some communities. Hundreds of people were involved in London, Ontario (Micak 1994). In Ontario's Hamilton-Wentworth Region:

> ...the senior staff and elected officials of the region decided that a vision or focus was needed around decision-making processes such as capital budgets and major policy initiatives (the official plan for example). It was decided... to involve every citizen, [and] a task force comprising leaders from a cross-section of the community... to prepare a community vision... (*Plan Canada* September 1995: 26)

Visioning in the sense of inviting a broad range and large number of citizens to participate in setting out the future urban development plans in their communities has been adopted as the latest iteration of citizen involvement. "The new paradigm," as one writer has put it, "is empowering people's vision of a better tomorrow" (McClendon 1993).

3.1.7 The Geography of Visioning

Some observations can be made concerning the geography of vision use. It is fairly clear that vision and visioning in their planning applications were raised, if not born, in North America. The first planning use may have been in Tennessee in the early 80s but the terms were widespread in American and Canadian planning journals by late in the decade. There is no single focus of use in Canada although little appeared until recently in the literature from Quebec or the other easterly provinces (Manders 1994). In the United States a mapping of early occurrences and subsequent applications of vision terms may reveal a distribution pattern. There seem to be nodes of activity in the Pacific northwest (Washington and Oregon), the Midwest (Iowa, Illinois and Minnesota), the northeast (Maine, Connecticut, rural New York and Massachusetts) and the near south (Arkansas, Tennessee and the Carolinas). This is not a strong pattern and may only reflect who was writing about their work.

In Britain the use of vision terms seems to have been confined to England. The words are absent in Wales and Scotland. Within England, however there is a marked difference from the North American experience. While vision related efforts in Canada and the US have tended to come from the ground up through practicing planners and citizens, and have widely been applied to land use plans, this is not the case in England. To date, where

vision terms have appeared they have more often involved such things as landscape preservation, small business incentives and neighbourhood projects. The British Waterways Board launched a vision for old canals (*Planning Week* April 11, 1996). A citizens group urged the government to show more vision in their proposed Countryside Plan (*Planning Week* January 26, 1995). A drug store chain is helping to fund a program called *Vision On* which supports small town high streets (*Planning Week* April 6, 1995). Inspired by the Rio Conference with its Agenda 21 on Sustainable Development, a group in Gloucestershire launched a Vision 21 exercise aimed at improving their community (Young 1995).

Until recently the British planning journals reported on these sorts of vision initiatives but didn't use the vision terms in reference to specific land use planning either in the strategic (product) or the participative (process) modes. In fact, with the exception of the Gloucestershire example there are few cases of participative planning discussed at all in British journals. There is some irony in this since unlike Canada and the US where visioning does not seem to have been mandated by regulation in any jurisdiction, there are new Regional Planning Guidelines in Britain specifically requiring that visions be prepared (Roberts 1996, Thomas 1995). The second of six requirements in the so-called RPGs of 1995 is to "provide a strategic vision or visions for the region." The 1990 version of these Guidelines required four steps of which the first was a broad development framework for 20 years or more but in which vision was not mentioned. In Australia's Queensland a 1994 State regulation similar to the British RPGs requires regional plans which began with a vision statement (Abbott 1995). Otherwise, Australian visioning seems to have been confined to some large centres although even among those Perth has a fairly new plan that does not include a vision statement (Bruning 1992). The only exception to the apparent lack of regulations requiring visions in North America were recommendations contained in

a pair of reports completed in Ontario but never put into effect by the provincial government (Ontario 1996).

While a review of ten years of planning literature indicates this rise in the use of the terms vision and visioning in the US, Canada, Australia and Britain it also shows where the concepts do not seem to have been used. The only mentions in New Zealand's *Planning Quarterly* are quite recent and are found in reports of planners returning from trips to North America (Leigh 1996). In the context of the lesser developed world the vision concept is also absent. This is true for example of articles concerning strategic planning in Southern Africa (Turok 1995, Dewar 1995). Some interesting visions of Indonesian and Brazilian development are offered in the journal *Third World Planning Review* (McGee 1994), and *Environments* (Norton 1994) but these were written by a Canadians and not by people from the subject countries. This view that vision or visioning is not a factor in planning in developing countries must be considered against the fact that the vast majority of the sources considered were English language publications. None of the French language articles in *Plan Canada*, however, dealt with vision.

3.2 Sources of Vision and Visioning Concepts

3.2.1 The Reasons for the Search

In the previous section the rise in the use of the vision and visioning concepts in planning practice was explored . It was noted that the phenomenon has primarily occurred during the last ten years. Notions about vision in other contexts, of course, long pre-date that time. It might still be asked, however, why it is necessary to search beyond the realm of contemporary planning and into the origins of the use of the visioning terms.

There are three reasons. First of all, we set out to look for the philosophical basis that underlies the present practice of visioning. That underpinning is found in the evolution of the concepts prior to their present style of application in planning. Secondly, we have already seen that far from being a single concept, vision and visioning may have numerous contextually specific meanings and once again the understanding of these nuances lies at least partly in the evolution of the words. Finally, it is important to know about the history of the vision ideas because planning theorists and leaders in the planning profession often make pointed reference to the past in claiming continuity for their ideas and authority for their assertions. It is vital then, to know what these references really mean, even if sometimes the people making the comments don't fully know.

The first two points, an appreciation of the philosophy behind visioning and coming to understand the range of meanings of the words, will emerge from the following discussion. The third point, concerning the historical references found in current planning literature, ought to be amplified here, before we go any further. On the cover of the brochure that introduced the visioning project in the Muskoka community of Lake of Bays, this line was quoted: "Where there is no dream - the people perish." As well as being found in public documents variations of this phrase can also be seen in books on planning. In Nelessen's *Visions for a New American Dream*, the quote is: "where there is no vision, the people perish." The words are from the book of Proverbs 29:18.

The phrase is undoubtedly intended to be inspirational and in a society with a strong Judeo-Christian tradition, the appeal to the authority of sacred writing as a basis of justification of a present effort is clear. In the previous section of this chapter British planner David Hall was quoted as calling for a new vision that would live up to the standard set by the great

urban visionary, Ebenezer Howard. Again, there is an appeal to a legendary, if not a sacred authority in a contemporary call to action (Hall 1995).

Spain, in her 1995 article, states that, "it is this emphasis on the power of new visions to change the future that places the sustainability movement squarely in the utopian tradition." She goes on to argue that both modern feminist ideas of planning and environmentalism are heirs to great visionary traditions of Plato, Thomas More, Charles Fournier, Wilfred Owen and Howard as well as more recent thinkers such as Lewis Mumford. Peter Newman takes a similar position in describing the traditions behind the Green Movement (1996). He talks about the Jewish prophet Zachariah's vision of a new Jerusalem and about the "lineage of struggles for the green city in modern times." In this line are all the people mentioned by Spain as well as John Ruskin, William Morris, Jane Jacobs, Ian MacHarg and Michael Hough among others.

While there are interesting insights in Spain's and Newman's articles they, like the previous examples, assume that, quite aside from what the actual substance of the visions were, the concept of vision has been constant through time from biblical to classical, through the renaissance, enlightenment, industrial revolution and down to the present. That assumption will be examined in the balance of this section and in the last part of this chapter.

Reflecting on the biblical quotation above, as well as some consideration of translation, will be a good introduction to the pitfalls of taking words at face value. The quote from the Lake of Bays brochure reads, "where there is no dream - the people perish." A check of numerous translation has failed to reveal the source of that particular version of Proverbs 29:18. If we go to the *King James Version* (1611), however, we find the quote as it is given in the Nelessen book and which from the point of view of endorsing a municipal visioning exercise seems quite appropriate: "where there is no vision, the people perish."

However, the situation becomes less clear if we consult the *Revised Standard Version* (c1952). Here the same verse says, "where there is no prophecy the people cast off restraint." Somehow that sounds less supportive of municipal visioning and when we go to the *New English Bible* (c1972) there is not much improvement. There the quote is "with no authority, the people throw off restraint." Moving on to the *Good News Bible* (1976) we find that Proverbs 29:18 is translated as: "a nation without God's guidance is a nation without order."

In most of the instances in the *Bible* the original Hebrew word which is translated into English as 'vision' is חָזוֹן [hăzôn] while in the Greek the word is ορασιζ [horasis] (Brown 1906, Louw 1988). The meaning in the case of these words is along the lines of divine communication of an ecstatic nature. In other words a message from God. It can be seen that this is a long way from the current usage in municipal planning exercises.

3.2.2 The Ancient Roots of Vision

It is quite likely that ever since our most distant human ancestors first came to perceive the passage of time and to have memory, they probably began to fear and anticipate the future. There was good reason for the fear since they could see the dire consequences of situations such as not having enough food for the winter. At the same time, they must also have begun to anticipate the pleasures that the future could bring: salmon runs on the river and spring rains that made things grow. Polak, a thinker we will hear more of a little later, speculated about this process (1961). He said that early in our development, humans learned to conceptually split time into a 'now' and an 'other.' That was the first step in being able to imagine that other time. So it was that many primary human activities came into being such as astronomy, which allows the accurate prediction of the seasons, and

arithmetic, which enables one to keep track of days. But people's desire to understand or to have some knowledge of what is coming has been more insatiable than that.

Out of many ancient religions and cultures, therefore, come the traditions of prophets, seers and shamans. These were individuals who could supposedly see into the future. In classical Greece, Plato described two different forms of foretelling which he called sane divination and insane divination (Gattey 1977). For the Greeks, and one might expect for many other people, sane divination meant reading signs. It may have been bird entrails or the alignment of certain stars but by slow steps and with many dead ends, that practice of careful observation grew into what we now call science. While the effectiveness of reading natural signals grew very slowly, most of the practitioners of future telling continued to rely heavily on the other branch of the trade. Insane divination was what Plato's mentor Socrates called, "a madness which is the special gift of heaven" (Gattey 1977). In their time the most famous example of this was the Delphic Oracle where messages concerning the intentions of the gods were delivered through priestesses while in states of fume induced ecstasy. Much like many modern visioning exercises, the garbled words of the priestesses had to be interpreted by priests who were the reigning experts of their day. There were many other culturally specific versions of this sort of practice, some employing consciousness altering substances, some using meditation and still others going for food and sleep deprivation.

The concept of the future in all of these instances was that it was unknown to mortals, predetermined by divine or extra worldly power and outside human control. The future was fate. You might get a glimpse of it through contact with the divinities or controlling power, but you couldn't do anything about it. One of the classic tensions in our tradition of drama and literature is the Cassandra dilemma; knowing what is going to happen and being helpless to do anything about it. This notion persisted in the common understanding until relatively recent history, and in some quarters it continues to persist up to the present. In

this way we can see a line of prophetic descent that stretches from Ezekial through Nostradamus down to Edgar Cayce and perhaps even into our own time (Thurston 1981).

There is a danger present in any reference or association of our contemporary understanding of vision in planning to this ancient tradition of having visions of the future. It is not likely that feminist or environmental visions referred to by Spain and Newman are really like Zacariah's, Plato's or More's since their understanding of the world and the future are so completely different than ours (1995, 1996).

3.2.3 Utopianism

In a way this concept of the future being visible only through divine or supernatural inspiration is also a feature of another great tradition, that of utopianism. The idea that utopias or perfect societies could be described by individual thinkers is one of three problems or factors in our contemporary association with this tradition. The second factor or question is whether utopias are really about the future at all and the third point is the great variation in attitude toward utopian thought which has been displayed throughout much of history.

In considering the first question we need to remember that while utopianism is a term that has come to describe various admonitions about what the world ought to be like, it does have a very specific origin. The word was coined in 1516 by the English politician and cleric, Thomas More (Tod 1978). It was a *double entendre* in Greek which had the meaning of 'no place' but could also be understood as meaning 'good place.' When the term utopia is used in retrospect to include Plato's *Republic* or St. Augustine's *City of God*, therefore, it is being used in a way that those authors may not necessarily have intended. From More's time, however, utopian has been applied not only to writing but also to some

actual experiments in living. Wilfred Owen's attempts to create a model industrial community and various religious movements such as the Mormons are examples. But the one thing that most of these attempted and literary utopias have in common is that they were the work of or they were directed by individual writers or leaders. The Shakers were an exception, being more of a communally directed movement.

The second question concerns whether or to what extent utopias are about the future and in that sense visions of things to come. More's work has been described as "not a paradise myth but a vehicle for comments on his own society" (Tod 1978). Neither is it clear to what extent Plato was actually advocating the system he described. Many religious writings that purport to be about the future may be akin to apocalyptic works such as the book of Revelations in that they are designed more to achieve compliance with prescribed norms of present behaviour than to predict actual coming events. In somewhat more recent times, as Bloch-Lainé points out in his article, *The Utility of Utopias for Reformers*, that approach continued (1967).

When people actually set out to establish communities according to a utopian prescription, however, that is a different matter. The question then arises as to how successful those attempts have been. In general, or some would say inevitably, they have failed. Owen's experimental communities disintegrated, the Shakers died out as a result of their utopian idea of celibacy and the Mormons have transformed themselves into a relatively standard North American community. Some of the more extreme self defined utopian experiments such as Ceausescu's Romania or Jonestown have not only been failures but horrendous disasters. When the recipes for all of these visions are examined what we generally find is that they rarely describe pleasant places (Tod 1978). Utopias either postulate that people are inherently good and only need a political and social system to allow their true nature to prosper or they assume that humans are basically corrupt and require a set of rules to curb

their worst impulses. In either case they advocate and if they reach the experimental stage, impose, a fairly rigid system of behaviour.

The attitudes toward utopian thinking has, perhaps as a result of some of its inherent contradictions, been somewhat uneven. Gabor says that in medieval times the future meant doomsday. The Renaissance began a long period of optimism about the future which was expressed by romantic poets as well as the nineteenth century activists such as the ones already mentioned above (1964). This optimism reached its literary height in works such as of William Morris' *News from Nowhere* and even survived the First World War in J.B.S. Haldane's *Daedalus* (1923). But it wasn't long after that when a very different kind of future view emerged in Aldous Huxley's *Brave New World* (1931). Orwell's *1984* and Freud's *Civilization and Its Discontents* joined Huxley's grim view in a movement that became known as dystopia, or the opposite of utopia (Richter 1975). Not only was it shown that the negative side of the future view could be expressed just as easily as the optimistic angle but throughout much of this century utopianism has generally been in disrepute. Even in a book on the subject this attitude is apparent:

> Is it possible to define it? Perhaps the only safe answer is that any attempt to do so would be hopeless... unrealistic, impracticable, impossible, doomed to failure, and a futile academic exercise - in fact, utopian (Tod 1978).

This historical view of utopianism is offered in pursuit of some perspective on changing attitudes. If the concept experienced a downturn in popularity earlier in this century it appears to be making a come back. It always had its proponents such as Lewis Mumford. We will take up this point later in Section 3.2.5 but we should consider before moving on, just how utopianism differed in essence from other traditional views of the future. In spite of it being generally the vision of an individual and therefore similar to other divine or inspired revelations, and in spite of its often being used as contemporary comment,

utopianism did introduce at least the seed of the idea that the future might be affected by present actions. Whether it was a vision of the perfect society or even the dark image of a hell on earth, utopia or dystopia, there was the idea that seeing this people might act in some way now that would potentially change the outcome (Richter 1975). While the idea of having the potential to affect the future remained relatively marginal until the 1960s - an intellectual but not a popular idea - there were many important concepts that found their first expression in utopianism. Utopian writing was a kind of repository for innovative ideas (Morgan 1946). Environmental planning ideas made an early appearance in this way (Tod 1978) while many subsequently significant social and cultural trends began as utopian notions (Richter 1975, Lynch 1981).

3.2.4 The Future As History

Some ideas about the future were described in utopian writing but another literary conceit or approach dealing with the future in a less proscriptive and less didactic way made its appearance in the nineteenth century. It was 1888 when an American named Edward Bellamy published a book called *Looking Backward*. It may not have been great literature but it seems to have been the first example of a story set far in the future, a hundred years in Bellamy's case, in which things that had not yet happened were viewed as though they were history. The technique was used to better effect by people such as H.G. Wells in *The Time Machine*, by Jules Verne in numerous books and gave rise to the whole genre of science fiction.

This approach had at least two outcomes. The first was that writers wanting to make social commentary could set a story in the future and speculate about the outcomes of contemporary policies and directions without speaking about them directly. That added to the evolution in thinking about the future and our ability to have an effect on outcomes.

The second change in thinking that grew from this new literary form was the notion of 'backcasting.' If forecasting was an attempt to project current trends into the future and thereby predict what would happen then backcasting was the exercise of speculating about a future state of affairs and working backwards from that point to reconstruct the steps that must have been taken to get there. This concept was one of the pieces that went into constructing the modern approach to visioning.

3.2.5 A Future Known and Shaped by Science and Technology

At about the same time that utopianism was undergoing increased criticism and being relegated to the fringes of serious thought, it was being replaced by a growing preoccupation with science and technology. Steadily from the beginning of the twentieth century the faith in human's ability to solve problems with machines and formulas replaced older beliefs. It was in this atmosphere that most of the urban design ideas that dominated the rest of the century came into the planning realm. Howard, the Bauhaus School, Le Corbusier and Wright all proposed ideas of city building that were designed to solve the problems of previous generations by organizing structures, services and space in ways that would improve people's lives (Fishman 1977, Hodge 1991, Buder 1990).

To deal with the future, one of these emerging techniques was forecasting. It was argued that if enough information about previous rainfall, former sales of products, population numbers or anything else could be obtained, then through the application of mathematical extrapolation the future trends could be predicted. Under these circumstances there was no longer any need to speculate, dream or even worry about the future. It would be a matter of knowledge.

The same logic extended to other areas of human endeavour. Between the appearance of Edward Bellamy's work in 1888 and the 1930s there were an estimated twenty five books published in the United States on the theme of what came to be called the technological utopia (Segal 1986). In the future these writings predicted, all of people's challenges would be met by the introduction of various labour saving and time freeing machines. But these machines were more than just tools, Segal says they were to be "a means of achieving a perfect society." The 1939 World's Fair in New York City was a kind of culmination of this fervour (Corn 1986). The theme of the event was 'Tomorrow's world that we shall build today.' In pavilions sponsored by companies such as General Motors models of cities criss-crossed by freeways were shown and in displays created by Westinghouse the future kitchen full of electric appliances appeared. These, it could be argued, were incredible visions of the future except that there were no traffic jams on the model freeways and no air pollution from car exhaust and electrical generating plants. While Plato's and More's and other earlier utopias had largely been about social organization and societal responsibility, this twentieth century dream mostly featured technical gadgets. The social aspects were not entirely left out, however. In his 1946 book *Walden Two* and in *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* (1971) B.F. Skinner said that this modern ideal society could only be brought about if refined techniques of behavioural engineering could be developed and applied. Where forecasting as predictive study relied on the concept of laws that governed mathematical models, some psychology relied on determinism.

It was only when the promise of technical utopia began to show signs of failure after the middle of the century that a new and different approach to the future began to crystalize around some developing ideas.

3.2.6 The Shapable Future and Self Actualization

It was noted above that Mumford was one of the thinkers who resisted the general, mid-century dismissal of utopian optimism. He made the distinction between utopias of escape that were impossible and utopias of reconstruction which seek to change the world for the better (1922). But there had always been a few special people, Mumford probably numbered among them, who were able to see a better or at least different world in their own minds. Some of those people had the will, the force of personality or the authority to actually direct what course future events would take. Those are the people we have traditionally called visionaries. Something else, a sea change in human development, had to happen before that concept of the controllable future could become more generalized.

That change was the introduction of a new way of seeing and studying human psychology and the primary agent of the change was A.H. Maslow (Lowry 1973). In 1983 *Esquire* magazine named him as one of the most influential psychologists of the half century, citing management theory as one area that he had significantly changed but his indirect influence on planning has not yet been widely recognized. By introducing the notion of self actualization Maslow paved the way for the idea that ordinary people's dreams or visions could actually be realized. After people's basic needs for shelter, food, safety and so on are met, he held that it was in everyone's nature, to reach for what he called their "highest aspirations... the striving toward health, the quest for identity and autonomy, the yearning for excellence" (Maslow 1987). He said in the same book that "the study of motivation must be in part the study of ultimate human goals or desires or needs." In other words the goal, or in many peoples' terms the vision of the future, was what motivated present actions.

Maslow's ideas had a ripple effect that went through academic psychology which developed a whole new study of cognitive and motivational dimensions. The influence spread to management theory and then to organizational practice (Peters 1982). It spread also to the realms of sport and health where the concept of visualizing athletic success and wellness have been widely studied and used (Simonton 1978, Smith 1990). The ideas reached planning largely through these routes and not directly as will be seen later from the interviews conducted with planners involved in current visioning exercises (see Section 5.2).

More closely associated with planning there were, however, other intellectual developments. A Dutch sociologist named Fred Polak published a two volume work in 1961 as part of the preparation for creating the European Community. In *The Image of the Future* he first postulated that a clear mental picture of states of being and events yet to come is the key to all choice-oriented behaviour. Polak then wrote an extensive history of societies from classical Greece to modern Israel in which he argued that a clear vision of their desired future was the common element of success. These ideas seem to have arrived in North America and received some circulation through Elise Boulding, the woman who translated Polak's work into English. She and her husband, Ken Boulding, taught at different American universities and were active in the peace movement in the 1960s and 70s. It was in writing and working of these issues that they disseminated the concepts of future images and motivation (Boulding 1983).

While Polak was working in the Netherlands, another European was busy in the 1960s in Paris. Bertrand de Jouvenel, supported by the Ford Foundation, set up a research institute called *Futuribles* and published *The Art of Conjecture* which was translated into English in 1967. While de Jouvenel still talked about predictions of the future and personal destiny he began to open up the idea of the controllable or shapable future. The next link in the

progression of ideas on visioning was American Denis Gabor. Under the influence of de Jouvenel he wrote a book in 1964 in which he discussed an interesting concept and gave a prognosis for the future. We must forgive Gabor for his miscalculation regarding the future, which turned out to be just about as far off the mark as one could imagine. He believed that the main problem that would face society in the 1970s, 80s and 90s would be a troublesome excess of leisure time. That may have been wishful thinking. The concept he proposed, however, was more perceptive. He said that the ancient prophets Jeremiah and Cassandra could do nothing about what they predicted. Jeremy Bentham and John Stuart Mill, though often wrong, had had some effect on changing the future. But in our age, though even with computers we will not be able to predict the future, we can in fact invent it.

> The first step of the technological or social inventor is to visualize by an act of imagination a thing or a state of things which does not yet exist and which to him appears in some way desirable. He can then start rationally arguing backwards from the invention and forward from the means at his disposal until a way is found from one to the other. (Gabor 1964)

3.3 Lessons from the Historical Uses of Vision

So what is it that we can see from this long look at the sources of the visioning ideas? Returning to the three reasons given at the beginning of this section for conducting the search, we can say first that a kind of philosophical basis for the present practice of visioning emerged in the 1950s and 60s. These ideas, while they had traceable antecedents, were markedly different from previous popular concepts about the nature of the future and how it could be approached. In terms of the meanings attached to various vision words, it is becoming even clearer that these are manifold and complex. The matter

of definition will be examined in more detail in the following chapter. As far as the way the vision words are used in writing about planning it should be clear that great care needs to be observed when reading such works. Just because vision words are used in proximity to and in conjunction with other terms does not in itself convey meaning. The kind of vision implied in reference to a biblical prophet and the sense in which a nineteenth century writer can be said to be visionary, are very different from one another and different again from the way the terms are used today.

Chapter 4

> Change meant a return to the humanist vision with greater openness to reality.
>
> John Ralston Saul *The Unconscious Civilization. (1995).*

4.0 CRITICAL ANALYSIS OF THE MEANINGS OF VISION TERMS

4.1 Taxonomic Framework

In speaking about planning literature Guttenberg "notes a bewildering change, from one context to another, in the meaning of key terms" (1993). He goes on to say that we need to get beyond simply exploring the ambiguities of words and to look systematically for the connections and observable patterns in use in order to explain their meanings in ways that have practical applications.

Having looked at the rise in use of the terms vision and visioning in planning practice and having explored the origins of the concepts surrounding them we have established that there are a multiplicity of meanings involved in the various uses and applications of the words. We can now attempt to disentangle the strains of meaning and set out an array of definitions or a taxonomy that will differentiate various applications. It is hoped that this will prove useful to those dealing with the study of vision and visioning.

To assist in this task it is helpful to have a descriptive and analytical framework. Using an approach suggested by Baum (1977) and based on Faludi's work (1973) we can separate

planning theory into its two main components. There is substantive theory, which deals with the social and environmental reality in which planners work and which they attempt to influence. This is where visions belong when they are actual products in the form of statements or documents that become potentially usable planning tools. The second branch of planning theory can be called procedural and concerns the processes in which planners engage. Visioning, the process of arriving at or developing a vision belongs in this category. We will, in this section and in Section 6.1 which examines case studies, use this primary distinction in order to separate product from process (see Figures 2 and 3 and Appendices B and C). We might consider where visionaries belong under these two general headings. What visionaries produce, visions in the form of books or actual plans, are substantive. What they do, or did, because we keep being told that there are no visionaries around today, was procedural. When visionaries are referred to or invoked in current discourse, it is a more complex matter (see Substantive Meaning 5 below).

Turning then to secondary distinctions in the way the vision words are used we can further divide the instances into those which are laudatory and those that are pejorative. By laudatory we mean that the words are used in complementary and positive ways. This kind of use can be found in comments such as "the vision serves as an organizing principle..." (Barczak 1987) or another from a newspaper: "... let's face it, the world is short of visionaries" (Howard 1995). In these cases the impact of what the writer is saying depends on the reader understanding and accepting that vision and visionary are meant to have positive value. There are hints of the meanings in the neighbouring words.

In the first case 'serve' and 'principle' indicate the nuance and in the second, the word 'short' indicates that the object of the sentence is rare and therefore valuable. Nevertheless, part of the meaning in these cases must be derived from other factors such as the reader's

knowledge of the particular writer's views and the larger context in which the words are found.

Pejorative connotes a derogatory or negative use of a term. We can find this once again in a newspaper story about a land development issue: "pragmatists say there is no money for such a vision" (Barber 1995). Here there are two things happening. The writer himself does not agree with the point of view on which he is reporting but he conveys the sense in which the 'pragmatists' feel that the subject project or 'vision' is impractical and unrealistic. In his 1993 book *The Shape of the City*, John Sewell describes the development of planning in the last decades as becoming "less an exercise in vision and adherence to theory, and more an opportunity to implement things that seemed to work." For Sewell, the concept of planning dominated by vision is associated with the old and discredited expert driven model of community development and he clearly doesn't approve of it. In both of these instances the same things are true that were stated above. Part of the sense of the words is found in the immediate context but part of it needs to come from a broader setting.

In both the substantive and procedural areas we will seek to arrange the various meanings being examined on the continuum between the laudatory and pejorative poles. For tertiary measures in each of our two major categories of meaning, however, we need to devise different gauges. In the case of substantive theory we are interested in the vision expressions as products that can be used in actual planning decisions. In terms of that use the next most important factor is the clarity of the vision statement. For that reason we can view the statements as employing either literal applications of the word vision or metaphorical applications. There is again a continuum between the poles but on the literal end we would find clear spatial and visual images while on the metaphorical extreme we find references to generalities, policies and/or methods of doing things. In the matter of

procedural theory the next factor of importance in considering how visions are created appears to be a question of whether they are individual acts or participative ones. Therefore, the continuum between visioning as a personal undertaking and visioning as a community endeavour can be laid out.

With these two broad frameworks arranged we can proceed to organize the various meanings of the vision words in a systematic way and following Guttenberg's directive, to find the patterns and relationships among them (1993). To better understand these relationships Figures 2 and 3 have been prepared and will be referred to in the text. Each of the meanings is defined and an example given. Most of these examples are drawn from planning literature including periodicals, books and documents or from other sources such as newspapers, non-planning books and popular magazines. As well some of the examples come from the interviews carried out as part of the present research. Some of the meanings are described as being related in certain ways to others while some are treated as having subsidiary meanings. Some are independent.

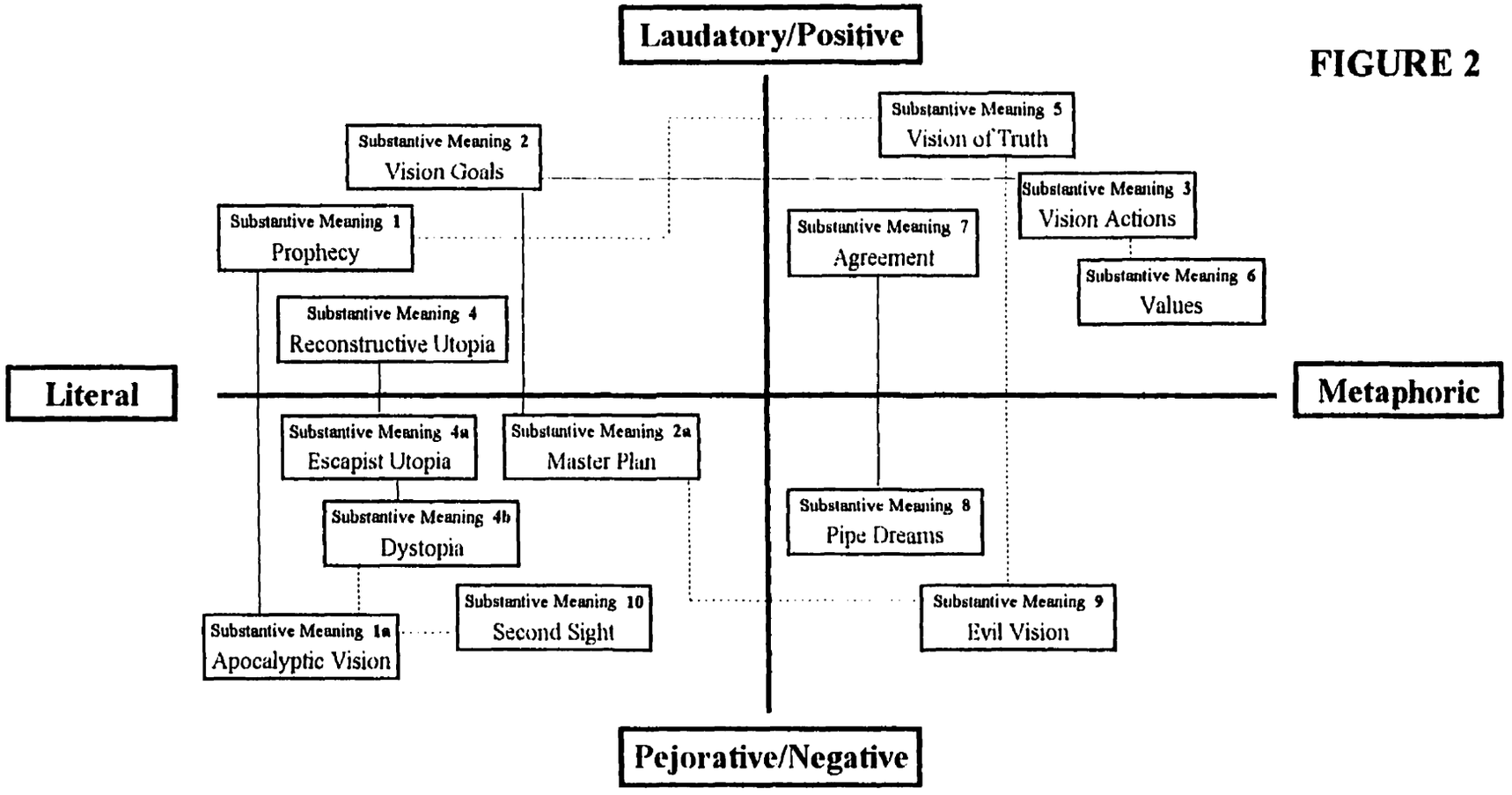
There may, of course, be other ways of classifying and defining these terms but this is an approach that should be able to accommodate virtually all of the possible uses of the terms. There may be uses that when analysed show that the words are conveying more than one of these meanings concurrently. While planning practice is the focus of the investigation, meanings that are not generally applied to planning are included here in order to demonstrate the complete range of possible uses. Strong links between meanings shown in the figures are indicated by solid lines while more tenuous connections are shown by broken lines.

THE USE OF VISIONING IN URBAN PLANNING - PH.D. Thesis Research

Robert Shipley - University of Waterloo School of Urban and Regional Planning

TAXONOMY OF THE SUBSTANTIVE THEORY MEANINGS OF VISION TERMS

FIGURE 2



X AXIS → **LITERAL** - The degree of specific and clear images or word pictures in the particular meaning.
METAPHORIC - The degree of vague, undefined and/or non-visual aspects in the particular meaning.

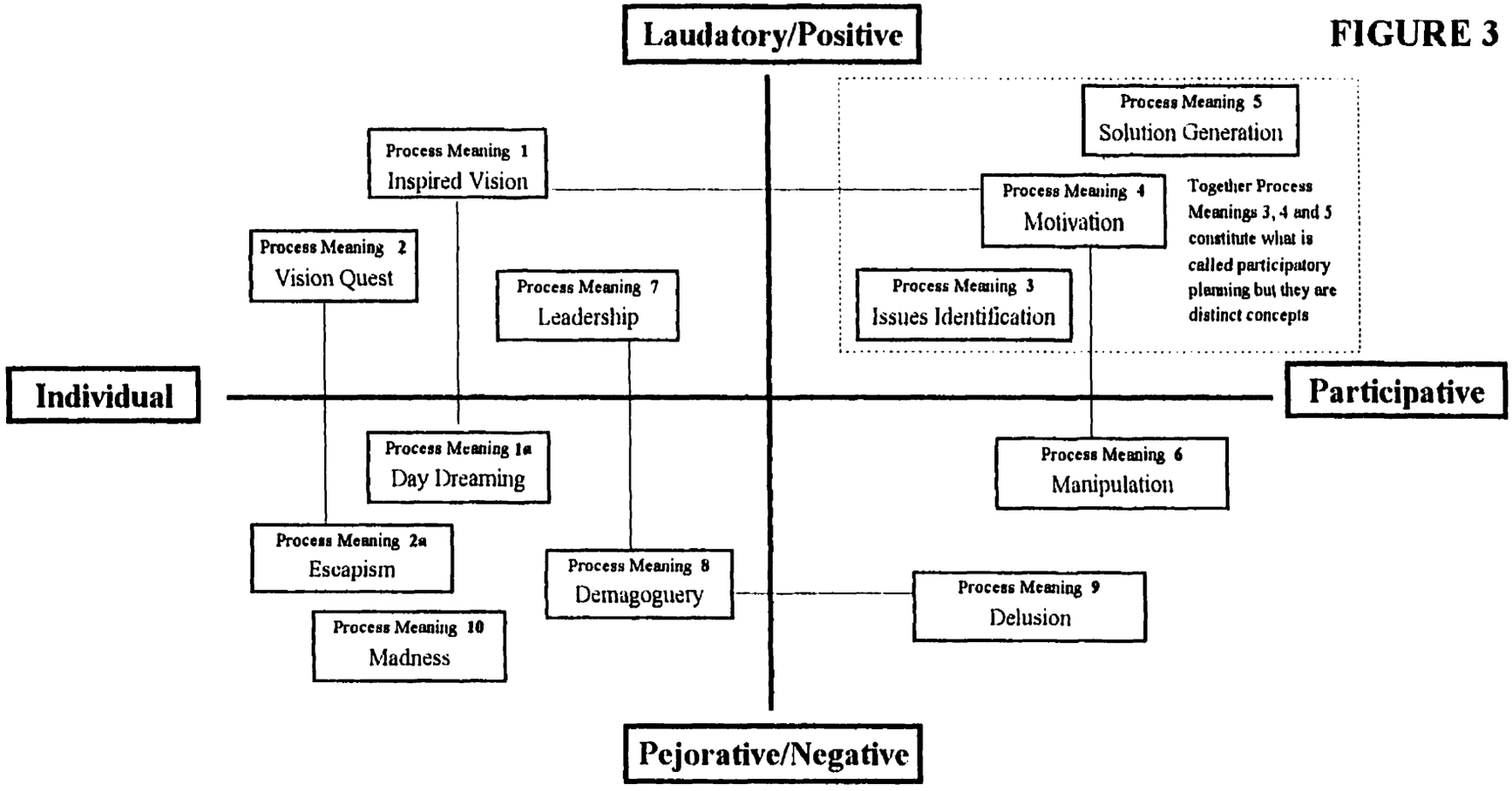
Y AXIS → **LAUDATORY/POSITIVE** - A measure of the degree to which the particular meaning is intended to be complementary.
PEJORATIVE/NEGATIVE - A measure of the degree to which a particular meaning is understood to be inauspicious.

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TAXONOMY OF THE PROCEDURAL THEORY MEANINGS OF VISION TERMS

FIGURE 3



X AXIS →	**INDIVIDUAL** - The degree to which the particular meaning applies to a personal activity. **PARTICIPATIVE** - The degree to which a particular meaning applies to a process that is intended to involve the community.
Y AXIS →	**LAUDATORY/POSITIVE** - A measure of the degree to which the particular meaning is intended to be complementary. **PEJORATIVE/NEGATIVE** - A measure of the degree to which a particular meaning is understood to be inauspicious.

4.2 Substantive Theory Meanings of Vision Terms - Products

Substantive Meaning 1. Prophetic Visions

Certainly one of the oldest applications of the term vision concerns the glimpses of the future given to individuals, generally in dreams at night, by the divinity. "And it shall come to pass afterwards, that I will pour out my spirit on all flesh; your sons and your daughters shall prophesy, your old men will dream dreams, and your young men shall see visions" (Joel 2: 28). Judeo-Christian holy writ is replete with such references but most of the great prophets of all traditions experienced these kinds of visions. A few common elements characterize them. The visions were generally quite literally pictures of what was to happen. On the positive side that might be the promise of prosperity in Abraham's case while on the negative side it could be the foretelling of destruction as in the instance of Lot, and Lot's wife. The visions came from God, they were not created from the prophet's own imagination. Finally, if the future scenario was catastrophic and was to be avoided, that could come about not by human intervention but only by human repentance followed by divine intervention as in the case of Jonah and the city of Nineveh. The ultimately negative connotation of this meaning is the apocalyptic vision such as found in St. John's Revelations. It might be pointed out in answer to the question of what this has to do with planning that references to sacred writing and to prophecy do occur in planning practice and theory (Kemp 1992, see Section 3.3.2 above).

Substantive Meaning 2. Vision Goals

A fairly typical planning document from southern Ontario includes the following description: "generally a vision/goals statement is a compilation of goals describing a view of what residents of a Region collectively want the area to be like in twenty years time"

(Regional Municipality of Haldimand-Norfolk 1993). Leaving aside for the time being the matter of whether or to what extent the vision statement is a "collective" desire, what is described here is a document containing a number of expressions about desired future outcomes or what Baum calls a 'future imaging' (1977). In this case the words vision and goal are used together in a way that implies they are interchangeable. In some planning documents there is an effort to distinguish vision goals from ordinary goals by implying that visions have an emotive dimension. 'Goals come from the head, visions from the heart,' is the type of phrase that tries to make this point (Feick 1995).

The degree of detail, clarity and specificity and the type of issues addressed in these vision goals statements varies widely. In some ways, however, they occupy the same place in planning that was once taken by documents with names like 'master plans.' Wingo, perhaps with tongue in cheek, once called master plans our cartoon of utopia (1963). Some expressions of vision goals use a kind of pyramidal diagram in which the apex is labelled 'vision' with the terms goals, objectives and programs occupying the expanding spaces below. The same diagram appeared in earlier documents with the apex called 'overall goal' (Metropolitan Toronto Planning Board 1973).

In the past the principal meaning of vision as master plan was visual and spatial in the sense of maps indicating the layout of structures and roads on the ground. That is what L'Enfant's Washington plan was (Peets 1933) and what Bacon's Philadelphia plan was (Barnett 1983). In describing Patrick Abercrombie's vision for London, Hall says that it was planned on organic principles with cells and arteries in which each part performed its proper function (1980). This is probably the most common use of the term vision in its planning application in spite of the vagueness of its connotations.

Substantive Meaning 3. Vision Actions

This concept is one of the most striking metaphorical uses of the word vision. What is really meant is not a visual image or picture of the future but the path or activities required to achieve the vision. Baum gives some theoretical context to this when he explains that images of the future require spatial (ends) dimensions and temporal (means) dimensions (1977). The temporal connects the present with the future and the two cannot be artificially separated but can be understood as facets of the same process. Polak called this splitting time and splitting space (1961). What are usually included under this heading are in fact policies or other description of ways of proceeding. This process becomes even more stark when one reads a theorist describing a business application of the principles involved:

> ...corporate vision, also called portfolio strategy: a description of the strategic business areas in which the firm proposes to participate, enter, and exit, as well as the synergies which will be maintained among them... definition of "the business we are in." (Ansoff 1990)

What is intended to be conveyed by the statement of vision actions is often confused with the term mission. The Ashridge Mission Model sets out what a mission statement might include: purpose, which is why the organization exists; strategy or the competitive position and distinctive competence; values, which are the things that the organization believes in and behaviour or policies and patterns of action (Campbell 1990). In the discourse about strategic planning the use of the term vision to describe actions, policies, behaviours and purposes seems not to add any clarity.

Substantive Meaning 4. Utopian Visions/Reconstructive/Escapist/Dystopias

In the examination of the origins of visions it was noted that utopianism has undergone some cycles of popularity. At a time when it was out of favour Lewis Mumford attempted to bring the term back into the planning discussion by doing what we are attempting here, which is to say to distinguish between positive and negative application of the word. He defined escapist utopianism as that tendency to leave the real world by talking about the impossible. That could not be defended as a useful exercise. On the other hand, reconstructive utopianism or seeking to change the world for the better, he felt was a vital and essential part of any planning (1922, Lynch 1981).

On the map of substantive meanings, Figure 2, we can place the two concepts of utopian vision on the laudatory-pejorative continuum. Even more negative in tone than escapist utopia is what Richter calls dystopia or those horrific images of the future presented by Orwell and others (1975).

Substantive Meaning 5. Visions of Truth/Vision As Mantra

Although the idea of visions being conveyed from God may no longer be in vogue there are ways in which the word vision is still used to indicate a kind of validation of concepts being put forth that is strongly authoritative. Consider for example this excerpt from a biography: "Maslow's was a vision of gnostic truth..." (Lowry 1973). It seems that people long to have some absolutes in which they can believe and in the absence of religious prophets they gravitate to scientific or scholarly ones whose views can be called visions and can be equated with truth.

This use of the word is potentially problematic if it is not recognized and understood for what it is. That is especially true when it is used by writers and theorists who otherwise have a claim to being hard-nosed and practical. This tenancy can be found in some business journals that purport to be objective and pragmatic. Take for example the statements that visioning "provides direction, generates commitment, strengthens bonding [and] cultivates support" (Barczak 1987). The evidence given for these assertions can be described as anecdotal and selective. The claims made for the effectiveness of vision in business become, at times, almost mantric. "Effective leaders, then, have vision that is persistent and consistent..." and "visions clearly are in demand during times of change" (Byrd 1987). Planners often echo this call for vision as though vision equated with truth (Wright 1996).

Two things need to be kept in mind at this point. First of all the comments made here do not suggest that there is no value in the ideas being written about but only that there are important questions with regard to the implied meanings and usage of the words. Second it needs to be remembered that for the most part the concept of vision in its present form entered planning practice through the conduit of business and management theory. Assuming that strong statements regarding the validity of vision made in the management literature can be regarded as authoritative may be misleading.

Substantive Meaning 6. Vision Principles/Values/Decision Criteria

In this use the term, value might be more accurate in conveying the meaning intended. When the Regional Municipality of Waterloo initiated an exercise in 1990, the planning staff attempted to interest people in talking about desirable visual images for the future. At public meetings and through mailed in questionnaires, however, they found that most citizens were more interested in discussing what could better be described as policy

matters. Eventually they produced a document quite different from their initial intention (see Appendix E, Interview 2). It set out, in part: "Vision Principles to be used in preparation of the new Official Plan... statements of direction that will guide subsequent phases..." (Regional Municipality of Waterloo 1992). In effect what had been arrived at was a set of values that were to be used as decision criteria in subsequent planning discussions. In one way the use of the term vision in this case may just have been seen as a way of maintaining the word in an exercise which no longer had to do with visions in the sense of future images. However, similar usages can be found in numerous other vision documents. One example is from the City of Barrie (Appendix B and C). Another use of vision to mean "decision making principles," was reported in *Plan Canada* (July 1996, CIP News, page 2) under the heading of Urban Vision Sampler.

Substantive Meaning 7. Vision as Agreement and Support

There are instances where the word vision indicates nothing more than that the writer or speaker is in agreement with or supports the thing or person on whom they are commenting. What else are we to make of a comment such as the following: "I have been impressed by the potential of the planning community to provide vision and hope for the future," (Codd 1995) or "planners should have and expound a broader vision," (van Geinkel 1996). There are no specific further references to anything that might otherwise be defined as a vision. The writers are simply using the words in a purely evocative way. Numerous other words such as leadership, insight or strength might be substituted without altering the meaning.

Substantive Meaning 8. Visions as Pipe Dreams

In the mirror image of the meaning outlined above, vision can just as easily be used in a negative and demeaning light to indicate disagreement. The phrase, "pragmatists say there is no money for such a vision," is a prime example of this usage (Barber 1995).

Substantive Meaning 9. Evil Visions

As pipe dreams are a negative reflection of vision used in its simple laudatory mode so the idea of vision as received truth (substantive meaning 5) has an opposite in the idea of the evil vision. This kind of use has abated since the end of the cold war but there was a time when one often encountered phrases such as the 'communist vision of world domination.'

Substantive Meaning 10. Premonition Visions/Second Sight/Forerunners

Although seldom found today there is a markedly different sense of vision that was much a part of historic literature and folklore. For this meaning it is helpful to turn to another, more oral and less technologically oriented language. If we look for the Gaelic words that would be used to translate vision and visionary we find *taibhis* and *taibhsear* [pronounced tifes and tifesher] (Dwelly 1901). However in this language that embodies a good deal of superstition there is little that is positive or comforting in the connotation of these terms. *Taibhis* means a spectre or apparition that is available to the seer through what is in turn translated as 'second sight,' a kind of mysterious and disturbing intrusion on the consciousness. This is what Scrooge experienced with the visit from Marley. A *taibhsear* or visionary is one who possesses this faculty of second sight; not a planner but more of what we would call a witch or a person bewitched. The substantive products of second

sight are generally things like forerunners of impending deaths. These differ from divine prophecies primarily in our understanding that they have the opposite origin.

4.3 Procedural Theory Meanings of Vision Terms - Process

Procedural Meaning 1. Inspired Vision/Divine or Otherwise

When we turn our attention to process of having visions the first stop for an historical understanding is at the notion of received inspiration. Traditionally this inspiration came from God who said, "I spoke to the prophets, it was I who multiplied visions, and through the prophets gave parables" (Hosea 12:10).

Our more modern interpretation of this process would probably argue that a person who has high intelligence and creativity, who is well educated and lives in a time of opportunity, may produce ideas that could be called inspired or visionary. In other words we might try to mechanistically explain the origin of the insights but we nevertheless accept that there are individuals who make major contributions to the world of ideas. There are also those who, while their creative instincts and desires may be recognized by some, never rise beyond the status of eccentricity. There appears to be only one clear way of distinguishing between creative genius and wool gathering. If a person in our society makes money or achieves fame as a result of their ideas we call them visionaries. If they toil in obscurity we call them dreamers. If, from time to time the work of one of these dreamers is discovered after their passing, we say they were ahead of their time. And if a person who was considered a successful visionary in their time later turns out to be a fake, then we conveniently forget them.

Procedural Meaning 2. Vision Quest

The vision quest is a process of spiritual awakening that is particularly associated with the Native People of North America. In this meaning of the word a young person goes through a right of passage into adulthood by separating themselves from the community and meditating until they make contact with their natural spirit guide. To some extent this vision state is brought on by physical deprivation. The concept is very appealing to people who are interested in environmental planning and in re-establishing the profound link with nature that seems to have been broken by modern urbanism and alienation. While not being legitimate members of any Native tradition some environmentalists feel that they have either experienced a similar transformation or else they find the vision quest concept a powerful literary expression of their sensitivities.

Procedural Meaning 3. Visioning as Issues Identification

Taken together Procedural Meanings 3, 4 and 5 could be described as participative planning. It is useful here to differentiate them in order characterize the specific nature of each. While it is certainly possible to do them all in a given visioning exercise it is equally possible to do one without the others. The participant in visioning may be under the impression that they are doing them all and the exercise facilitator way indicate that is the case but simply saying it does not make it so.

The first of the three parts or stages is what Ziegler calls "discerning concerns" and others call identifying issues. There are cases where this is all that is done under the name visioning. In 1990 the Future Vision Project in Clifton, NJ, produced a report that stopped after outlining community concerns (Kemp 1992). Some projects involve the public in the

identification of issues (Burlington, ON) but not in the other potential aspects of creating a final vision document.

Procedural Meaning 4. Visioning as Galvanisation/Team Building/Appreciating Others

Many people feel that the process of visioning, thinking about the future, is far more valuable than any actual document that is produced. Interviewee number 8 in this study (see Appendix E) said that it was vital to get people thinking about things in a different way than they normally do and to confront other people's legitimate concerns. This team building aspect is also stressed in many writings on visioning (Senge 1990, Thomason 1981, Hutcheson 1984). The result of the process can be quite motivational and can subsequently galvanize people into action. Sometimes that motivation can be seen to go well beyond the original time period devoted to creating the vision and well beyond any real understanding of the document. In talking about the American Constitution for example, one writer said:

> It was a mighty vision... It was an even broader and bolder declaration than those who made it knew... its soaring vision enabled our society to meet the trials of emerging nationhood... it inspires us still... to make the vision a reality, a framework of self government was established... (President's Commission on National Goals 1960)

It is doubtful whether Americans have made a detailed study of the vision document being spoken of but its effect is not substantive so much as procedural in the sense that it motivates action. That is the fond hope of those who undertake planning visions, that the effort will generate the kind of dynamics that are expressed here.

Procedural Meaning 5. Visioning as Generation of Solutions

After visioning has identified issues and motivated a team approach its last process is the solving of problems. There are a number of ways of going about this. "Creative visualization," is one approach which "employs goal directed imagery to bring about desired outcomes. These can be for objects, lifestyles and desired personality traits" (Shone 1984). One of the principal ideas behind this aspect of participation in vision creation is that the synergy engendered by many people's involvement will result in better solutions.

Procedural Meaning 6. Visioning as Manipulation of the Public

When we talked above about utopianism, about vision as an expression of agreement and about vision as a revelation of truth, there was in each case a reflection or down side. The same is true in the case of the participative planning triad. While the three aspects outlined above are thought of in positive terms by most planners, some, both inside and outside the profession, see the visioning process as a way of manipulating the public or other groups involved in the decision making process. A person contacted as part of the present research indicated that a 'visioning meeting' was held in their community after a particular planning document had been completed, solely in order to meet the statutory requirements for a public consultation. Another official said that visioning was done in his municipality to get the politicians to agree to do what the planners wanted them to do. One writer said of visioning that it was "a new - and proven - tool for broadening citizen participation, and thus winning new constituents for planning" (Klein 1993). Another indicated that visioning was undertaken because city leaders sensed mistrust from the community (Benson 1993). While these statements may not necessarily indicate the worst motivation they could be seen to be somewhat cynical.

Procedural Meaning 7. Visioning as Leadership

In this usage vision is either equated directly with leadership or is seen a major component of it. In a Maclean's article about the CBC (Nov 18, 1996 pg 51) we see an example of the first type when an employee of the corporation said: "There is no leadership. No vision." The second idea is conveyed in the following passage:

> To choose a direction, a leader must first have developed a mental image of a possible and desirable state of the organization. This image, which we call a vision, may be as vague as a dream or as precise as a goal or mission statement. The critical point is that a vision articulates a view of a realistic, credible, attractive future for the organization, a condition that is better in some important ways than what now exists (Bennis 1985).

Procedural Meaning 8. Visioning as Demagoguery

The flip side of strong and beneficial leadership is dictatorial authority and repression. Some people see that kind of regime built and maintained through the process of demagoguery or the creation of false visions. "Evil is always with us; no political program can eliminate it. Every utopian scheme hides a Grand Inquisitor. We make the earth hell when we insist on turning it into paradise" (Keen 1974).

Procedural Meaning 9. Deluding the People with Distorted Visions

The expression of authoritarianism in a community is sometimes manifested in visual ways. Many dictatorial regimes, as part of their program, try to influence their populations with ideal visions of the future, and past. We can think of Maoist poster campaigns in the

Cultural Revolution and the insistence in former Soviet countries on art that portrayed socialist realism.

In spite of our political freedom and open society we may not be totally immune from this in the west. In 1995 article in *Planning*, Dericle makes the case that Hollywood's popular movie and television images of cities are making it difficult to change urban patterns that are clearly destructive. She says that movies continually reinforce that there is only one right way to live, one vision if you will, and that is in a suburb.

Procedural Meaning10. Visions as Madness/Hallucinations

The last definition under the heading of visioning is what is called 'seeing things' in the sense of madness. There has always been a fine line in this area. You can be visionary if you're successful, you can be a wool gathering day dreamer if your genius is not recognized or you can be a stark raving looney when people really don't like what you're telling them you see (Knoll 1982). Rachael Carsen might have been able to commiserate with St. Joan on this matter.

In summary, it can be seen from the foregoing battery of definitions, that the vision words have a broad spectrum of possible meanings. It is not at all clear that the potential for confusion resulting from the use of these words is realized by planners or others.

4.4 Sample Text Analyses Based on the Proposed Taxonomy

Now that we have outlined an array of potential meanings for vision, visioning and related words, it might be useful to test the taxonomy by analysing some sample texts from

planning literature. The first of these, Novak's *The American Vision*, was published half a generation ago by a body that could be characterized as conservative. The second passage is found in a Canadian planning journal from 1995 and the third comes from a British journal in the same year. These were chosen without any perceived bias simply because each had two or more occurrences of vision words. After each time the words appear there is a number that can be subsequently referred to while in the analysis paragraphs the Substantive and Procedural Meanings from the previous section are cited.

> ...indeed, we do not actually have a theory that expresses our vision (occurrence 1) of the good and just society. There is no single book one would willingly place in the hands of a serious inquirer and say: 'here is our full moral, political and economic vision.' (occurrence 2) Granted that our system is complex, and granted that it is pluralistic, encompassing many metaphysical and cultural visions (occurrence 3) rather than one alone; still, it is, to say the least, awkward that we have no overarching vision (occurrence 4) to express, no electrifying text to send into the world-wide ideological battle in which we are engaged." (Novak 1978)

In this passage occurrence 1 has Substantive Meaning 6 which is a set of values or decision criteria. Occurrence 2 conveys Substantive Meanings 2 and 3 or a set of specific goals and actions required to achieve them. Occurrence 3 carries Procedural Meanings 1 and 3, an inspired view and an identification of issues. Occurrence 3 also has Substantive Meanings 5 and 6, implying that it carries revealed truths and a sets of values. Occurrence 4 carries Procedural Meaning 4 which is a motivating force. In total then there are four occurrences of the word vision which among them carry seven different meaning out of a possible twenty with one possible meaning appearing twice and no two of the occurrences having exactly the same meaning.

> ...the senior staff and elected officials of the region decided that a vision (occurrence 1) or focus was needed around decision-making processes such as capital budgets and major policy initiatives (the official plan for example). It was decided... to involve every citizen, [and] a task force

> comprising leaders from a cross-section of the community... to prepare a community vision...(occurrence 2) (Pearce 1995)

In the second quote the word vision appears twice. Occurrence 1 has Substantive Meaning 6, which is a set of values and decision criteria. Occurrence 2 carries Substantive Meanings 2 and 3, a set of goals and the actions to achieve those goals. At the same time occurrence 2 has Procedural Meanings 3, 4, 5 and 7, encompassing all three participative planning stages and implying a leadership role. Between them the two appearances of the word vision have seven of a possible twenty meanings and neither of them means the same as the other.

> What was required from RPG [Regional Planning Guide-lines] was clear guidance that set the context for development based upon a clear vision (occurrence 1) of the future prospects for the region. Early RPG was somewhat weak in terms of strategic vision (occurrence 2), often concentrating on workaday matters to the exclusion of coherent and far-sighted strategic vision (occurrence 3). Later RPG provides a clearer sense of purpose and vision (occurrence 4) (Roberts 1996).

In the third passage the word vision appears four times. Occurrence 1 has Procedural Meaning 3 which is to say the notion of issues identification. The writer may have intended this use to convey Substantive Meaning 2, the sense of goals, but by adding the words 'future prospects' he thereby leaves open the interpretation of vision as prediction or speculation about coming conditions. Occurrences 2 and 3 both have the word strategic attached to vision but they are not exactly the same. Occurrence 2 is intended to imply Substantive Meaning 2, goals, but primarily carries Substantive Meaning 7 in the sense that it is being used to indicate a positive and desirable statement with which the writer can agree. Occurrence 3 more clearly represents Substantive Meaning 2 but also has Process Meaning 4 in that it is expected to be motivational. Occurrence 4 carries Substantive Meaning 3 in that the accompanying word 'purpose' implies actions and it has Process Meaning 4, or motivation as well. In these four appearances, the word vision manifests

five of the possible twenty meanings with somewhat more consistency from one use to the other than the previous examples.

4.5 A Reflection on the Question of Meaning

In concluding this examination of the meanings of vision words a couple of observations or perhaps questions can be reflected upon. If readers understand all these different meanings then there is no problem. That, however, seems unlikely. If, they don't understand them and writers don't see the necessity clarifying them, then the question might be asked as to whether the passages are capable of conveying any clear meaning at all.§ If, on the other hand, people don't understand and the writers would genuinely like to clarify the meanings might it not be preferable to use other words that are more straight forward?

In the following section the ways in which the vision words have been used in specific planning contexts and by particular planning practitioners will be explored.

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§ *It can be noted that there are examples, the Region of Ottawa Carlton for one, where planners preparing documents have undertaken to explain the different nuances of the vision words to the public.*

Chapter 5

Community Vision ...is a set of shared ideas about how we want our community to change...

Ottawa Carlton (Daily Plan-it, Mar 95)

5.0 THE PHILOSOPHICAL BASIS FOR VISIONING

5.1 Defined Systems or Approaches

There are a number of approaches to visioning that might be called systems. Ten of these will be outlined here as they are described by those who practice or advocate them. It is not claimed that these represent all the approaches in use, but only that they provide a sampling of ideas that illustrate the major points involved in visioning.

Where there are other systems similar to one of the ten listed here, reference is made to them. One category listed is not really a complete visioning system but was identified by practitioners as having had some influence on their work. Only a couple are specifically intended for use in urban planning while the rest are offered not only for municipal use but for corporate, organizational, personal and other planning applications as well. Not all have visioning as their central concept. Most of the visioning approaches described are proprietorial in that they are offered as part of consulting packages. Joel Barker's video *The power of vision* is a kind of 'infomercial' or an advertisement posing as a documentary (1990). One of the systems to be discussed, Anton Nelessen and Associates' Visual Preference Analysis, even has a technique the name of which is the subject of copyright protection: Visual Preference Surveys™ (1993).

Only three or four of these approaches feature anything that might be called a theory or theory-like construct that guides their application. The rest are more in the nature of technique sets. Ziegler admits that there is "not much theoretical structure in the practice of envisioning" (1990). This lack of theory concerning the place of vision in the sense of goals or objectives in strategic planning is underlined by Dyson in the introduction to his collection of writings:

> ... a key part of the strategic planning process involves setting and reviewing objectives... objectives and goals need to be clearly stated if strategic options are going to be evaluated in any meaningful way... models and analytical procedures have so far had relatively little impact on this aspect of strategic planning, and in recognition of this no papers are included under this heading (1990).

The systems will first be outlined. The few examples of stated theory will be examined and a general characterization of the practices will be offered. The following Section, 5.2, will then undertake to lay out the implied or assumed program theory on which the described practices appear to be based. Section 5.3 will then critically assess those underlying ideas.

Perhaps the place to begin is with the two approaches on this list that are not linked to specific practitioners or organizations that directly provide professional consulting services. The first is the Oregon Model (Oregon Chapter of the APA 1993). In a thirty-six page booklet published by the American Planning Association the approach to community visioning that was developed by the School of Urban and Public Affairs at Portland State University and practicing planners in the Pacific northwest of the United States is outlined. By way of definition the booklet says that the visioning process differs from traditional strategic planning in three ways. It focusses on a wide range of issues, it is geared to community values and it uses alternative scenarios to explore the future. It is not claimed that visioning necessarily replaces other forms of planning but that it might improve the overall process. The Oregon Model proposes a four stage approach beginning with polling

the community (see Figure 4). In that phase the present situation is clearly set out. It is a largely a research operation that includes not only a physical inventory but also an attempt to understand the community's values. Stage two involves analyzing trends. This is an attempt to see where the community is being pushed by present conditions. The third part involves creating a vision and
really asks the question, where do people in the community want to be in the future? The fourth and final step is the creation of an action plan that will move the community towards its defined vision. That phase includes articulating specific goals, strategies and priorities.

Some examples of places where this model or a close variant have been applied include Corvallis, Washington, Portland, Oregon and Revelstoke, British Columbia. There are a number of other articles and published case studies that propose roughly similar approaches under names such as Empowering the Vision (Wheeland 1993) and Future State Visioning (Stewart 1993).

The second approach to be examined is Soft Systems Methodology (SSM) which was developed from systems engineering by Professor Peter Checkland of England's Lancaster University (1990). The approach has influenced some of the people teaching Environmental Resources Studies at the University of Waterloo and has found its way from there into Ontario planning through projects undertaken for the Ministry of Natural Resources. A brief description of the approach is summarized in Checkland's own words when he says that SSM is:

> a general methodology which uses systems ideas to find a structure in apparently unstructured 'soft' problems, and hence leads to action to eliminate, alleviate or solve the problem, or provides an orderly way of tackling 'hard' problems (1976).

Soft Systems Methodology uses the idea of vision as a way of imagining what the situation would be like with the problem solved. That image or future state can then assist in reassembling an idea of the hidden structure of the problem. This approach differs from some of the more self-actualization models that assume the future can be invented in that SSM does fall back on a positivist or determinist understanding that there are knowable underlying forces at work in determining outcomes.

The rest of the examples described are associated with the consulting work of certain individuals or groups. Some of these are commercial, for profit ventures while others are not-for-profit associations. All seem to be reasonably willing to share their ideas in books and articles but there is generally an understanding that to get the full benefit of the notions put forward the direct services of the individual or group are required.

The Envisioning method is a very precise way of arriving at a vision. It has been developed over a twenty year period by Warren Ziegler and his firm Future Invention Associates of Denver, Colorado, and Edmonton, Alberta. Ziegler's techniques grew out of his academic work in the field of education at the University of Syracuse but he has applied the approach in urban and corporate planning, individual self-fulfilment, institutions, civic bodies and issues identification (U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare 1979). A direct municipal planning application was undertaken in the Edmonton neighbourhood of Strathcona in the early 1990s. Envisioning is summed up by Ziegler as the art of coming to a palpable sense of what the future can and should be. The formal processes that he follows with clients are guided by the following set of principles: that the future is not the domain of knowledge but of action; that the future is a metaphor for the human imagination; that participants in envisioning form a community of learners who have to be ready to take risks, de-role, search for shared vision without giving up their own and be prepared to listen, nurture, clarify and critique each other in search of a shared vision

(Ziegler 1990). One of the main points that Ziegler's approach shares with some, but not all other visioning proponents, is the idea that visioning ought to be about the desirable and not the possible. Ziegler is also clear in his assertion that only individuals can participate in envisioning. Only individual people, he says, can dream. It is not something you can do on behalf of or as a representative of a group.

While apparently not directly influenced by Ziegler's envisioning ideas another movement shares many of the same notions. They are incorporated in the procedure used in Ontario by the Healthy Communities initiative. It grew out of the realization that community health could be better approached in a positive, proactive and preventative way by focussing on wellness rather than treating sickness. Since this idea involves not just hospitals and medical professionals but the whole community, vision exercises have been used to mobilize citizen organization and action. It is known that this approach was important in the case studies of Woolwich Township, the Regional Municipality of Waterloo and the Regional Municipality of Haldimond-Norfolk (see Appendix E). The healthy communities movement was also influenced by another visioning system put forward by an organization called the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA).

The ICA system uses what it calls the Technologies of Participation (ToP) method (Spencer c1996). In this approach to strategic planning there are five steps. It begins with mapping out a practical vision, then proceeds to deal with underlying contradictions. From that emerge ideas for strategic directions, plans for systematic actions and finally an implementation timeline. These steps are pictured by ICA as forming a spiral (see Figure 4a). The visioning part of this approach is also broken down into five steps. It begins with setting the context or deciding what the main question is. Next the group engages in 'brainstorming' during which time they generate all sorts of ideas and write them all down without being in any way critical or judgemental about those ideas. This is similar to De

Bono's coloured hats technique. Typically these ideas are recorded on pieces of paper that can be taped up on the wall and moved around when desired. Once all the creative idea generation has been completed the group begins to organize the ideas into instinctive categories, i.e. which ones seem to feel right together. Once the ideas are grouped the categories can be named. Finally the groups and items within them can be evaluated which leads to prioritizing them by importance.

Insofar as there is a theory involved in the ICA approach it is the claim that this sequence of steps replicates people's everyday thinking process (Spencer c1996).

The next system to be considered matches or perhaps surpasses the ICA approach in its comprehensiveness. Senge's books *The Fifth Discipline* (1990) and its companion *The Fifth Discipline Fieldbook* (1992), outlines his detailed and inspirational but extremely complex system for changing group behaviour to be more effective. What he calls "building shared vision" is the fourth of five "learning disciplines" outlined as a way to create a "learning organization." The others are systems thinking, personal mastery, mental models and team learning. The importance of linking these factors is stressed by Senge when he says "...vision without systems thinking ends up painting lovely pictures of the future with no deep understanding of the forces that must be mastered to move from here to there" (Senge 1990). This is primarily a system aimed at leaders but while it had its origins in work on management Senge contends that its premises hold true for all sorts of people and in a variety of settings. These ideas are thought to have been considered in regard to municipal visioning exercises in placed such as Welland, Ontario.

GRAPHICS ASSOCIATED WITH VARIOUS VISIONING TECHNIQUES

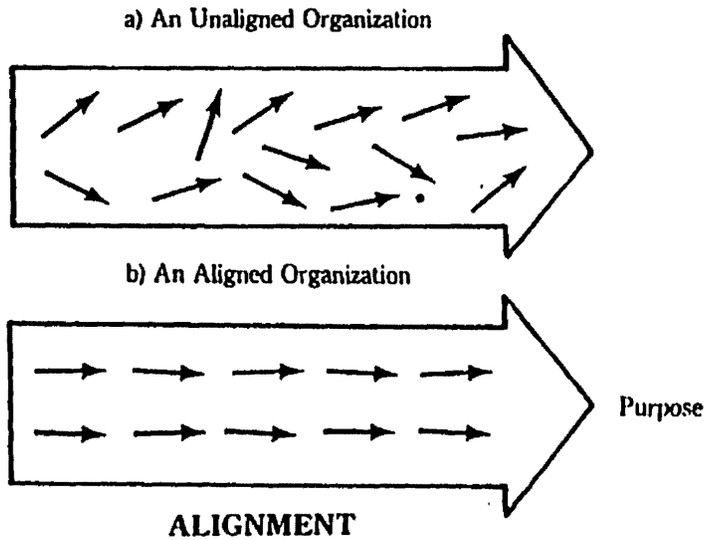
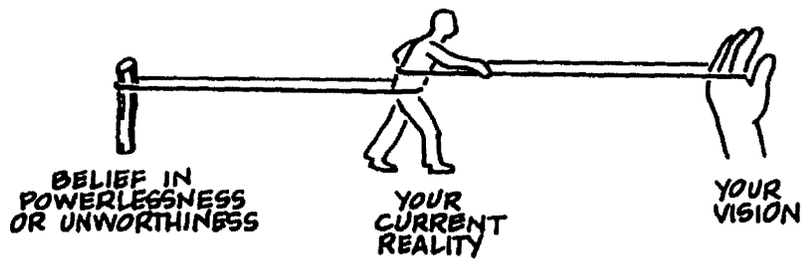
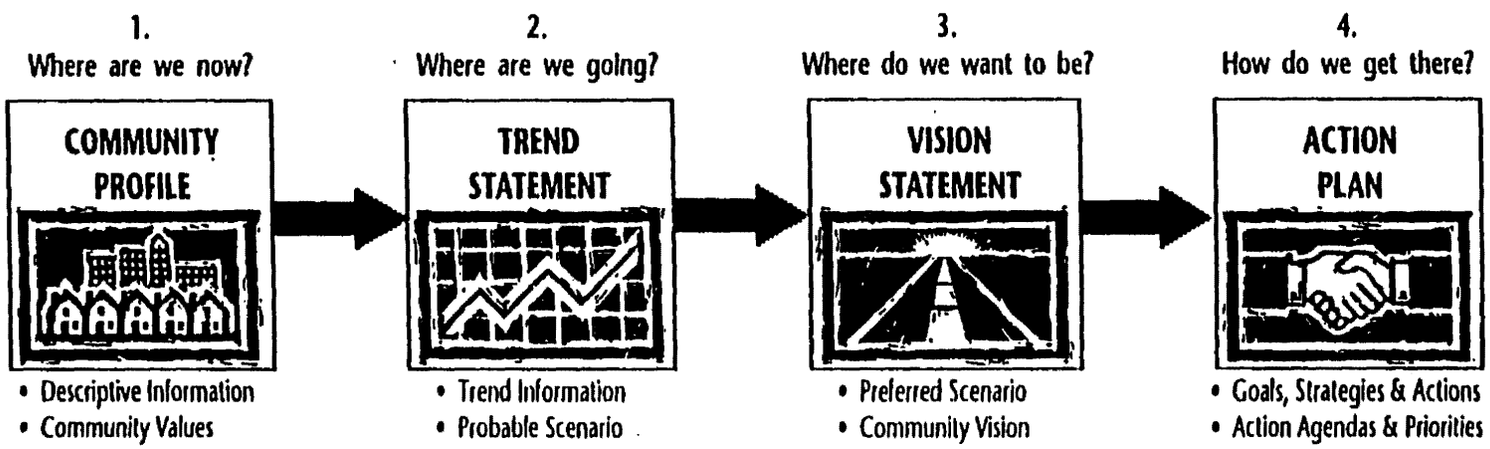


FIGURE 4



From Senge's books *The Fifth Discipline* (1990).

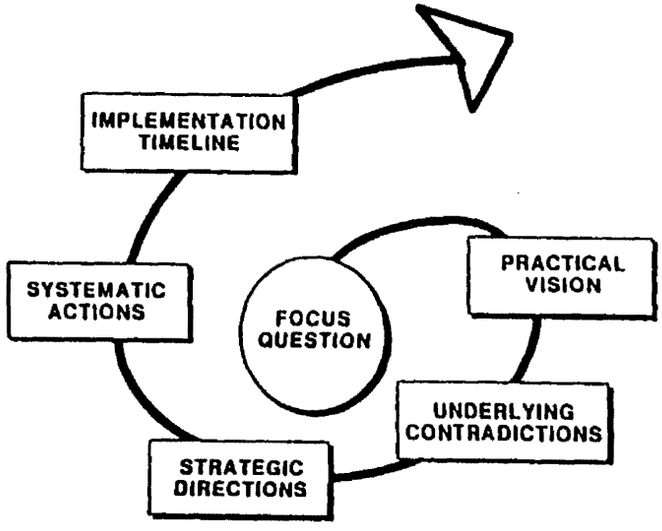
The Oregon Model



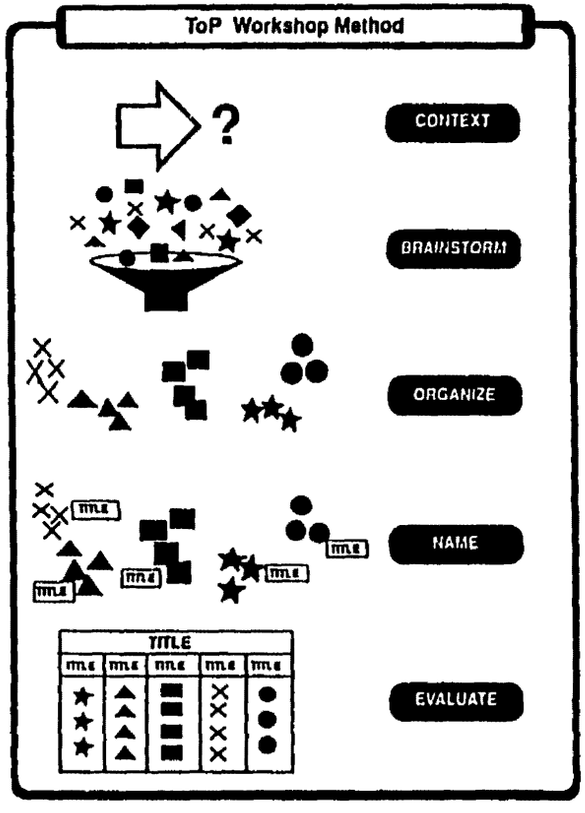
GRAPHICS ASSOCIATED WITH VARIOUS VISIONING TECHNIQUES

The ToP Strategic Planning Process

FIGURE 4a



From the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA).



There is a theory or theory-like concept behind this approach. Senge describes it in this way:

> The juxtaposition of vision (what we want) and a clear picture of current reality (where we are relative to what we want) generates what we call "creative tension"; a force to bring them together, caused by the natural tendency of tension to seek resolution. The essence of personal mastery is learning how to generate and sustain creative tension in our lives. (Senge 1990)

In the books this 'natural force' of 'creative tension' is pictured in a diagram showing a human figure being pulled back toward the past but also being pulled forward toward a goal (see Figure 4). It is important to this construct that vision be understood as a very specific destination, a picture or a graphic image. For abstract goals Senge uses the term purpose rather than vision.

Although we have not found any direct application of the next system to urban planning situations it is included here as a contrast to the prevailing orientation of the other approaches and to introduce a theoretical perspective that will be discussed later in Section 5.3 under the heading of Critical Analysis. Cognitive psychology is the general theory behind Colin Eden's "cognitive mapping" method of arriving at organizational vision (1990). In his estimation the need for new goals or vision in an organization only comes about as a result of perceived problems. People, he argues, will only want to change if there is a crisis. Outlining his approach, Eden says that:

> encouraging people to define their world in 'idealized' forms is unnatural and relatively unhelpful. Thus problem solving methods that demand the construction of an idealized scenario do not relate to the natural process of working out problems. This view of problem construction is largely influenced by Kelly (1955) in as much as he argues, from the stand-point of a cognitive psychologist, that man attempts to make sense of his world in a practical way. Man seeks to predict and control. That is, he construes the

> world in terms of *managing* it. In the same manner thinking about strategy is *seeing the future as something to be controlled and managed*, *not to be forecast*. (1990)

Cognitive mapping involves helping people in an organization or some other particular setting, to look back and reconstruct the series of thoughts that have brought them to their present appreciation of a given problem. In this way it shares some resonance with Soft Systems Methodology. The web of thought progressions can then be projected forward to determine where things are headed. This mapping can become so complicated that a purpose designed computer program is needed to sort out the web, or map, of progressive thinking or cognitions. The theory in this case is that people are not motivated to act by future considerations but by their past experience. The notion is that all future actions have their origin in the solving of past problems. Future action or a vision of what is to come, can be understood by carefully mapping the trajectory of past experiences.

The analysis of visual preference is the next idea to be considered. This is the most literal and specific of the approaches to visioning. The firm of Anton Nelessen and Associates in the United States and the Co-Design Group of Vancouver, led by Stanley King, are proponents of this practice. Examples of its use can be found in Calgary (McDowell 1988) and in the case studies for this research in Markham, Ontario (see Appendix B and C). The concept operating in these approaches is that people need some expert assistance in order to build their ideas of a future state.

There are two ways to do this. One is to show people various pictures and to systematically measure their relative preferences (Nelessen 1994). From that input design guide-lines for the preferred future can be derived. In Nelessen's approach there are seven steps. It begins with understanding the biography of the past then proceeds to analyzing the present problems. The next step he calls 'design by democracy' which aims at creating

a common vision. From there the process goes on to analyzing and applying the potentials, creating three and four dimensional plans and developing illustrated codes. The last phase involves a citizen review process of developer's plans.

The other visual preference technique involves discussing future desires with people and then having artists draw the preferred streetscapes. These pictures can then be further discussed and additional changes made to more closely approximate participants preferences. These approaches are very specifically aimed at the physical and design aspects of the future setting.

Some of the practitioners interviewed as part of this research indicated that they had been influenced in some way by publications on strategic planning. Among these books were Kemp's *Strategic Planning in Local Government: A Casebook* (1992) published by the APA and Gordon's *Strategic Planning for Local Government* (1993) published by the International City/County Management Association. Neither of these references discuss vision in any great detail and in the case of the former visioning is spoken of only as a method for issues identification. In another APA publication visioning is suggested as a practice only for use in specific instances where the issues facing the community are either unclear or where there is little or no agreement about what they are (Bryson 1988). So while these books contain many of those practices common to most strategic planning and also found in other approaches to visioning, they are not very helpful in understanding visioning.

Stephen Covey is one of a number of consultants whose approach to visioning relies heavily on a concept called 'alignment' (1996, Kiefer and Stroh 1983). The easiest way to understand this idea is to visualize the diagram used (see Figure 4). The large arrow represents the direction of an organization while the activities of the individuals within the

collective are indicated by smaller arrows inside the large one. Alignment is the desirable state where all of the small arrows are not only pointing the same way as the large one but are also all parallel. According to Kiefer and Stroh alignment, and the resulting organizational success, comes about as a result of a shared vision which "embodies people's highest values and aspirations. 'Visioning' enables people to clarify and realize what they really want, independent of what seems possible now. It encourages them to develop their visions of ideal reality and then builds a bridge between the current and desired states" (1983). Covey is even more emphatic when he says "alignment means working together in harmony, going in the same direction, supporting each other... all components of your organization... especially the minds and hearts of your people - support and work together... it is a process that never ends" (1996).

The last system that will be described is Joel Barker's version of visioning. In a slick promotional video that was filmed all over the world, Barker makes his case for the effectiveness of his process. In detail it resembles the steps of the ICA system although somewhat simplified. What is different about Barker, however, is that he makes a kind of philosophical and pseudo-scientific case for the efficacy of vision based planning, which he claims to have invented. He cites three influences which led him to his understanding. First was the work of Polak (1961) whose work we discussed in Section 3.2. Polak wrote about ancient states and modern countries that were successful because they had a vision of potential greatness. Secondly Barker talks about Benjamin Singer's study of New York ghetto students who were given inspiring lectures on achieving their vision and who subsequently succeeded in their ambitions. Finally in his video, Barker is seen standing in front of the gate at the Auschwitz concentration camp with its insidious inscription, Arbiet Mach Frei [work makes us free]. He describes a former inmate, Victor Frankel, who in book *Man's Search for Meaning*, attributed his surviving the holocaust to having had a

vision of himself alive after the war. Barker says that that vision was what separated Frankel from all of those who perished.

Having outlined a number of systems of visioning we can turn first to a consideration of the theory-like explanation contained within them. The assumed or hidden program philosophies will be examined in the next section.

First of all there is the Soft Systems Methodology assertion that all systems have a structure but sometimes it is just very obscure and hidden. The idea is that if we search long enough it will emerge. The question that arises from this is that even if there are such hidden systems, once you've found one, will there be transferable lessons or does each problem have its own unique system? While the approach may have some helpful techniques in problem solving the theory might be difficult or impossible to test. We might also ask, if it is not transferable or generalizable, in what sense is it a system.

Secondly, there is the assertion on the part of the Institute for Cultural Management that their system works because it replicates everyday human thought processes. On examination, that means that everyone sees challenges in the same way. The process described by ICA is logical, goal oriented and incremental. Senge's notions coincides with the ICA theory. He holds that having a goal and an appreciation of present conditions creates a tension that will move a person inexorably towards the goal. As a matter of fact, he too argues that what he describes is a 'natural' phenomenon. Many, however, would argue that such descriptions of thought patterns and problem solving are far from universal. The proponents of cognitive mapping, hold precisely the opposite view. We will dwell on these matter in some detail in Section 5.3.

A possible characterization of the above systems might now be offered. All of them are efforts to help people and organizations prepare for the future. There are some similarities and many differences with the approaches but beyond that concern for the future there is no single common thread. Most are complex, long term and involved processes. Senge says that to work, his system demands that an organization must be prepared to change completely. Soft Systems Methodology, Ziegler's Future Invention and Covey's Alignment method require people involved to enter into a learning community. Covey, as we have seen, calls it a life-time commitment. While as consultants the proponents of these systems are more than willing to offer two day seminars, most advise that much more time be spent and most say that to be effective the process must continue past their involvement.

By and large the systems described here, whatever their relation to other systems, are well thought out and have some degree of internal consistency. For the most part they are based on considerable experience possessed by their proponents, albeit anecdotal experience. Generally the proponents are enthusiastic and dedicated to delivering a good consulting product and achieving desirable ends for their clients.

A negative comment might be made, however, about the kind of justification offered in this field by a practitioner such as Joel Barker. Perhaps it is a function of highly competitive market place but his claims show both a want of logic and a degree of bad taste. There might be a warning here for others because they too commit some of the same errors. Virtually all of Barker's arguments are cases of the rhetorical fallacies of arguing from supporting evidence and confirming antecedents (Beardsely 1966). We are told that the correct vision will bring success and we are shown purported evidence of success, for example the ghetto students in Barker's video. When we ask what the difference is between successful and unsuccessful cases we are told that the latter didn't have enough vision or the right vision. That may break the strict rules of formal logic but it is only

marginally bad advertising. Barker's holocaust example, however, is a problem of another sort. I'm sure there were countless Auschwitz victims who dreamt long and hard about freedom and survival and had powerful visions. There are just too many other variables in an often cruel world to be able to pin success on one aspect.

5.2 Implied or Assumed Ideas Concerning Visioning

Looking closely at the visioning systems, primarily as they are presented in the literature, has had several purposes. We saw that at least a few theory-like concepts were stated overtly. By further deconstructing the description of techniques and practices we can tease out the remaining unstated assumptions that appear to underpin visioning. This process yields ten definable constructs that are stated below. As far as possible at least one documented source is given for each of the assertions. Not all of the visioning exercises and visioning systems necessarily assume all ten of these points. As we have already seen with creative tension and cognitive mapping, there are examples of diametrically opposed assumptions. Some visioning approaches embrace some of these points while specifically rejecting others. Those who see vision as a function of leadership for example, would not accept the participative aspects of visioning as essential (Benus 1985, Bass 1990). But any given approach adopts at least a subset of these assumptions. What the outline of possible assumptions provides is the broadest characterization of what we have called the 'program philosophy' (see Section 2.4.2, Bickman 1987).

Each of the statements can be examined and measured for efficacy first of all against available research. Second, the statements can be considered in conjunction with one another to see if there is the possibility of internal consistency. Those operations will be undertaken in the following Section 5.3. Finally these constructs are what formed the basis

for a) the analysis of the vision statements and visioning processes that constituted the case studies and b) the questions that were put to practitioners (see Chapter 6).

Statement 1. Visioning is a new technique.

The claim of novelty is contained both in documents with wide circulation such as the Oregon APA's *Guide to Community Visioning* (1993), and in more local and modest documents such as Ottawa, Ontario's Alta Vista neighbourhood plan.

Statement 2. A clear image or vision of the future acts as a beacon to guide actions until that vision is reached.

Nelessen says that a master plan is the key to zoning and development policies and that it "must provide a vision; it must include specific statements and images" (1994). Roberts holds that a strategic vision is a clear guidance that sets the context for development based upon a clear vision of the future (1996).

On a lighter note this is also the statement that is often illustrated by the line from that great planning text *Alice in Wonderland* to the effect that if you don't know where you're going then it doesn't much matter which way you go.

Statement 3. If you have a clear vision you will be inexorably drawn towards it.

Senge's concept of creative tension and the image of the figure being pulled forward are probably the best expressions of this idea but there are many others (1990). Polak talked about the image of the future acting as a magnet (1961) and Maslow described a compelling motivational force (1987).

Statement 4. The clearer the picture of the future, the better it will be as a guide.

Ziegler tells us that our visions of the future should be specific and palpable and embedded in our psyche (1991). We should be able to feel them. Senge says that vision is different from purpose (1990). Vision is a specific destination, a picture of a desired future while purpose is abstract. Vision is concrete. Purpose is "advancing man's capacity to explore the heavens" but vision is "a man on the moon by the end of the 1960s." Purpose is "being the best I can be," while vision is "breaking four minutes in the mile."

Statement 5. A clear image of the future will inspire and motivate purposeful action.

Kiefer and Stroh stated that organizations transcend their need for survival and strive to make the world a better place when they have a vision (1983). They went on to say that vision embodies people's highest and best aspirations and allows them to integrate the purpose of the organization with their image of the future.

Statement 6. A strong shared community vision is possible to articulate.

The *Guide to Community Visioning* states that "by basing their efforts on the facts and trends affecting the community, citizens can create a vision that is realistic and achievable" (Oregon Chapter of the APA 1993)

Statement 7. The more people are involved in creating a vision the more they will accept it and be motivated by it.

In his 1993 article reviewing a number of visioning exercises in the US, Klein stated that, "proponents of visioning believe that plans that resonate with citizens' deepest aspirations and values have the best chance of being implemented." This same belief is expressed in an article in *Plan Canada* describing a project in Halifax, Nova Scotia:

> To ensure the plan is based on a common vision and a set of goals endorsed by all members of the community, the Downtown Halifax Business Commission initiated a two-year planning process that involved hundreds of people... (Manders 1994).

Statement 8. The broader the involvement in creating vision goals the more effective those goals will be in bringing about social harmony and well-being.

In emphasizing the opinion that broad involvement in visionary goal setting was important Castle said that a, "leader-led concept of creating a vision is a recipe for disaster" (1993).

Statement 9. People who might not otherwise be included in planning will be involved in visioning.

When the City of Hamilton, Ontario, undertook a vision exercise they published a series of brochures. In the first of these they declared that, "every citizen's opinion counts and it is critical that the planning department and the politicians hear your ideas and concerns." Similarly in London, Ontario, it was felt that visioning was a way of hearing from people who were not usually involved in planning issues (Micak 1994).

Statement 10. All people are equally capable of creating future images and are equally interested in pursuing and inclined to be motivated by future images.

When the Regional Municipality of Hamilton Wentworth set about to create a community vision it was their intention to at least attempt to include all the people in the jurisdiction (Pearce 1995). In numerous other examples from the case studies for the research the clear understanding in the approach was that potentially everyone and anyone from the community could participate (see Appendix C). The same is true of various examples previously quoted from planning periodical literature (Klein 1993, Greene 1990).

5.3 Critical Analysis of the Ideas Underlying the Practice of Visioning

The following critical examination of each of the statements with reference where possible to pertinent research, affirms some and points to potential problems and inconsistencies in others.

Statement 1. Visioning is a new technique.

There are, as we have seen, various components to the overall concept of visioning. When the claim is made that it is a new technique, therefore, we might ask which part of it is supposed to be new? Visioning is part strategic planning, part participation and part public motivation. Kaufman and Jacobs took a long look at the strategic planning and participation question and concluded that it was largely a case of "old wine in new bottles" (1987). They found that most of the ideas subsumed under the supposedly innovative approaches such as action orientation, broad and diverse participation, emphasis on understanding the community and considering strengths and weaknesses, were concepts

that had long been a part of good planning education and practice. This is born out when we look back at many of the classic writers on urban subjects such as Catherine Bauer Wurster (1963,1974). She urged people to "create new public images of the desirable metropolitan community." She also proposed the consideration of alternative future scenarios. The public participation program laid out in 1969 for the city of Dallas had virtually all of the same elements as many visioning exercises that were surveyed as part of the present research (*Goals for Dallas).*

The idea of a vision being an inspirational statement is one of the points given by some in arguing its difference from other approaches. But if we look at other competing or much older ideas what do we find? In his 1990 book putting forth mission statements as the most powerful motivators to action in an organization Campbell claimed that a mission is not intellectual but emotional. That is precisely the claim made about visions. Goals, like missions, have a long history. If we go back to 1960 and read the Report of the US President's Commission on National Goals, we find them talking about goals "calculated to bring to fruition the dreams of the men who laid the foundation of this country." Turning to the *Metroplan* produced by Metro Toronto in 1973 we find not dissimilar sentiments when they say that:

> ... a goal is the end result or ultimate accomplishment toward which an effort is directed... not simply a wish [but] suggests effort toward some defined end... goals are an accepted part of the theory and practice of urban and regional planning... [they] help stimulate us to action, they give action purpose and direction and they provide a basis for evaluation of achievement... [and goals are] ... declarations of intent, images of a better future towards which effort is to be directed...

The thing that might be considered innovative about vision based planning as it is practiced today is the notion of beginning a plan with a detailed statement of the desired goals and

outcomes that the plan is intended to foster. This expression of community desires and values has the potential at least to provide decision criteria for future debates. This potentially beneficial use, however, depends completely on the nature of some of the other aspects of the vision plan, notably its clarity and the strength of the position it is given in the plan.

Statement 2. A clear image or vision of the future acts as a beacon to guide actions until that vision is reached.

The *Alice* line about knowing where you're going has a certain common sense ring to it which is ironic to the extent that she was talking to a cat. If one was going for groceries, after all, one would have to know that one needed food and know where to find the store. But is this assertion quite as strong as it appears when applied to a wider framework? Is it necessary to see ahead or to have vision in order to engage in purposeful action? What is the psychological basis for such an assertion? If we turn to the literature on early childhood development (Bertenthal 1996) we find that experimentation has shown that infants of about seven months are already acquiring the ability to track a moving object. This is the beginning of the ability that will, within a few years, allow them to anticipate where a thrown ball will be in a future instant and will enable them to catch it. The ability to anticipate temporal and spatial events will also enable them to get to class on time or meet their boyfriend downtown. One interpretation of this concept is that growing humans become successful across tasks as they develop the capacity to represent future events. So in its simplest and most visual application there is sound evidence that some interaction with future events, at least in the very short term, is a human trait. Both Karniol and Ross (1996) and Baum (1977) talk about the complexities that arise once we get past the simplest aspects of this ability. That will be discussed under Statement 10 below.

A further problem that may arise from the notion of setting a community vision for the future, concerns the subsequent altering of that vision or goal. The statement above uses a navigation metaphor. The vision is seen as a beacon or lighthouse toward which the community wants to steer. The idea is that when you go off course due to immediate pressures or unforeseen exigencies you can get back on the right path by focussing on that destination which is the beacon. There appears, however, to be a good deal of confusion in many municipal plans about whether the vision is constant or malleable. In Welland, Ontario, for example the phrase, "times change, but our vision remains the same," appears in the same paragraph with the words, "we have the flexibility to revise our plan as it is necessary" (City of Welland 1994). Another examples of this confusion is found in the description of the visioning process in Revelstoke, B.C.:

> ...a vision refers to the expression of a utopian goal, end state or willed future. It is a desired, idealized future state of affairs... these visions of the future describe neither the best nor the worst of all possible worlds, but one that is both practical and preferable to the one we had... (Feick 1995)

In these cases, the writers can't quite make up their minds about whether a vision is fixed or moving and whether it is ideal or practical.

Statement 3. If you have a clear vision you will be inexorably drawn towards it.

This assertion is mainly supported by observations that are anecdotal and tautological in nature and therefore somewhat suspect. The anecdotal evidence is contained in many of the promotional style articles on visioning systems. The Institute for Cultural Affairs tells about what it did for Texaco (Spencer c1996). Ziegler recounts a story about the city of Edmonton (1991). Senge talks about the successes of AT&T, Ford and Apple as well as the first century AD uprising against Rome led by the ex-slave Spartacus (1990). As well

there are accounts of successful visioning in planning journals such as APA's *Planning* and *Ontario Planning Journal* (Klein 1993, Micak 1994). In other scholarly journals case studies of auspicious visioning exercises appear. Among these, this researcher's favourite is the account of the Batesville Casket Company in Indiana where vision allowed the employees became more proactive and creative in making coffins (Ferris 1992). Among all of these articles, however, there is only one that is critical (Kiechel 1989) and none that are systematic tests of the principal claims for visioning.

For the most part the accounts of success with visioning, and especially the claim that a vision will act as magnet pulling you toward it, are tautological. That is, you can tell it is a good vision if it works and if it doesn't work then it wasn't a good enough vision. These two preceding points are not condemnation of the practice of visioning. The practice may be useful and many of the claims may be true. The point is that the list of successful applications and the circular argument of efficacy are not in themselves proof or evidence of any effectiveness.

Statement 4. The clearer the picture of the future, the better it will be as a guide.

This point is supported to some extent by research in the area of goals and performance. Psychologists such as Earley, Campbell and Gallatly have conducted studies showing that specific, difficult goals enhance performance in many tasks (1989, 1986, 1992). Locke *et al* found in a review of ten years of psychological research that ninety percent of the studies showed that specific and challenging goals led to better performance than "do your best" type goals (1980). That work was confirmed in Locke and Latham's 1990 book. Investigations carried out by Klein and associates in 1990 showed the relationship between goal specificity and task performance, with specificity operationalized as a continuous quantitative variable reflecting the range of performance levels individuals chose as their

personal goals. In other words the clearer the statement of the goal the more likely will be its attainment.

There are, nevertheless, some potential flaws in this assertion. Earley and his associates hypothesized that the motivating effect of specific goals disappears or reverses for novel tasks that allow multiple alternative strategies (1989). These psychological studies involve individuals but it might be speculated that when a whole community is involved in a goal setting exercise such as visioning then there might be a great deal of latitude for "tasks that allow multiple alternative strategies," and therefore some potential for problems.

In urban planning there have been examples of great urban plans prospering. There have also been instances of the opposite. Most would agree that the Paris plan was successful, while Canada's first master plan for the city of Kitchener is a case of a clear goal not being achieved. At very least it might be said that there are a great many variables to take into account, besides the vision, in judging success in urban planning.

Statement 5. A clear image of the future will inspire and motivate purposeful action.

With regard to the role of visioning in motivating or galvanizing the population it can be noted that there were many great urban plans in the past that had that effect. Certainly Haussmann's Paris, which has already been mentioned, and L'Enfant's Washington are models that cause considerable nostalgia. Howard's Garden City is spoken of regularly by planners as a great influence although it was a template or transferable pattern rather than a site specific plan. In 1993, on its hundredth anniversary, Burnham's Chicago plan was featured in articles and was the subject of exhibitions. The thing about all these plans is that a) they were primarily the work of individuals rather than participative ventures and b) they were very specific spatially oriented plans with street layouts and design guide-lines.

Many of today's vision plans tend to be much more in the line of policy documents lacking any spatial details (see Appendix B). The question arises as to how motivational can a statement be that reads like the following? "Vision for the Economy: Ottawa Carlton's economic base will be strong and diversified" or "The Township of King strives to be a prosperous, vibrant community..."

Statement 6. A strong shared community vision is possible to articulate.

Although this is a strongly held belief in many circles it is questionable in terms of a) weakened clarity of goals or visions arising from the compromises necessary to get consensus and b) in light of the discussion on Statement 10 below.

The literature on vision that emanates from the realms of business management and organizational psychology is almost universally of the opinion that vision is a function of leadership (Andersen 1987, Benis 1985, Barczak 1987, Bass 1990, Burns 1991, Byrd 1987, El-Namaki 1992, Hamel 1989, Kiefer 1983, Nanus 1990, Peters 1982, Senge 1992, Spencer c1996, Wilson 1992). Most of these writers stress the need for leaders to share their vision with employees and to achieve "buy-in" but they virtually never talk about participation in creating the vision. Some of the planning literature also addresses the importance of leadership in providing vision (Wheeland 1993). All of these examples would suggest that a community created vision would be either impossible or ineffective. Those writers and practitioners who argue that a shared community vision is possible generally state their view as an article of faith (Klein 1993, Oregon Chapter of the APA 1993, Appendix E - Interview 6)

Statement 7. The more people are involved in creating a vision the more they will accept it and be motivated by it.

While this is another point that has a common sense appeal, social psychology experiments that have been conducted are not confirming. In her 1988 study Kernan compared task performance in groups who were given goals and groups that participated in setting their own goals. She found that assigned rather than participative goal setting led to higher goal commitment. Locke's ten year review of psychological research showed that other studies had also found that participation in goal setting had a neutral or negative affect on performance (1980).

Statement 8. The broader the involvement in creating vision goals the more effective those goals will be in bringing about social harmony and well-being.

While no specific valid research was found that supported this claim it appears from anecdotal evidence and case studies to be possible in some instances (see Appendix E - Interview 10). Woods (1995) describes an interesting example in an isolated community in the southern United States where genuine planning for the local area was only possible when the indigenous culture was understood.

At the same time there may also be some disconfirming evidence. A headline in the London Free Press from February 11, 1997 reported: "Citizen group plans private studies - Some feel their contribution to Vision 96 was given short shrift." Vision 96 was a participative planning process that ran for three years in the City of London and involved hundreds of people. Strong environmental policies were included in London's Official Plan as a direct result of the citizen input but less than a year after the approval of that plan opposition was stirred by indications that the city was not honouring the plan's provisions.

In Woolwich township a report in the Elmira *Independent*, September 23, 1996, suggested that the Township Council was not taking the community's one year old vision into account in its decision making. Some would argue that the citizen's vigilance in these cases was a result of the people having participated in the visioning and therefore feeling an ownership of the vision statements. That may be the case.

Statement 9. People who might not otherwise be included in planning will be involved in visioning.

There does appear to be some anecdotal evidence that supports this claim. The numbers of people who responded to surveys and questionnaires and attended public visioning forums in such places as Burlington, Hamilton Wentworth, Ottawa Carlton and London, Ontario was higher than previously recorded levels of involvement in planning issues (see Appendix C). The claim of numbers of people involved in Vancouver was even greater (City Profile 1994). At the same time some observers continue to believe that involvement in public discussions on planning is still generally limited to a certain self-selected segment of the population (Appendix E - Interview 9). The final question that arises from this point is that even if more people get involved in planning issues through visioning exercises, will those people continue with their involvement and interest?

Statement 10. All people are equally capable of creating future images and are equally interested in pursuing and inclined to be motivated by future images.

This is perhaps the most problematic of the assertions about visioning. Many people want to believe that it is true and the concept fits the planning ideology favouring advocacy and participation which has enjoyed currency for a number of years (Forester 1982, Nagel 1987, Greene 1990, Young 1995). However, psychological research indicates that a) the

ability to create future images is not universal and b) that not all people are motivated by concepts of future states. That does not deny the democratic principle that all people have an equal right to decide their future. What it does suggest is that not all people think about the future in the same way. To assume that they do, to design programs on that basis and to expect them to participate in the same way may in itself not serve democratic principles.

Baum pointed out as long ago as 1977 that the ability to create future images was a specific skill. Because it is a skill generally possessed by the kinds of people who choose planning as a career those people, as a group, may not be aware that the skill they possess is not universal. Developmental psychology segments, classifies and orders phases of growth and defines what is and is not to be taken as growth (Broughton 1987). Within the study of developmental psychology, what is referred to as "abstract/visual reasoning" is one of the criteria used to measure relative intelligence (Reynolds and Kamphaus 1990). In other words, there is enough variability in abstract/visual reasoning, or the capacity that Baum identified as the ability to create future images, that it can be used, along with other factors, as a delineater of general abilities. That is the case for the Revised Wechsler Intelligence Scale for Children (WISC-R) and in the Woodcock-Johnson test (WJ) which are both used extensively to evaluate learning problems and performance potential in children. Besides the fact that the basic ability to create future images in the imagination varies from person to person Baum reminds us that a) the ability is not developed or honed to the same degree in all individuals even when they possess it at equal levels and b) there are demonstrated gender, age and cultural variations in the ability (1977).

In addition to the visual/abstract reasoning factor the study of psychology also informs us that people's motivation regarding the future is not uniform. Staw (1980) and Karniol and Ross (1996), explain aspects of motivational differences. We can accept that people generally act rationally, in the sense that for them their decisions are based on the best

available information at a given time. For some people, the thoughts or prospects of things that will potentially happen in the future are strong motivators. Those people we could identify as "prospectively rational." Others are more likely to be influenced by their ideas about what has happened in the past. They will act more to avoid past mistakes than to ensure future benefits. These people we could call "retrospectively rational."

When writers like Gabor, Senge and Ziegler (1964, 1990, 1991) talk about inventing the future they are describing actions that can be undertaken by persons who have well developed abilities to create future images in their imaginations and are prospectively rational. When Eden (1990) declares that it is not natural for people to describe their world in idealized terms, he is talking about those who may have future imaging ability but are retrospectively rational. When Benis and Nanus (1985) describe the need for leaders to create a vision and communicate it to those under them, they are assuming that many of the followers neither possess the developed ability to image the future and are not particularly motivated by future prospects. All of these kinds of people with their varied skills and inclinations exist.

This researcher's own field experience confirms this. In a 1995 project undertaken in conjunction with the IBI Group of Toronto, a visioning exercise was conducted on behalf of the Huron Park Natural Area Steering Committee in the Region of Waterloo. The Steering Committee was made up of representatives from the Kitchener City Council, city staff and the Waterloo Public and Separate Boards of Education. The program for the exercise had been clearly articulated in a proposal submitted in response to published terms of reference. The proposal was accepted and the work contracted. One of the clear steps described in the proposed process (number 2 of 5) was "creating images." "In this step participants, on an individual basis, will be encouraged to bring into their conscious minds their picture of the possible futures for the area" (IBI Group in Association with Robert

Shipley 1995). The approach had been developed with reference to the numerous models outlined above. In the actual workshop, however, it was noted that while some people had little difficulty in imagining future states and in expressing them, others found that task extremely difficult. The second group expressed their ideas primarily in terms of addressing immediate concerns or past problems. Where people in the first group said they could picture an area where many different animals could be seen, those in the second group said we should stop the use of pesticides. Both were aiming at encouraging species diversity but one thought in terms of the end state while the other approached it from the perspective of past problems and present policy.

Another type of experience also confirms this fundamental dichotomy in people's concept of the future. In talks to various groups this researcher has asked people to complete the following statement: it is the year 2005 and I... When the written responses are collected and analysed they are generally divided roughly equally between those that complete the statement in the present tense and those who use future tense. Some say, it is the year 2005 and I am a successful consultant, while others write, it is the year 2005 and I will be retired and well off. This simple exercise indicates that some people are comfortable talking about the future from a future perspective while others are more comfortable projecting their hopes for the future from their current perspective.

This same division is reflected in the language of public documents. Where efforts have been made to craft vision statements to include a variety of views it is almost impossible for them to maintain a consistent grammatical tense (see Appendix B). Theoretically a vision statement, since it is intended to be a picture of the future, ought to be in the present tense or even in the past tense as it looks back at how that future state was reached. If it uses the future tense then it could be said more accurately to be a prediction or aspiration rather than a vision. If it uses the current present, then it is clearly a statement about the present

and not the future. If the infinitive is used, for example 'our vision is to be the best town in the country,' then an ongoing value is being expressed rather than a future state. All those ideas may be valid and even useful in motivation, planning and decision making but the question arises as to whether vision is the appropriate terms to apply to them. To a great extent the confusion emerges from the invalid assumption that all people think about the future in the same manner.

The dichotomy in thinking about the future is also reflected in comment on the planning profession. Here there are indications that the problems, which can assume pathological dimensions, are clearly seen but still not understood in theoretical terms. In writing about a new model for development Gertler said: "Canadian planning has been ambiguous, almost schizophrenic, about its role, sometimes aligning with a broad societal vision, at others aspiring only to a technocratic mission" (1995).

In summary, what can be said about the philosophical basis or the program theory that underlies visioning? A number of visioning systems have been proposed. Generally they consist of technique sets and/or step by step approaches. Even proponents admit there is nothing like a firm theoretical basis. Nevertheless, a few theory-like claims are made on behalf of some techniques. At the same time a careful analysis of visioning techniques reveal a number of tacit assumptions that can be expressed as a series of statements or assertions. When the direct theory-like claims and the underlying assumptions about visioning are subjected to some rigorous examination to test their efficacy we find that a few can be seen to have some validity, although this is largely based on anecdotal evidence, while many present serious questions. In the following Chapter, case studies will be examined and interviews with practitioners summarized but that will not throw much light on the subject of visioning's underlying philosophy.

Chapter 6

> Those who have a miraculous vision of the world created in seven days or, in this case, from the Industrial Revolution on, require a total break in order to assert their model.
>
> John Ralston Saul *The Unconscious Civilization, (1995).*

6.0 THE CURRENT PRACTICE OF VISIONING

6.1 Findings from the Survey of Target Municipalities

Observations on the forty-four case studies from some forty municipalities across Ontario are summarised in tables contained in Appendices B and C. The derivation of the categories used to organize these observations was outlined in Chapter 2 concerning methodology.

The selection of the two main divisions, product or characterization of vision statements and process or consideration of the procedures used in visioning, are based on branches of general planning theory, substantive and procedural (Baum 1977, Faludi 1973). With regard to product, the categories of tense or grammar of the statement, visuality or degree of concrete imagery, detail or length of statement, complexity or clarity of statement and innovativeness or novelty of approach, all emerged from a study of the underlying assumptions of vision practice. Similarly the set of process measures including participation or who takes part, timing or when they are involved, change or whether participation affects the process, leadership or the degree of professional facilitation of the

process and monitoring or how visioning is followed up, also grow from the analysis of visioning's program philosophy (see Chapter 5).

What is included here is a summary of the main findings and not an attempt to comment on every aspect of the practice. Where it is appropriate or useful some reference is made to the tables in the Appendices.

6.1.1 Products

The grammar of the vision statements varies greatly. Most vision statements somehow address the future, but how the future is described is difficult for people, especially when a consensus must be reached among people with differing outlooks. The future tense is used most often and the current present or statements about now are also common. In that regard many of the statements could be said not to be visions at all if a vision is taken literally to mean a picture of the future, as seen in the future. Some practitioners, such as the people who worked on the Haldimond-Norfolk vision, reported a clear resistance on the part of many participants to the notion of making speculative statements about future states. Sometimes the tense varies even within given examples, as is the case with Halton Region's Official Plan. In light of the discussion in Section 5.3, Statement 10 above, this can be seen as a result of the unresolved tension between the two main styles of thinking about the future. It becomes virtually impossible for a consensus to be reached in a diverse group about how to express the collective ideas and that tension comes out in the mixed tenses of the statements.

In only a small number of cases, notably Hamilton-Wentworth or Metro Toronto's Waterfront Plan, is the language of the vision clearly and consistently a picture of a future state.

In spite of preambles which often talk about the need for clear images or pictures of a desired future, the majority of the surveyed vision statements have few visual images. It is perhaps not surprising that visions for either smaller and more homogeneous municipalities such as the Township of Wainfleet or visions dealing with more specific mandated areas such as Metro Toronto's waterfront are more rich in visual imagery. It is also the case that where the mandated services of the particular jurisdiction are large and amorphous, as they are in many regional municipalities, it appears more difficult to give them specific visual reference. It is easier to describe a beautiful wildlife park than a trunk sewer or a regional police force. In many cases what the vision statements do express is very general. Many of these statements concentrate more on values such as respect for the environment or on policies such as encouraging business, than they do on images. The statements may be well meaning and even useful as decision guides but the question arises as to whether they can be called visions.

In terms of length the vision statements vary all the way from a single sentence to multiple pages. Some of the writers on business management have stressed the need for corporate missions to be brief (Campbell et all 1990). The notion has been that the guiding mission statement should be something that can be put up on the wall or used like a newspaper banner heading; e.g. all the news fit to print, or to be the best town in the country. Somehow this notion about missions seems to have spilt over into the idea of vision statements. What we find, therefore, are numerous statements that are called visions but are really more like mottos. The one for Milton, Ontario, has only ten words. It is true that some of these short versions are amplified by much longer lists of goals, objectives, values or other kinds of statements. Here again the grammar question reappears. Even where the vision itself is set in the future, the subsidiary points, goals, objectives and so on, lapse into future or conditional tense becoming 'wills' and 'shoulds.'

The main point in this regard is that virtually none of the proponents of comprehensive visioning systems have ever proposed that vision statements be short. If anything the general consensus among those who have written extensively about vision based planning would be that the longer and more detailed the visions are the better they will be in guiding decisions. This was also underlined in the discussion of the psychological evidence concerning goal specificity in Section 5.3, Statement 4.

In spite of the general call by proponents for detailed visions most of the municipal statements surveyed were found not to be elaborate, especially in any visual way. In fact, while most are clearly worded, many could be criticized for being far too general to serve adequately as guides to decision making. For example it would difficult to argue whether a shopping mall would do more to create jobs, where job creation is one part of a vision, or would harm the downtown, whose protection was also in the vision. Very often the vision statements are simply made up of such things as calls to protect the environment, encourage enterprise and promote prosperity. These might be admirable desires but does stating them in such general terms in any way assist the community in achieving them?

In a few cases there is a degree of clarity and detail that might arguably lead to genuine influence in decision making. Hamilton-Wentworth stands out in this regard as do some of the more specifically targeted or focussed projects such as the Markham Centre Plan.

Only a few of the vision statements could be said to be truly innovative. Most of the statements, although called visions, in fact more closely resemble other definable categories of assertion such as a mission (King), values statement (Barrie) or decision criteria (Halton). Many are not significantly different from what were previously called goals statements (Ottawa-Carleton), master plan components (Niagara Parks Commission), or

strategic strengths and weaknesses (Stoney Creek). When we assert that there is little significant difference between the present vision statements and examples of more traditional planning language, what is meant is this; if you simply substitute the word goal for vision, there would be no change in the meaning of the statement.

On the whole, this examination of the forty-four case studies collected reveals that only a limited number of the statements actually meet the standards of genuine visions as outlined in the characterization derived in Chapter 5. As well only a limited number meet the criteria that are stated within the documents themselves. For example, the Township of King vision aspires, to be a "clear, powerful message" but it could be said to be neither.

6.1.2 Process

There is a wide variation in what has been done under the title of visioning even within the research focus of municipal planning in Ontario. There have been elaborate multi-year facilitated exercises and there have been single day workshops. There has been very little in common among these processes besides the name. Some places such as Kingston initiated and followed through with a visioning process without ever actually drafting a vision statement. Metro Toronto produced a vision statement with no formal visioning process whatever.

The majority of the visioning exercises examined have involved the public. Some of these interactions have been massive with multiple meetings, surveys, focus groups, sectoral committees and series of publications (London and Hamilton-Wentworth). Others have been perfunctory (Thorold). By and large, when the public has been involved they have been consulted early in the process (Sault Ste. Marie) but in a certain number of cases public input was only sought after a steering committee or staff technical committee forged

the initial vision statement (Welland). In some instances, such as Mississauga, Vaughan, Burlington, Stoney Creek, Peel and York, the creation of municipal vision statements has been primarily leadership exercise. In some of those cases the public was informed and allowed to comment after the fact but there was no undertaking to involve the public in the visioning process itself. In York the public was asked to submit initial ideas while in Burlington and Stoney Creek a survey of opinions was conducted prior to the creation of the vision. In these cases an approach more typical of business management was adopted.

When the public has been involved there is at least some evidence of specific plan elements that can be directly attributed to that involvement. That is, there are items that can be pointed to that would not have arisen without public input. One example of this occurred in Haldimond-Norfolk where provisions for woodlot management came to light during consultation (Appendix E, Interview 1). In the case of Pickering there was fair consensus that agriculture should be maintained within the study area. However, it was learned that there were in fact only a small handful of actual full-time farmers left operating the neighbourhood. Measures were taken to ensure that the views of that small minority were represented in order to reflect their relative importance (Appendix E, Interview 8).

In most case studies political leaders and municipal staff have been principally involved in the visioning process. Quite often citizen steering committees or task forces are appointed from among leading members of the community. In some places professional facilitators were hired but those municipalities were in the minority. One factor that became clear from the interviews but was not detectable from reading the documents was that the provincial government had provided funds for many of the visioning exercises. These grants seemed to have ranged from about $20,000 to as much as $100,000. The availability of this money may have induced some municipalities to undertake visioning when they might not otherwise have done so. While consultants worked in many places it

was more often the case that the process was staff led. While the work in a few places such as the Township of Wainfleet relied heavily on the involvement of volunteers, in no case was it found that the visioning process was initiated by citizens.

Formal follow-up or monitoring of the implementation of visions was only undertaken in a comprehensive sense in a few cases. As with a number of other aspects the case of Hamilton-Wentworth stands out. Provision has been made there for an annual public progress review based on a formal state of the environment report. While a number of other monitoring structures and procedures were recommended in different reports they have not generally been instituted.

6.1.3 Analysis of Potential Effectiveness of Municipal Visions

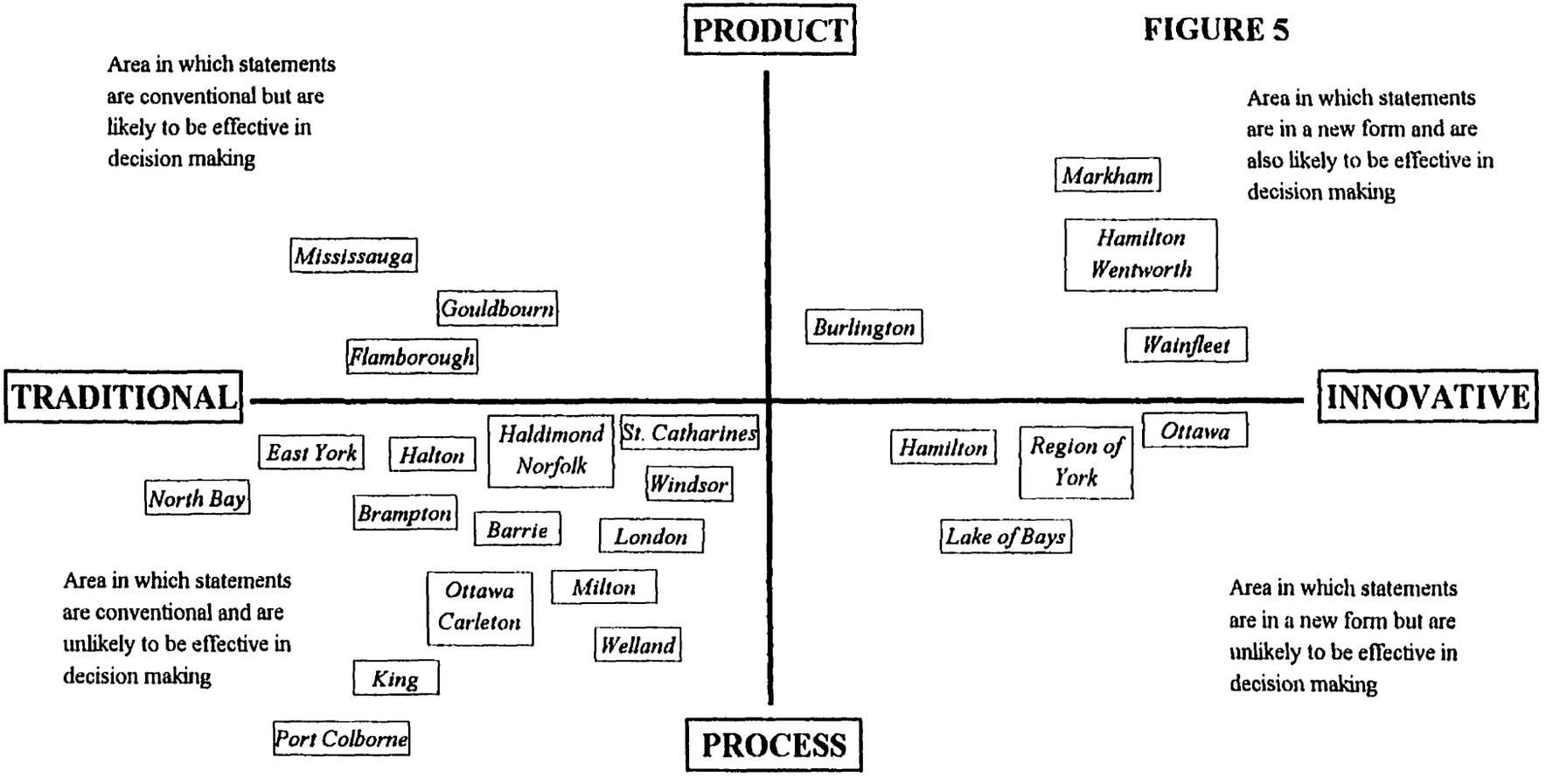
While none of the case studies have had vision based plans in effect long enough to properly evaluate their ultimate effectiveness, it is possible to develop a set of criteria that might predict their potential effectiveness in affecting planning decisions. Six such criteria are articulated here. One concerns leadership or the degree to which individuals with significant influence can be seen to champion the vision. The second is community buy-in or degree of demonstrated support. Three and four represent clarity or the ease with which the vision can be understood and detail or the amount of specific information included in the vision. Five is the provision of follow-up or monitoring and six is a measure of the likelihood of the vision to affect decisions. The last point is a combination of the other influences.

THE USE OF VISIONING IN URBAN PLANNING - PH.D. Thesis Research

Robert Shipley - University of Waterloo School of Urban and Regional Planning

ANALYSIS OF THE RELATIVE POSITIONS OF SELECTED MUNICIPAL VISION STATEMENTS

FIGURE 5



X AXIS →	**TRADITIONAL** - The degree to which the statement of vision resembles planning statements in use before the term vision was widely used. **INNOVATIVE** - The degree to which the vision statement can be said to demonstrate new or different approaches to planning.
Y AXIS →	**PRODUCT** - A measure of the degree of emphasis that is judged to have been placed on the final statement of vision. **PROCESS** - A measure of the degree of emphasis that is judged to have been placed on the process of developing the vision.

These criteria have been used to place selected visions, just over half the survey sample, on a chart (Figure 5). The application of the criteria is impressionistic and is intended to show the researcher's considered opinion of the relative positions of the community vision statements in terms of their estimated potential effectiveness. Figure 5 is laid out with an x axis indicating the continuum between the *traditional* types of planning instruments and the degree to which documents presently being considered are new or *innovative*. The y axis represents the continuum between *product* and *process* in vision. Product is a measure of the emphasis placed on the statement of the visions while process is a measure of the importance of the procedural aspects of visioning. This arrangement presents four quadrants in which the upper left contains those statements that are conventional and are judged to be likely to affect decisions. The lower left quadrant contains those statements that are conventional and unlikely to affect decisions. The lower right is where we have placed statements that are innovative but are judged unlikely to affect decisions while in the upper right hand quadrant are statements that are both innovative and considered likely to affect decisions. According to this chart it can be seen that the majority of what are called vision statements are judged to be neither innovative nor likely to be particularly effective in guiding decisions.

6.2 Findings from Interviews With Key Informants

Twelve key informants were interviewed (Appendix F). The interviewees represented a cross-section of planning practitioners some of whom had worked in both large and small jurisdictions, others who had worked in different parts of the province and beyond and some whose experience had been limited to their own municipality. They were from the public and the private sector and the sample included both men and women. A structured

interview guide was used as an outline for each talk (Appendix D). Summaries of each of these interviews are included in Appendix E.

Most practitioners felt that visioning was undertaken a) to set goals and directions as part of strategic planning, b) to get people thinking differently and creatively and c) to foster common purpose within the community. What is clear from these responses is that on the question of the balance between the visioning process and the vision as a product, the majority felt that the process was somewhat more important. A couple even said that visioning was almost all process (see Interviews 3 and 6). This finding coincides in general with the approaches put forward by proponents of the various visioning systems. There was somewhat more focus on the product among the public sector planners who were involved not only with creating the vision but with the subsequent implementation of the resulting strategic or official plans.

There was a considerable lack of agreement among practitioners about how concrete or abstract visions ought to be. Some said participants had difficulty with concrete thinking (Interview 2) while others said abstract thinking was the problem (Interview 1). Some were adamant that vision should involve literal pictures of the future (Interview 4) while others (Interview 10) felt that more abstract values were the proper content of vision statements. Some thought that visions should be about policies with specific examples of things seen as goals or actions to attain the vision (Interview 6). In that example the vision is of a safe community while well lit streets would be a way of reaching the vision. Senge (1990) and Ziegler (1991) would of course argue the opposite use of the terms.

This disagreement could be explained as a function of the fundamentally different psychological outlooks that were explored in the previous chapter (5.3 Statement 10). Since only some of the population are equipped and inclined to think in terms of future

images, while others approach the future from the point of view of solving present problems, it is hardly surprising that tensions arise from a process that fails to recognize this fact. The second reason for the disagreement lies in the poor definition of the terms. As one respondent expressed it, "the terminology in this field just sucks, big-time..." (Appendix E, Interview 8).

The question comes forward about how aware visioning practitioners are of these psychological factors? Several respondents felt that everyone has the same ability to imagine the future (Interviews 4, 7 and 10). Some others were very aware that this was not the case (Interviews 2, 3 and 5) although this awareness was intuitive and in no way informed by an understanding of the cognitive theory or the psychological research. Some associated the differences in cognitive styles with levels of education which according to psychologists is only partly true. A couple talked about the need to employ different facilitation techniques to solicit responses from different types of people (Interview 3). The terminology used by the practitioner in that case dealt with learning styles which is closest to the theoretical understanding.

There was not a particularly strong sense among practitioners about how visioning differed from other forms of participative planning. What was clear is that the approach was seen as important in getting people excited and interested in planning issues. Most felt that people participated in visioning both as individuals and sometimes as representatives of interest groups. That concept is at odds with Ziegler (1991) and some of the other proponents of visioning systems who feel that people can only legitimately dream about the future on their own behalf.

Most of the public sector planners admitted that a truly shared community vision was difficult or very difficult to obtain and that even when it seemed to have been achieved it

tended to be very general (Interviews 2 and 3). Some of the private sector consultants were more sanguine. They said it was not only possible to get a shared community vision but that it was absolutely necessary (interview 6). This difference may simply reflect which kind of planner has to live with the plan once it is finished and try to make it work and which ones have a shorter term involvement.

Some interviewees were able to point to specific parts of visions that came directly from citizens who might not otherwise have been involved in planning and to parts of plans that might not have been included if only professional planners had been involved. Examples can be found in Interviews 1 and 4. Respondent 8 pointed out that in his experience with ten municipalities, politicians and planning staffs dislike the visioning process because it inevitably results in setting more community goals. One of the best examples of input comes from Interview 9 where a major municipal amalgamation initiative appears to have been significantly affected by a clear message put forward by citizens during the visioning process. The message was a call for politicians to negotiate in good faith and without nastiness and pettiness.

At the same time there was some feeling on the part of practitioners that some of the planning points that arose from public consultation and consensus are not the most robust elements of those plans. The two respondents in Interview 1 felt that while small town character was clearly favoured by the participants in their vision exercise, preventing "big box" stores in strip malls would be very difficult. Another popular feature echoes Nelessen's observation in his book *Visions for a New American Dream* (1994) and Grant's comments in her article "Visions of the Future" (1994). Like Interviewee 4, Nelessen and Grant say that most citizens, when asked to picture a perfect future, describe communities without cars. What people seem to want in the 21st century is a 19th century market town.

While this is clearly a popular vision it seems virtually unattainable given our present auto-dominated economy and municipal structures dominated by road engineers.

When asked where they learned about visioning and where they picked up their techniques, several interviewees chuckled with some amusement and perhaps embarrassment. Virtually all admitted never having learned anything formally about vision. Some said they picked up ideas from now forgotten sources. None of them had read any of the sources on visioning systems that this research had identified before they began to practice the techniques although some had read some of these after they had already done visioning. The one exception was Interviewee 4 who was aware of the work of the Institute for Cultural Affairs. Some drew on business management ideas but as seen from Interview 7 when the sources quoted were checked the information contained in them did not necessarily coincide with the answers concerning practice that were given by the interviewee. Some characterized their practice simply as strategic planning or as participation, to which the term vision had been attached, sometimes at the insistence of the client (Interviews 6 and 7).

The way in which the visioning approach spread is quite interesting in some of these cases. The respondents in interview 1 said that they had adopted the technique from the jurisdiction where interviewee 2 worked. That municipality had in turn adopted visioning techniques from another jurisdiction where interviewee 4 had worked. Interviewee 4 was not aware of this progression and a comparison of his responses to a number of questions with those of the adoptees of his approach shows considerable changes in practice. For example respondent 4 insisted that a shared community vision was possible while the participants in interviews 1 and 2 expressed serious doubts about the possibility of achieving more than the most general consensus.

On the matter of their understanding of the underlying philosophy of visioning, respondents on the whole found it difficult to articulate what the basis was for their approaches. A couple said they were not interested in theory only in results. A couple responded to the question of philosophy by saying, "it should work, shouldn't it?" In a number of cases the interviewees could begin to express a kind of understanding of the program but the researcher had to complete the thought.§ Interviewees would describe their approach of involving a lot of people in thinking about the future they desired. Then they would agree with the statements that when that is done, better planning decisions result or the statement that visions serve as goals. In other words, while few of the interviewees made any of the statements on their own they agreed with many of the kinds of statements outlined in Section 5.2 above.

As with identifying influences the notable exception among the interviewees with regard to describing philosophy was respondent 4. These findings should not be surprising since he was the only academic among the group and therefore more professionally accustomed to thinking about and expressing theoretical ideas. He was able to set out four different concepts about the future and to identify some philosophical influences. The particular source he indicated as the origin of the four concepts of the future could not be located but the ideas coincide with the work of de Jouvenel (1967).

Some of the others had interesting intuitions about what they did and were able to tell stories about how they had developed their approaches (Interviews 9 and 10). In both the latter cases the stories were childhood experiences. While informative, however, the stories could just as easily have been told in answer to other questions. While offered as

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§ *While this would not be considered a proper survey technique in a conventional setting it can be an approach adopted within the* emergent evaluation *methodology. See Section 2.4.3.*

explanations of their philosophy of visioning they might have been explanations of the importance of environmental and social sensitivity and conflict resolution. Perhaps for these interviewees all of those things are intertwined.

In terms of the actual facilitation techniques used, the respondents' methods varied widely but were all fairly standard group enabling approaches.

Many of the visioning practitioners felt that the success of their projects would be judged ultimately by long term outcomes. However, some of the private sector consultants stressed more immediate success factors such as whether participants came back for the second day of a session. Many felt that the visioning approach should fundamentally change the nature of the public debate in a community. They cited such indicators as the number of times the local newspaper referred to the vision or the number of times that councillors brought up points from the vision in debates.

There was a split on the question of formal follow-up procedures. Some practitioners felt that if visioning had been successful there would be no need for formal follow-up because the participants in the visioning exercise would be so motivated that they would automatically monitor future implementation of plans. Others, notably in public sector, thought monitoring was essential. Interviewee 5 explained a particularly active monitoring program that was established in his particular jurisdiction.

Most of the interviewees thought that some form of goal setting was fundamental to planning.

Most of those interviewed indicated that from their experience they had learned that some degree of leadership both within the visioning and the plan implementation process was essential for success. In interview 10 the respondents talked about there being a time for consultants to listen and learn but also a time for them to lead. Two interviewees, 7 and 8, who had never met or worked together, both used the term "champions" to describe players who would be needed in order to implement elements of any vision. A genuine commitment on the part of the real decision makers was also cited by several respondents as vital.

In summary, then, a number of things might be said about the collective responses of the dozen key informants. Their general planning experience is wide and their ethics, professionalism and dedication impeccable. Their responses to the research questions shows a considerable degree of confusion with the terminology used in visioning. Their principal purposes in using the approach seems to be strategic goal setting and the stimulation of public interest in planning. As a group they had little or no particular background in visioning before undertaking projects and they have little or no understanding of the philosophical underpinnings of the practice. They have little conscious awareness of the psychological implications involved although many possess good instincts in addressing the dilemmas that they encounter.

It is now possible to proceed with an evaluation of vision and visioning as planning techniques based on understanding gathered from history, literature and field research.

Chapter 7

... a vision represents the collective values of our community...

City of Hamilton

7.0 EVALUATION OF VISIONING AS A PLANNING TECHNIQUE

7.1 Some Reflections on Vision, Visionaries and Visioning

What emerges from this examination of the meanings of vision terms, a review of their use in planning literature, an exploration of the philosophy behind visioning and a survey of case studies of the ways visioning has been applied, is hopefully a clearer understanding. Over the last ten years the vision family of words have reappeared in planning after a long absence and have gone through various metamorphoses. First of all vision was separated from visionaries and took on a number of different meanings. What we might call strategic vision is a fairly formal goal-like statement about desired futures. These statements can either be literal, a picture of tomorrow, or metaphorical, an idea of desired human conditions. Participatory visioning is the attempt to foster a process involving the population at large in making the decisions that will shape the future. Visionary leadership is the act of inspiring people with a dream of how environments can be improved. With an idea firmly in mind of how and where these ideas developed, it is now possible to address the dual questions of why this situation came about and what are its implications for planning.

There are at least three possible reasons why there was little or no talk of vision during the three decades before the 1980s. First of all the planning documents of the 1950s and 60s

were primarily structural blueprints. They dealt with where booming development would happen, what sort of infrastructure would support it and what detailed rules would govern site design (Thomas 1995). There was little regard for the conceptual dimension of urban development, a fact that has been much lamented since (Duany 1992). There were some clarion calls to address these questions but it took some time for them to be heeded (Bauer Wurster 1964).

Secondly, the planning profession through much of that time was busy trying to establish its technical credentials. Visioning was associated with utopianism, a desire to create a better or even perfect society. That approach to planning was out of fashion (Fishman 1977). Something referred to as technological utopianism found some acceptance but it was primarily the notion that all problems had technical solutions (Segal 1986). Planners wanted to be functional, practical, pragmatic and statistically correct (Hellman 1970).

The third reason why vision was not a concern of planners for many years was the near absence of its context which is long range or strategic planning. In 1984 an article appeared in the journal *Built Environment* with the provocative title: "The Strange Death of Strategic Planning and the Victory of the Know-Nothing School" (Brehny). The opinion both at the time and later was that Reagan and Thatcher neo-conservativism was anti-planning and favoured incremental actions over state direction (Forester 1984, Thomas 1995).

Slowly through the last generation strategic planning has made a come-back. This can be partly attributed to the environmental movement and its call to re-think urban concepts whose negative impacts are increasingly difficult to ignore and partly to re-evaluation within the planning profession itself (Checkoway 1986). Even before the term vision became popular other related ideas were creeping back into the planning vocabulary. In a

1986 it was said of Schumacher, that *"Small is Beautiful* provides a basis for much day-dreaming..." (Cooper). In 1987 a publication called *Hamlets of the Adirondacks: A Manual of Development Strategies* was described as a "wish book" (Henderson) while in 1988 San Antonio, Texas published a plan that was called a "dream" (Cullick).

At first planners moved timidly back towards allowing themselves the speculative freedom that vision implies but by 1995 there were some eager to reclaim the utopian and visionary heritage of not only Lewis Mumford but even Plato and Thomas More (Spain). In 1996 Australian Peter Newman proclaimed that "the organic city movement has a new vision," and placed it in the tradition the biblical prophet Zachariah as well as John Ruskin, William Morris, Ebenezer Howard and Patrick Geddes. We have discussed some of the problems with these claims in Section 3.2.2 above, but certainly their intent was honourable.

7.2 Another Reason Why Vision Is Again Popular in Planning

The vision family of words have another aspect as we find them used in the most recent planning literature. People have mostly forgotten the negative connotation of visionary that was typified in past years by words like "romantic" and "dreamer" and there seems to be genuine nostalgia among many planners for the good old days of visions. David Hall, at the annual conference Britain's Town & Country Planning Association in April 1995, said:

> I believe there is only one person in the last 100 years who has had this sense of vision, combining the physical, social, economic and political dimensions. That person is Sir Ebenezer Howard, whose visionary book, *Tomorrow: A Peaceful Path to Real Reform*, is in many respects still relevant to today's circumstance... What we need is a latter day Ebenezer Howard to produce a new version of *Tomorrow*...

At the same time there is a perceived crisis of leadership in many civic settings that is seen as leaving something of a power vacuum. Writing in the 1995 APA Annual Report that organization's president echoed David Hall in Britain in his call for vision. Richard Codd said in part:

> I have been impressed by the potential of the planning community to provide vision and hope for the future. Such vision is particularly needed at a time when the nation's political leadership seems unwilling to address the problems that face us all.

This temptation for planners to occupy vacant leadership space is not particularly new. In his memoirs a former Cleveland, Ohio, planning director said that when he took over the job in the 1970s there were "no goals, no political direction" and that things were "open to the planner's interpretation" (Krumholz 1995). In 1994 an article in the *Journal of the American Planning Association* appeared with the title: "If Planning Includes Too Much, Maybe It Should Include More" (Lucy). "Other professions are ill prepared by their conceptual foundations for leadership," the author said. Many planners seem to have embraced this ill-defined concept of vision as a path to acquiring increased power. We might question the legitimacy of that inclination.

7.3 Cautionary Notes on the Use of Visioning in Planning

To paraphrase the eminent Dr. Johnson... visioning has elements that are both good and original... the trouble is the good parts are not original and the original parts are not that good. To sort this out there are a number of cautionary points about the use of vision and visioning that grow from this analysis.

7.3.1 Confusing Meanings

First is the question of the literal versus the metaphorical meaning of vision. The sense in which vision is strictly visual is clear enough. The visionaries of the past drew plans that showed where the boulevards, great public squares and civic buildings would be. People in a community today might agree that they want a distinct urban boundary. That means the city stops and farmland begins. They all know what it looks like and they can tell whether they have it or not.

Increasingly, however, so-called municipal visions are not at all clear. We have seen that Sydney, Australia, says it wants to be "a dynamic, sustainable and diverse community..." (Newman, J. 1993) Vancouver, British Columbia, wants to be "... the first urban region in the world to combine in one place the things to which humanity aspires on a global basis..." (City Profile 1994). The overall vision for Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, includes on-going public consultation, a strong and diverse economic base, housing stock that meets the need and a city that is efficient to operate and maintain... (Grauer 1996). In Williamstown, Massachusetts, the vision statement includes things like "performance based housing controls and inclusionary rules for housing development" (Klein 1993). In England one writer talks about "a vision for the UK achievable with only limited constitutional reform" (Warren Evans 1996). These may all be admirable aspirations but are they visions, even a metaphorical sense? Are they things that can ever be seen and could people ever agree on whether they had been achieved?

7.3.2 A Better Use of Words

It could be argued that people are free to use words in whatever way they want. It could be said that in the competitive world of consulting, where many planners vie for contracts

and need to differentiate their products, that they should be allowed to put different spins on the words they use to advertise. It might be held that to try to define such emotive words as those associated with visioning is simply impossible. It might also be argued that as planning researchers we have some obligation to clarify terms and concepts in ways that directly assist practicing members of the profession.

In pursuit of the latter responsibility it is our intent to offer some ideas on the more precise uses of terms involved in strategic planning. The vision terms have a chachet because of the association with the great urban plans of the past and with the inspirational figures of planning history. In too many cases they are simply being appropriated in suspicious ways. Much of what is called visioning could be better, less misleadingly and more accurately described using other words. For example if what you are doing is goal setting, then why not call it that? If you are identifying values or decision criteria then say so? If you agree or disagree with someone else's proposal then express that and don't call them visionary while holding your mouth one way if you mean it positively and scowling if you mean it negatively. If you are framing policies or ways of acting then why not call them that instead of calling them visions? Using more precise language and defining terms can only improve the clarity of discussion. The array of meanings outlined in Chapter 4 should assist in this clarification.

Probably the most appropriate application of the vision terms is their most literal meanings. We would do well to reserve vision for discussion of the visual, the pictures, the images of the future. Visions in this regard would mean things that could be expressed spatially and dimensionally such as maps, diagrams, verbal descriptions of landscapes, objects and even the feelings or moods that would be experienced in these places. It is not really adequate to say we want cities to be safe, the environment to be clean or the economy to be strong.

Senge would say those are purposes, values and goals. The vision needs to be detailed and in Ziegler's words, embedded in the psyche (1991).

In this regard the work of people like Nelessen (1994), King (McDowell 1988) and Southworth (1985) would represent the models because they deal almost exclusively with visual images. Because, as we have discussed, not all people can equally well imagine future states in their mind's eye, the process of visualization as discussed by people such as Friedhoff and Benson (1989), Levy (1995) and Jamieson (1995) becomes important. As Hall put it "planners and environmentalists will need to help the public at large visualize and articulate what they want our cities, towns and villages to be like" (1990). The great and exciting advantage of computers is the access to manipulable images that they can potentially provide. Friedhoff and Benson say that that will not only make such images available to those who can't generate them in their own imaginations but will free and facilitate the imaginations of those who can generate internal images.

7.3.3 Being Clear About Participation

Speaking at a session of the 1995 joint APA/CIP Conference in Toronto, Dublin, Ohio, Planner Vince Papsidero said that "visioning is what we call participative planning in the 1990s." The third caution addresses this confusing of visioning with participation. There can be participative planning without necessarily creating a shared vision. There can also be strong clear planning visions that are individually created and even authoritarian. That was certainly the case with Haussman in Paris, Robert Moses in New York, McQuestin's in Niagara and many many more. Visioning can be an aspect in citizen involvement but the two are not synonymous.

This confusion is surprising when we consider the fact that when planners embraced the idea of visioning as a motivator and catalyst for action, they seem to have borrowed most of the visioning techniques from business management literature (Simpson 1990, Nanus 1990, Byrd 1987). The management thinkers have almost always talked about vision as a function of leadership and as a tool to increase productivity and competitiveness. The question must be asked whether these approaches are transferable to a community setting where the goals are potentially much more diverse than profitability.

There is also a contradiction between the notion of planner as visionary leader and the idea of citizens creating their own futures through participating in the visioning process. Gertler says that it is the calling of the planner, particularly in these uncertain and turbulent times, to hold out a vision of what our cities could and should be (1996). Other leaders in the planning profession say that "to accomplish this vision, we must never lose sight of who we serve" (Codd 1996) and "planners need to revive their enthusiasm for helping the public and the politicians to see what is possible and what needs doing" (Hall 1995). But once planners have decided that they are the ones who know best, they may be on dangerous ground. "Other professions," Lucy says, "are ill prepared by their conceptual foundations for leadership."

Planners may become frustrated by politicians and the slow political process but electoral order and representative government are somewhat more fundamental to democracy than visioning. Perhaps there are some visionary planners who want to direct society. If so then they ought to seek election. Having a good vision is not the only qualification for leadership. In a democracy those who are elected should lead and those who lead should be answerable to the people.

7.3.4 Understanding Planning Fundamentals

It is clear that the best parts of what is being done under the rubric visioning are not new ideas but are long established elements of good strategic planning, consultation and urban design. Although the craze for visioning may pass - even in 1989 Kiechel referred to the "faddish interest in the subject" - the fundamentals involved are central to planning. Perhaps more effort should be spent, without apology, on strengthening and more clearly defining planning theory as it relates to how the future is perceived, who leads the way in decision making and how do fairly clear public desires get translated into actual urban form. Is it possible, for example, for people who want to preserve the rural character of their municipality to say "no" to big box stores? Is it possible for people who want pedestrian friendly neighbourhoods to say "no" to endless cycles of road building?

7.3.5 Appreciating Human Psychology

Although most of what has been done under the title of visioning has been done with good intentions, the lack of understanding on the part of practitioners of the underlying psychological principles has seriously weakened the effort. More research, education and interdisciplinary discussion needs to proceed in order to rectify this situation.

There is a certain resistance on the part of some visioning proponents to accepting the facts in this matter. Because not all people respond to ideas about the future in the same way, and because some people have more of the requisite cognitive skills to engage in future imaging, it does not follow that the process is elitist or undemocratic. All citizens have the right to be involved in decisions about the future but not all of them can have the same roles and responsibilities any more than they would in relation to medicine or law. The challenge for planners is to devise the appropriate facilitation and mediation techniques and

the most effective processes to accomplish genuine community strategic planning. That is exactly what many of them have been attempting to do and it is lack of good research information that has prevented them from being successful and not their lack of dedication.

One of the things that has been encouraging about some of the visioning exercises that have been undertaken is the enthusiasm they have engendered among members of the public who were not otherwise involved in planning. That is not something that the professionals involved want to lose. If the process is not effective in the long run, however, and there are already signs of that in some of the surveyed municipalities, then there will potentially be a backlash. What has been gained in creating enthusiasm for a supposed new approach to planning may be lost in promotional fatigue and lack of demonstrable results.

7.4 Principles for the Use of Vision in Planning

Lessons gleaned from examining the use of vision in planning and from exploring the origin af the concept, can perhaps be summarized best as a set of principles. It is proposed that these points be six in number:

Principle 1

The concept of *vision* is most useful when it is taken in its literal sense; that is, pictures of possible future states. In Chapter 6 it was seen that communities that have specific visual representations of what they plan to encourage in future physical form are judged to be most likely to succeed in achieving their desires.

Principle 2

Thinking about the future is essential for good planning but not everyone goes about it in the same way. In Chapter 5 it was shown that not all people have the capacity or inclination to create *visions* of the future. Knowing and appreciating that fact is vital for planners.

Principle 3

Vision is a word rich in various meanings. In Chapter 4 a wide range of these concepts and nuances were explored. Understanding the differences in meaning is important for anyone who engages in discussion concerning planning. For clarity it is often preferable to use words other than vision, which have meanings more suited to the specific intent.

Principle 4

Public participation is arguably an important aspect of modern planning but it should not be thought of as synonymous with *visioning*. In Chapter 4 the particular range of meanings that encompass participation were outlined while in Chapter 3 it was pointed out that there can be vision without participation and participation without vision. The attempt to excite and inspire people about the future of their community is admirable but should not be confined to a single technique or approach.

Principle 5

In a modern or post modern pluralistic society, a genuine shared *vision* for an entire political jurisdiction may not be achievable. In Chapter 6 it was demonstrated that it is certainly not possible in every community. More specific applications, either spatially or organisationally limited may be the best scenarios for using the concept of *vision*.

Principle 6

The fundamentals of good planning transcend passing styles. Those aspects that are the best and most useful elements in the *vision* trend have always been part of effective strategic planning.

Chapter 8

> When I talk about the need to make nonsense of official language, I am referring to what can happen when a whole approach to language is discredited. One small example: it would be a major accomplishment if we were able to focus on the tendency of those, who make the arguments for corporatism, to also praise the rural idyll - *Italia Rurale*, as Mussolini put it. Or small-town America. Or common-sense conservatism. Always behind these simplistic utopias is a sense of moral cleanliness, deep roots, local belonging, clarity of shared vision; all things which the proposers of these utopias are removing with their other hand through corporatism.
>
> John Ralston Saul *The Unconscious Civilization, (1995).*

8.0 GUIDELINES FOR THE USE OF VISION IN PLANNING

Planners, politicians, the media and the public increasingly are heard to call for vision and visionaries. So called visioning processes have been and continue to be injected into planning practice. The use of the vision family of terms in planning has increased so rapidly that they risk being relegated to the status of meaningless jargon.

For these reasons it was the primary goal of the present research to offer some useful information and advice to practicing planners to help them determine whether it is worthwhile to attempt to create a vision as part of their strategic planning and, if they decide to do so, what are the best ways to proceed. The secondary goal was to attempt to gather some base line information for evaluating the long term outcomes of planning that is "vision based" or has a "vision" component and to considered what sorts of methodologies might exist for undertaking such an evaluation.

Perhaps we can begin with the second goal. Talen points out, that monitoring should be central in planning theory and practice:

> If plans are meant to be devices for fostering communication and if adherence to plans is irrelevant then the way plans are developed must be revised. If, on the other hand, plans are formulated with the intent of being implemented, then an evaluation mechanism should be part of the planning document and their delivery must be clearly defined (1996)

As we have seen, much of what has been done under the name of visioning is of very questionable value since it is too vague and general to be of any real use in guiding decisions. Still, Talen's suggested methods for evaluating planning results could be usefully applied to visioning exercises and there are also other approaches. In her master's thesis for the Faculty of Environmental Design, University of Calgary, Feick laid out a very comprehensive and valuable methodology for evaluating vision based planning.

The material collected in this research does provide an information context that may be useful to other investigators in the form of a base-line for the ongoing monitoring of plans containing vision statements. However, it should be realized that there are a number of difficulties that will constrain monitoring. Some of the municipalities represented in the case studies will disappear in their present form due to government restructuring. At the same time, the term visioning appears to be less commonly used in recent practice. This means that even though there are some valuable elements in the vision statements, many planners will choose in the future not to refer to their plans using the word vision. Nevertheless, it will be possible in some cases to track the effects that creating a vision will have had on strategic plans.

With regard to the primary goal, that of advising planners on the use of vision in practice, a few general points can be made and a set of guidelines offered. It is this researcher's

opinion that the efforts surrounding visioning, while not by any means a panacea, have had some positive impact on planning. Focussing on the setting of goals is definitely a valuable exercise that has perhaps been rediscovered. Looking for ways to accommodate diverse opinions in a pluralistic society is another important aspect that has been strong in the pursuit of vision statements. But what is perhaps the most significant factor that has emerged from this study is the realization that planners understand little about the different ways that people think about the future. It is in this area of fundamental applied psychological research that future efforts will be most rewarded.

In the matter of potential visioning guidelines it is important to take into account the many pitfalls related to vision that have been identified in this study while attempting to benefit from the good points that have been developed. The ideas that follow grow in part directly from the literature and the field research. They are also informed by the researcher's own experience and philosophy and are offered in the manner of considered opinion.

After the fashion of contemporary planning literature these guide-lines are offered in a form organized around an anagram. The anagram is the word V.I.S.I.O.N. These six letters are intended to stand for five verbs and an exclamation. The words are Visualize, Individuate, Separate, Inspire, Organize and No! It is suggested that before undertaking the creation of a vision a municipality, or any other group, might be greatly assisted if they carefully consider the six critical points of V.I.S.I.O.N.

Visualize

Vision is about the visible. It is about pictures, images, spatial relationships and things that can be described in a concrete way. This is the literal dictionary meaning of the word. The use of the word vision in a metaphorical way tends to be misleading, confusing and

ultimately ineffective. The great urban visions of the past were pictures, diagrams and/or actual space organizing plans. So if people want a vision, they should be clear about what they are talking about and beware of people who use the word with imprecision.

It is probably best for planners to stay away completely from the term visioning. Vision is a noun that ought to have stayed being a noun and does not work well as a verb. Visioning is a nebulous concept that has been completely corrupted not by malice but by too much good intent. Many people have taken the word and imbued it in their own minds with all sorts of embellishments that are not necessarily understood in the same ways by others. When this happens to a word it potentially becomes a medium for misunderstanding and disappointment rather than a term that communicates substantive concepts.

If a community wants to do visioning, they shouldn't. They should do planning. Planning is a perfectly good word that has a long and noble tradition. Citizens ought to take back the use of the word; recapture it from its narrow technocratic confinement and liberate it from its bureaucratic prison. Planning is not just about filling out forms and making private deals. Planning doesn't need any faddish and ill-defined techniques to mediate it. Planning is about a community considering its future, making decisions about what it wants, allocating its resources and moving forward. It might be done primarily by trained professionals but it should always involve citizens either directly or through their elected representatives. That is not visioning, that is planning, plain and simple.

Individuate

Each community is different and each person is an individual. That means that no formula will work universally. Having a vision for an organization should be seen neither as a

status symbol nor as an absolute necessity. Involving every person in the same way and in the same exercise is not a reasonable approach.

There are municipalities and other organizations where having a clear vision or picture of the outcomes the group aspires to is very useful. If the agency involved, for example, is responsible for development and building permissions, then design parameters are essential. The question of what the community wants its streets to look like and feel like is central. Would many communities have wanted fringe strip development if they had known what it would look like before it became the standard planning pattern all over North America? If the area where planning decisions are to be made is specifically defined, as in the instance of a park or neighbourhood or transportation corridor, then a visual expression of how it will look in the future will be a very useful decision making tool.

Not all communities, municipalities or jurisdictions, however, will be well served by attempting to articulate a vision. When a jurisdiction is primarily responsible for the delivery of large scale services and when its function is largely procedural rather than concerned with actual urban form, then a visual image of what it does may be too difficult to express or too far removed from the kinds of decisions it has to make. We might visualize a person waiting at a bus stop and being picked up quite quickly. That is a palpable image and relates to an efficient public transit system. Whether designing efficient routes and convenient schedules is dependent on that particular vision is questionable. In some cases a vision may simply be impossible and not useful. A strong and diverse economy is not a vision. Some public agencies or municipalities may have performance goals related to service delivery, policies related to functions and missions describing their purpose but these should be called goals, policies and purposes; perfectly good and much more precise words to describe what they are intended to describe.

Communities are made up of individual citizens. There are grouping of individuals as well but the fundamental unit of society is the person. People have individual interests and groups have collective interests. Those interests are legitimate but the basic undertaking of a community is the achievement of the common good, the best situation for the most people while maintaining a minimum standard. Individual and group interests should always be secondary to the common good. This presents a dilemma since dreaming of the future is something that only an individual can do and not all people can do it to the same extent and with the same skill.

How then do we reconcile the common good, individual and group interests and the highly variable ability among people to create future images? While all people have the same civic rights all people are not the same. Some people have well developed abilities to imagine future scenes and events and are motivated to action by these images while others see things primarily from the present perspective and are motivated largely by their understanding of the past. In this case, those who have the ability to create visions of the future, should. Those who do not have that ability, or perhaps it would be better to say, those who have other abilities, need to find other ways to be involved in public as well as private decision making.

There are a few specific ways that this can be done. First of all those capable of future imaging should share their images as effectively as possible. As Bob Dylan sang, "you let me be in your dream and I'll let you be in mine." That might be accomplished through visual preference analysis, computer image generation or numerous visualization methods. Other people should demand this sharing, not from a position of weakness or inferiority but from the stand-point of fairness and the belief that they have a genuine contribution to make to the process. This might take place in a public consultation context or it might be within some more select decision making forum.

Part of that requirement for disclosure of future images might be a demand that covert visions be exposed. A developer may have an image of herself or himself in the future sitting on a beach in a sunny country having made lots of money by building ugly structures back home. The people back home who have to live with that ugliness may decide not to share the developer's vision of the future.

Finally on this point there is the question of sharing an image or set of images about the future. While those images are individual by their nature and not readily conjured by all, they can, if clearly expressed, be shared. People can adopt other's visions and they can modify their own to take advantage of good offerings. Individuals can agree to pursue a certain picture of the future but it is always an individual decision. What should not and cannot in fact be done is to have a future image by compromise, committee or decree. That is not a shared vision.

Separate

It is vital to separate the meanings of the words that are used to talk about planning. Words are important not in and of themselves but because they express substantive concepts, emotions and because they inform action. We have already suggested that vision ought to be taken to mean visual and concrete images. Other words that are useful in the context of community strategic planning are of course "community'" "strategic" and "planning." They can be joined by goals, purpose, values, policy and others. We will not undertake to define these words here. There is no single correct meaning for each of them. What is important is for the people involved in any particular planning exercise to agree on these definitions among themselves. They need to attempt that as they begin a planning exercise, and they need to revisit their glossary of terms as they proceed. They should write these definitions

down and share them widely and they should challenge, question and correct each other in public and private conversation as they work. When any person involved in planning complains that others are just arguing about semantics, that is the mere meaning of words, that person ought to be viewed with great suspicion since that line of argument often preceds efforts to subvert the substance of the process.

The second aspect of separation is to understand that there is a difference between the vision as a product and the process of developing the vision. The product can consist of verbal statements, maps, drawing, diagrams, computer images and other concrete expressions. The process is made up of information gathering, discussion, debate and other procedural matters. The term vision is best reserved for the product while the elements of the process can be called by their appropriate titles.

The final matter of separation concerns a temporal understanding or a separation of the past, present and future. This is not as simple matter as it may seem because, as we have emphasized, different people have very different conscious and unconscious attitudes about time. People are also motivated quite differently by these perceptions. Back in the 1960s when Gabor first wrote about 'inventing the future,' he may have almost inadvertently captured one of the essentials about an understanding of time and how to approach it in a planning context. What Gabor said was this:

> The first step of the technological or social inventor is to visualize by an act of imagination a thing or a state of things which does not yet exist and which to him appears in some way desirable. He can then start rationally arguing backwards from the invention and forward from the means at his disposal until a way is found from one to the other. (1964)

In the first part of the passage the writer expresses the core notion about vision as a determiner of the future. But in the second part he recognizes that not only that the future

is separated from the present but also that people have at least two separate ways of approaching the future. Some can see it and guide their actions as if looking back from that vantage point while others work 'forward from the means at their disposal.' There is no easy way to reconcile these different approaches but a recognition of the conditions is a necessary first step.

Inspire

Great visions can indeed be inspiring. That is why the word vision keeps returning to our lexicon in spite of recurring efforts by pessimists to debunk it. People probably have some sort of latent desire to be inspired. So that is why, if someone has an inspiration and it can be put into visual form and become a vision, then we ought to recognize it and allow ourselves to be inspired. It is alright to give ourselves this permission. An increasingly cynical world can only be changed by making room for inspiration. Scepticism, on the other hand, is useful. Anyone offering a vision ought to be challenged and questioned and required to justify their view but at our core we ought to be looking for such people.

While it is important to be prepared to follow a good lead it is also important to be ready to offer inspiration that you may feel strongly about. The significant factor here is separating truly inspired vision from actions motivated by self interest. That is why clearly articulating visions and allowing them to be subjected to scrutiny is important.

The final point about inspiration is that it cannot be bought cheaply. A community may want to experience the lift of coming together and feeling the excitement of common purpose, team building and conflict resolution. But if this is attempted without the solid and exacting work required to bring lasting results, the thrill of the moment may be followed by the discouragement that comes from the lack of real results. Many

communities examined in this study experienced this rise in expectation as a result of so-called visioning, only to face the disillusion of failure that followed.

Organize

Developing a vision that can be genuinely useful in municipal planning, or any other organizational context, is not easy. All of the thinkers and writers who have considered the process carefully conclude that it is time consuming, requires real dedication and demands follow through. If a community or organization thinks they can develop a vision at a couple of workshops they should probably adopt some other approach. If people become enthusiastic and dedicated to a good vision, whatever its origins, that excitement is only a preliminary step. All of the tough and time consuming elements of old fashion planning still have to be dealt with.

In this regard it becomes essential to organize the process carefully. For this task it is important to understand not just some of the innovative and motivating techniques that might be on offer at the time from dynamic consultants, but to know what the fundamentals of good planning are and to be prepared to undertake them.

In organizing for effective community planning in which vision will be an element it is important to recognize the rights, roles and responsibilities involved. While everyone has a right to be involved not everyone has the same talents and skills. For that reason people need to be comfortable about playing their appropriate role. Professional planners have their place as do all the other members of the community. Planners must be very clear that they are not the leaders of the community but its servants. In terms of responsibility there will also be a differential. Elected representatives have a special place. While they may genuinely want to involve a wide spectrum of the public they must accept ultimate

responsibility for community decisions. So-called visioning has too often been used by politicians to deflect negative comment on their decisions or as an excuse to abdicate their rightful decision making role. Citizens who have only limited time to be involved need to find the most effective and appropriate way to participate. Ultimately their responsibility is to vote in or out the best people to represent them.

NO!

The last and most important letter in our anagram stands for the word No. Citizens, planners, politicians and the whole of a community have to be able to clearly and loudly say this word. There is little point in having a vision of the future, however derived, if we are not prepared to support the things that will bring that vision about and say a cold hard no to things that will compromise that vision. Saying no will always mean hurting someone's interest. Never saying no inevitably damages everyone's interests and more importantly hurting the common good.

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Appendix A

Surveyed Municipalities Where Visioning Has Been Undertaken

Municipalities Contacted Seeking Information Concerning Visioning Used in Strategic Planning

Municipality	Contact Person	Phone	Address		
Ajax	Ms. Gwen Manderson	(905) 685-4550	65 Harwood Ave S	Ajax	L1S 2H9
Aurora*	Sue Siebert	(905) 727-1375	Box 1000, 100 John Way	Aurora	L4G 6J1
Barrie, City	Mr. Jim Taylor	(705) 726-4242	Box 400, 70 Collier St.	Barrie	L4M 4T5
Brampton	John Marshall	(905) 874-2113	2 Wellington St. W	Brampton	L6Y 4R2
Brantford, City*	Matthew Reniers	(519)759-4150	City Hall, 100 Wellington Sq.	Brantford	N3T 2M3
Burlington	Allen Ramsay	(905) 335-7777	Box 5013, 426 Brant St.	Burlington	L7R 3Z6
Cambridge	Cathy Connelly	(519) 740-4615	Box 669, 73 Water St. N	Cambridge	N1R 5W8
Dundas	Mr. Lou Spital	(905) 628-6327	Box 8584, 60 Main St	Dundas	L9H 5E7
Durham Region	Kai Yew	(905) 668-7711	Box 623, 605 Rossland Rd E	Whitby	L1N 6A3
East York	Dave Oikawa	(416) 778-2049	850 Coxwell Ave	East York	M4C 5R1
Flamborough	Brian Smith	(905) 689-7351	Box 50, 163 Dundas St. E.	Waterdown	L0R 2H0
Fort Erie*	Joe Mrozak	(905) 871-1600	200 Jarvis St	Fort Erie	L2A 2S6
Gouldbourn	Debra Belfie	(613) 836-4864	Box 189, 2135 Huntley Rd.	Stittsville	K2S 1A3
Guelph, City*	Paul Kraeling	(519) 822-1260	City Hall, 59 Carden St.	Guelph	N1H 3A1
Haldimand-Norfolk Region	Mary Elder	(519) 587-4911	70 Town Centre Dr.	Townsend	N0A 1S0
Halton Hills*	Karen Pianosi	(905) 873-2600	Box 128, 1 Halton Hills Dr.	Georgetown	L7G 5G2
Halton Region	Mr. Ho Wong	(905) 825-6000	1151 Bronte Rd.	Oakville	L6M 3L1
Hamilton	Joane Hickey-Evans	(905) 546-2700	City Hall, 71 Main St.	Hamilton	L8N 3T4
Hamilton-Wentworth Region	Mark Bekkering	(905) 546-2195	Box 910, 119 King St. W.	Hamilton	L8N 3V9
King	Steven Kitchen	(905) 833-5321	Township of King Offices	King City	L7B 1A1
Kingston, City	Mr. Jim De Hoop	(613) 546-4291	City Hall, 216 Ontario St	Kingston	K7L 2Z3
Lake of Bays Township	Mr. Tom Pinckard		3 Dwight Bay Rd.	Dwight	P0A 1H0
Lincoln*	Carl Held	(905) 563-8205	4800 South Service Rd	Beamsville	L0R 1B1
London, City	Brian Turcotte	(519) 661-4651	Box 5035, City Hall, 300 Dufferin Ave	London	N6A 4L9
Markham	Meg West	(519) 477-7000	101 Town Centre Blvd.	Markham	L3R 9W3
Milton	Mel Iovio	(905) 878-7211	Box 1005, Victoria Park Square	Milton	L9T 4B6
Mississauga	John Calvert	(905) 896-5000	Civic Centre, 300 City Centre Dr	Mississauga	L5B 3C1
Muskoka District	Mr. Jim Green	(705) 645-2231	10 Pine St.	Bracebridge	P1L 1N3
Niagara Falls*	Doug Darbyson	(905) 356-7521	Box 1023, 4310 Queen St	Niagara Falls	L2E 6X5
Niagara Region	George Nicholson	(905) 685-1571	Box 1042, 2201 St. David's Rd	Thorold	L2V 4T7
Niagara-on-the-Lake*	John Perry	(905) 468-3266			
North Bay, City	Mr. Jeff Celentano	(705) 474-0400	200 McIntyre St. E	North Bay	P1B 8H8
Oakville*	Ted Salisbury	(905) 854-6601	Box 310, 1225 Trafalgar Rd.	Oakville	L6J 5A6
Ottawa, City	Ted Robinson	(613) 564-1414	111 Sussex Dr.	Ottawa	K1N 5A1

Municipality	Contact Person	Phone	Address		
Ottawa-Carleton Region	Ms Sue Sams	(613) 560-6058	Cartier Sguare, 111 Lisgar St	Ottawa	K2P 2L7
Peel Region	Ms. Katherine Bladen	(905) 791-9400	10 Peel Centre Dr.	Brampton	L6T 4B9
Pelham*	Jack Bernardi	(905) 892-2607	Box 400, 20 Pelham Town Sq	Pelham	L0S 1E0
Peterborough, City*	Mr. Malcolm Hunt	(705) 742-7771	500 George St. N	Peterborough	K9H 3R9
Pickering	Ms. Catherine Rose	(905) 420-2222	One The Esplanade	Pickering	L1V 6K7
Port Colborne	Charles Miller	(905) 835-2900	239 King St.	Port Colborne	L3K 4G8
Richmond Hill*	Janet Babcock	(905) 771-8800	Box 300, 225 East Beaver Creek Rd.	Richmond Hill	L4C 4Y5
Sarnia, City *	Albert Flintman	(519)332-0330	Box 3018, 255 North Christina St.	Sarnia	N7T 7N2
Sault Ste. Marie, City	Mr Joe Sniezek	(705) 759-5371	Box 580, 99 Foster Dr.	Sault Ste. Marie	P6A 5N1
St. Catharines	John Rody	(905) 688-5600	Box 3012,, 50 Church St	St. Catharines	L2R 7C2
Stoney Creek	Paul Smithson	(905) 643-1261	Box 9940, 777Hwy 8	Stoney Creek	L8G 4N9
Sudbury Region	Mr. Tin-Chee Wu	(705) 674-4455	Box 3700, Stn A, 200 Brady St.	Sudbury	P3A 5W5
Thorold	Adele Filson	(905) 227-6613			
Thunder Bay, City*	Mr. Mark Smith	(807) 625-2833	500 Donald St E	Thunder Bay	P7E 5V3
Toronto, City	John Gladki	(416) 392-7186	100 Queen St W	Toronto	M5H 2N2
Toronto, Metro	Ms. Lynne Morrow	(416) 392-8776	55 John St., Station 1071	Toronto	M5V 3C6
Vaughan	John Stevens	(905)832-2281	2141 Major Mackenzie Dr.	Vaughan	L6A 1T1
Wainfleet	Michael Higgins	(905) 899-3463	Box 40 19M43 Hwy 3	Wainfleet	L0S 1V0
Waterloo Region	Ms. Lucille Bish	(519) 575-4499	150 Frederick St.	Kitchener	N2G 4J3
Welland	Vic Kerchel	(905) 735-1700	411 East Main St.	Welland	L3B 3K4
West Carleton*	Tim Chadder	(613) 832-5644	5670 Carp Rd.	Kinburn	K0A 2H0
Windsor, City	Bob Hayes	(519) 255-6500	Box 1607, 350 City Hall Square	Windsor	N9A 6S1
York Region	Mr. John Waller	(905) 895-1231	Box 147, 17250 Yonge St.	Newmarket	L3Y 6Z1

* municipalities that did not respond or had not done visioning exercises

Appendix B

Summary of Characteristics of Municipal Vision Statements

THE USE OF VISIONING IN URBAN PLANNING - PH.D. Thesis Research

Robert Shipley - University of Waterloo School of Urban and Regional Planning

SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS OF MUNICIPAL VISION STATEMENTS — Page DEFINITIONS

Place	*Tense*	*Visuality*	*Detail*	*Complexity/Clarity*	*Innovativeness*	*General Comments*
The agency or municipality, The planning exercise in which visioning was used and The date or approximate date of the exercise.	Whether the vision statement was articulated in future, present or past tense What, if any, is the particular date or time period to which the statement refers.	The extent to which the vision statement is literally visual; that is referring to objects, landscapes or other tangibles. The extent to which it is a word picture.	Comment on the length and specificity of the vision statement.	Comments on the questions of whether the statement contains more than generalities Whether it might be understandable to a broad range of people.	Is the statement different from the kinds of standard expressions of planning goals and objectives that were used before the term visioning became popular.	Useful observations not covered under the other headings.

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SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS OF MUNICIPAL VISION STATEMENTS

Place	*Tense*	*Visuality*	*Detail*	*Complexity/Clarity*	*Innovativeness*	*General Comments*
Ajax Somerset Cove Neighbourhood 1995						- a process was initiated in Feb. '95 to create a vision for a particular neighbourhood but as of Jan '97 the statement not received
Barrie Strategic Plan 1994	- present but with no projected date	- no images or word pictures expressed	- four policy areas mentioned but only one line each	- words such as promotion, encouragement, cultivation and stewardship used	- not significantly different from traditional goals type statements	- statement of values
Brampton Internal Strategic Plan for Planning Department 1996	- current present - ongoing with no future date	- no images	- short densely worded outline of working approach to planning admin.	- general phrases such as working cooperatively, respect flexibility - some words are current codes such as "clients"	- statement conforms to the type commonly called a mission	- statement sets out some values and procedural guidelines such as providing professional service
Burlington Official Plan 1992	- generally future with part in current present - 20 year horizon	- strong visual references describing neighbourhoods, transport, work places and parks	- 7 paragraphs with quite specific references	- housing, work areas, transport and parks mentioned in some detail as to how they will look, operate and how they will feel - straightforward and easy to understand	- somewhat different than traditional goals statements	- primary sentiment in statement is that city will not change very much in appearance though there will be underlying change
Cambridge Community Strategic Plan 1994	- present - 21st century in general	- heritage, the river, natural environment and neighbourhoods mentioned but not described	- three short paragraphs each on a different theme	- words such as celebrate, safe, clean, enjoy, business growth, strong leadership, pride and entrepreneurial spirit but very general	- appears quite comprehensive and not a traditional land-use oriented plan nor a narrow social policy plan	- although the vision is general the goals and action plans that grow from it are primarily an economic development strategy

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SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS OF MUNICIPAL VISION STATEMENTS

Place	*Tense*	*Visuality*	*Detail*	*Complexity/Clarity*	*Innovativeness*	*General Comments*
Dundas Official Plan 1996						- never completed
East York Official Plan 1995	- future - no specific time	- no images or word pictures expressed	- seven policy areas named but only a couple of words each	- statement is grammatically incorrect and somewhat difficult to follow	- not significantly different from traditional goals type statement	- statement of values
Flamborough Strategic Plan 1996	- current present hopes for future with no set time frame	- some pictures e.g. woodlots; some negatives e.g. no sprawl but most not visual	- 2 summary pages, 8 pages with more detailed comments	- there is considerable detail on certain issues such as the beauty of the escarpment but many points seem to concern solutions to current problems	- statements are similar to conventional goals	- many of the detailed statements are quotes from specific individuals... it might be questioned how representative they are
Gouldbourn Community Development Strategy 1996	- no actual vision statement - recommend-ations	- public talked about solution to current problems so were often site specific	- recommend-ation about 20 pages	- whole strategy called a vision - very detailed planning policy and zoning recommendations that are quite specific	- not significantly different from conventional growth strategy	- some contradiction e.g. policy against strip malls to save main street then standards for strip mall development
Haldimand-Norfolk Official Plan 1993	- term used is vision/goals statement - future - 20 year horizon	- not strongly pictorial - policy terms used such as intensification and words like scenic and lifestyle	- vision/goals statement is 8 pages long but much concerns policies (how to) rather than images of desired ends	- in spite of their length the statements are couched in generalities, i.e. encourage this, consider that - the language is not difficult but neither is it directive	- reads like a traditional planning forecast but one based on desires rather than projection of current trends although trends are sometimes mentioned	- has the feel of a document that started out to be something different than the way it ended up - shows signs of enfeebling compromise

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SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS OF MUNICIPAL VISION STATEMENTS

Place	*Tense*	*Visuality*	*Detail*	*Complexity/Clarity*	*Innovativeness*	*General Comments*
Halton Official Plan Review 1991	- called Vision of '90's and Beyond - some parts in future tense	- few visual references and most of those general such as farmland	- about 30 pages long but most references general	- statements are procedural policies which are clearly stated but not at all specific and would be open to wide interpretation	- fairly traditional policy statements	- this is really a statement of procedural or administrative intent or as Part 3 states a "Value System"
Official Plan 1994	- mixture of current present and future - 2011	- no specific visual references	- 2 pages of general comments	- policy type statements afirming sustainable development, fostering well-being and so on	- conventional	- the vision is an operational undertaking to preserve the land for future generations stating values such as caring and equity
Hamilton Official Plan Review 1996/97	- present and past but in an un-specified time period	- some specific images such as walking trails and streetscapes - negatives images e.g. agglomeration	- 1 to 3 short paragraphs on each of 6 themes	- a large number of issues are touched on with reasonable clarity but not in great detail	- the vision statements are quite novel with the following objectives being in a more conventional form	- the statements seem intended to be retrospective views from the future but that is not altogether clear from the document
Hamilton-Wentworth Official Plan 1993	- present - 2020	- there are many word pictures describing scenes of communities, landscape, transit, quality of life and work	- 4 pages of dense text	- the statements are clearly worded and many are very specific in their references to the way things look and the way people feel and behave although there are some generalities such as adequate food and safety	- this is in large part a genuinely different kind of planning statement	- vision statement shows a boldness not diluted by compromise and indicates a consistency in the process from its original intent through to its completion
King Strategic Plan 1995	- current present - title indicates 2000	- no images at all	- one sentence	- most general statement of un-defined values such as prosperity, vibrancy and pride	- resembles what is commonly defined as a mission statement	- it is hard to imagine that the statement provides "clear, powerful message" as stated - consultant did not include a vision in work plan but one appears in final document

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SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS OF MUNICIPAL VISION STATEMENTS

Place	*Tense*	*Visuality*	*Detail*	*Complexity/Clarity*	*Innovativeness*	*General Comments*
Kingston Strategic Plan 1995	- n/a	-n/a	-n/a	- n/a	- n/a	- in spite of an elaborate process no final vision statement or document was completed although some felt the exercise was worthwhile
Lake of Bays Vision 1996	- future, time of grand-children's children	general reference to clean water, fesh air etc.	- 2 sentences without specifics	- generalities with words such as nurture, sustain, peaceful living and recreation	- not a traditional planning document statement	- a statement of values which followed by list including sound economy, heritage, etc
London Vision 1996 (Basis for Strategic Plan, OP and other plans)	- mostly in future with a twenty year horizon (some parts in present)	- not particularly visual even when referring to river valley etc.	- statements for each section of plan a sentence each except general on for OP which is 9 paragraphs	- most of the statements are very general and use language such as "wanting a safe and healthy community" - vision statements followed by goals also general with terms such as affordable and available	- the idea of having an OP based on visions is different but in the event they read like conventional policy preambles	- although the OP intro states that the visions "convey an image" of the future city most of the statements are very general policy and procedural guidelines
Markham Markhan Centre Vision Plan 1994	- mixture of current present and future of no specific date	- absolutely visual with integrated illustrations both typical photos and generic diagrams	- multiple pages organized by themes such as transit, streets, housing and open space	- easily understood and very specific guidelines for design of physical space	- not typical of many contemporary urban planning documents but like other design guidelines of the type associated with heritage districts	- this plan takes the form of a Visual Preference Survey™ which was conducted by Nelessen & Assoc. and while called a Vision Plan is really the precurser for urban design guidelines
Milton Strategic Community Economic Development Plan 1994	- infinitive i.e. "to be..."	- no images	- the vision statement itself consists of only 10 words followed by a list of values	- point form generalities such as promoting health and fostering entrepreneurialism organized under headings living, business and leisure	- beginning an economic development document with values may be novel but the goals and strategies that follow are in typical policy form	- Niagara Escarpment is mentioned as the most important feature and its protection is called for

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SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS OF MUNICIPAL VISION STATEMENTS Page 5

Place	*Tense*	*Visuality*	*Detail*	*Complexity/Clarity*	*Innovativeness*	*General Comments*
Mississauga Stategic Plan 1992	- future - 15 to 20 year horizon	- not visual with only general reference to things like the city centre - little visual	- vision statements themselves very general	- the objective and strategic action statements that follow visions (3 to 6 each) outline areas of interest but remain very general	- the vision statements read very much like the goals given in the 1992 OP	- many of the objective and action points under the vision statements are like performance objectives or states to be achieved
Niagara Parks Commission 100 Year Vision, 20 Year Plan 5 Year Action Plan 1988	- current present projecting 100 years into the future	reference in statement which speaks more of attitude, synthesis and innovation	- the statement itself refers only briefly to water, rocks etc. but the whole report is rich in detail	- the statement is really an intro to the report which lays out intricate concept plans using maps, diagrams and pictures	- the plan is a classic master plan in the tradition of works that in the past were termed visions	- while the Parks Commision is not a municipality (no elected leaders) it has many of the same characteristics and this plan has influenced many subsequent planning efforts
North Bay Economic Development Plan 1996	- future with no apparent time horizon	- no images	- 1 sentence	- states that working together the community will implement the action which are outlined	- the statement is more characteristic of a mission	- vision seems in this case to be a misnomer
Ottawa Alta Vista Neighbourhood 1994	- current present, future and present at some unspecified future time	- for its length quite full of specific images e.g. linked open spaces, trees and quiet spacious streets	- 2 paragraphs with some details	- since the area being described is only a section of the city the degree of detail may be appropriate to capture the sense of the place intended	- the statement is quite a fresh introduction to a planning document	- the shifting tense probably reflects attempts to include differing inputs and also differing ways of expressing ideas about the future
Ottawa Carleton Community Vision 1995	- future in an unspecified time period	- no visual images	- vision consists of 12 sentences each dealing with a different issue e.g. safety, caring economy etc.	- points are all very general with terms such as model region and access to services but each issue has a number of "ideas for how" attached which provide some additional deatil	- the vision statements and ideas for how are similar to goals and objective statements in traditional plans	- perhaps because the Region deals primarily with services the emphasis here is almost entirely on procedural matters such as providing education, promoting economic activity and so on

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SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS OF MUNICIPAL VISION STATEMENTS

Place	*Tense*	*Visuality*	*Detail*	*Complexity/Clarity*	*Innovativeness*	*General Comments*
Peel Corporate Strategic Plan 1994	- future without a stated time horizon	- only general reference to mix of rural and urban	- 1 sentence	- very general commitment to nurturing well-being	- a standard statement of general goals	- there is some amplification of intent under the heading elements of vision and goals but they remain fairly general
Pickering District Plan Review (official plan) 1992/96	- infinitive (to build) in statement and current present in themes	- no images in vision statement and only general ones in themes e.g. distinctive setting, rural	- 1 sentence in statement with several pages of theme outlines	- the initial statement is very general and the 5 theme statements only a little more specific; the latter mostly end with prescriptive "should" statements	- the initial vision statement is much like a conventional mission while the theme statements are directives or admonitions	- it appears that as of Feb 96 the OP was still in draft form and therefore the vision which had been crafted over 2 years earlier was not yet formally adopted
Port Colborne Vision 2005 Strategic Plan (?)	- no statement as such, short document called Vision 2005	- n/a	- 5 statements of themes with 1 sentence each	- document is only 2 pages but breifly states a number of things that the community feels are important while expressing some basic values as well	- not particularly different from previous strategic plan outlines	- given the modest nature of this document the "Image Slogan" of being a model city for the country seems a bit ambitious
St. Catharines Strategic Plan 1995	- future without any specific time frame	- no images in vision statement and even in the action section under goals and objectives there are few specifics	- vision consists of 3 short paragraphs	- general statements using terms such as caring and prosperous community, strong and diverse economy etc.	- the vision statement is a somewhat different preamble to a plan but the goals, objectives and actions are similar to previous documents	- while the vision does state aspirations, as the document promises, it is difficult to see how it can serve as a guide or how it embodies the key ideas for the future since it is not at all specific
Sault Ste Marie Focus 2020 Strategic Planning Process and Official Plan Review 1993/95	- current present	- no images	- 3 bullet points and 1 sentence	- very general using terms such as promoting a superior quality of life	- the vision is in fact the mission statement from an earlier planning study	- the vision concept played a very minor role in the City's Strategic Plan Development process

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SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS OF MUNICIPAL VISION STATEMENTS Page 7

Place	*Tense*	*Visuality*	*Detail*	*Complexity/Clarity*	*Innovativeness*	*General Comments*
Scarborough Information Technology Vision 1995	- present and future with no particular time frame	- no images in vision statement but the following points are quite concrete	- 2 sentences in the initial statement with 9 subsidiary points	- the intial statement is very general with terms such as optimal use while the supporting points are primarily procedural	- the statement is much like a mission while the supporting points are mostly service delivery objectives	- while this is called a vision it might be better described as a business plan
Stoney Creek Visioning Exercise 1995	- words and phrases some from current perspective e.g. better	- many of the points are quite clear images e.g. waterfront park, walkways	- series of words and phrases	- examined reports dated Jan 96 were not final documents and were in point form without much detail	- in part the reports were conventional strategic planning strengths - weaknesses outlines with some future images	- what can be seen in the evolution of the reports as they were 'refined' is compromise and a dropping of many points
Sudbury Ramsey Lake Community Improvement Plan 1991/92	- current present with many 'shoulds' and 'musts'	- primarily process terms e.g. working together but some general images e.g. nodes around shore	- 9 pages of fairly dense text	- it is easy to read and covers many points but mostly deals with means such as education, property acquisitions etc. and less with images	- the preamble and ecological approach were novel at the time but most is a good but conventional planning policy outline	- the statements in the vision do not really follow the guide set out at the beginning - it was arguably a successful plan but mostly because of good fundamentals
Metro Toronto Draft Official Plan 1992	- present - unspecified time in future - called goals and objectives and a vision	- not particularly visual except in general e.g. parks extensive, nature preserved	- 8 points of 1 sentence each	- statements are very general and deal largely with services such as affordable housing, efficient transit, diverse employment which are Metro level concerns	- these are fairly conventional upper tier government planning goals	- it is perhaps understandable that the largest municipal government would find it difficult to design a suitable participative vision process - while the vision development
Metro Toronto Waterfront Plan 1994	- final vision in present, refers to 21st century while earlier versions are mostly future conditional	- final version full of vivid images e.g. wild flowers, views of the lake, theatrical productions	- page and half of dense text	- the final vision is very clear and evocative of a feeling in part because it is long enough and deals with specific images - there are still a few comparisons with the present such as more public land	- the vision is unlike traditional planning document goals statements	process was clearly managed the final version appears to do a good job of including the input in a dynamic way - this is not a watered- down consensus

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SUMMARY OF CHARACTERISTICS OF MUNICIPAL VISION STATEMENTS Page 8

Place	*Tense*	*Visuality*	*Detail*	*Complexity/Clarity*	*Innovativeness*	*General Comments*
Thorold Strategic Plan, Task Force Reports 1996	- 2 of 5 are in the infinitive while 3 are present, no specifc period	- none of the vision statements contain images but attached recommendations do	- statements all 1 short sentence except leisure & recreation which is 2	- the statements are very very general but each is accompanied by a series of more specific recommendations along with implementation notes & costs	- vision statements could be called purposes for policies while the recommendations are goals	- the 5 sections represent clear community aspirations with reasonable goals but it is difficult to see why one would call them visions
Vaughan Vision 1996	- initial vision future, while expanded form present, 2003	- vision general but expanded elements have some images	- vision is 5 short statements, each with 4 to 9 explanations	- vision and expanded elements are clear but general with following goals and strategies also quite general in nature	- vision and elements are not in traditional form but goals and strategies are conventional	- much of the future vision is about policy and procedure e.g. business principles guide policy, complementary plans
Wainfleet Community Strategic Plan 1995	- past from the vantage point of 2010	- a statement very rich in images	- 2 pages of very dense text with 16 paragraphs	- the vision statement is both clear and complete with descriptions of the landscape (some very site specific), villages, activites and even the home cooking	- as a basis for planning this statement is unlike the traditional approach in its vividness	- there appears to be little diminishing of colour in the statement necessitated by compromise although there are a few potential conflicts e.g. rural character vs severances
Waterloo Official Plan 1996	- final version present and past as stated in the year 2016	- original 3 scenarios very visual as is final version; intervening steps much less so	- final 4 pages of dense text but less detailed than original scenarios	- although there is some degree of detail, e.g. mixed land use nodes, it is fairly general while much of the text is procedural e.g. planning framework for decisions by Region on land use	- final vision statement is non-traditional but earlier vision principles were value statements and original scenarios were like growth options	- the first and last versions of the vision were drafted by staff and are somewhat innovative but much of the public input was policy oriented, i.e. not about what but about how
Welland Mayor's Task Force 1991	- present and past as stated in 2001	- a number of quite specific images	- 4 short paragraphs	- ideas of a revitalized core and a new highway are clear but quite general as are the other images	- actual vision statement is not in the form of older planning docuemnts	- much of the document is statement of problems and recommended actions
Community Strategic Plan 1994	- infinitive i.e. to develop, to promote, no time reference	- reference to places but no clear images	- multiple pages of point form items	- points under headings of goals and suggested actions; many points procedural e.g.good customer relations at city hall	- fairly conventional statement of goals	- this is a wish list including many old ideas never realized before; hard to imagine how this list will make a difference

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Place	*Tense*	*Visuality*	*Detail*	*Complexity/Clarity*	*Innovativeness*	*General Comments*
Windsor Community Strategic Plan 1996	- present with no specified date	- no specific images except international gateway	- 1 sentence	- claims to be 'clear and powerful' but is very general; more details in objectives section but those stated in future	- except for the one short statement the rest is conventional strategic planning	- values, vision and issues were considered separately which might have been and interesting feature
Woolwich Community Vision Statement 1996	- present with the year 2016 as the horizon	- general references to rural and small town character	- 1 sentence	- the document consists of layers beginning with a short vision statement, then values, then strategic issues and goals - all are quite general and mainly procedural e.g. provide good service, manage growth	- the vision statement is much like a mission although there is a separately stated mission containing similar points - most of document is conventional policy plan	- the healthy community guiding principles previously developed in a visioning exercise are appended to the Township vision document - these contain a bit more detail but are also procedural
York York Region 2021: A Vision 1993 and Official Plan 1994	- present stated in the year 2021	- general references to green space but no specific images	- 5 sentences	- while the vision statements are very general they are amplified by a set of values, statements of issues and measures of success - however, most of those are also very vague aspirations - only the vision statement is included in the OP but there have been efforts to reflect the values and issues	- the vision document begins with a difference and has the look of a new kind of plan but the statements of issues become conventional policy outlines - the attempt to integrate the vision into the OP is somewhat more innovative	- it remains to be seen how the vision effort will affect the application of the OP - the OP does include some visuals and mentions a number of specific landscape details and features such as village main streets

Appendix C

Summary of Processes Used in Developing Municipal Visions

THE USE OF VISIONING IN URBAN PLANNING - PH.D. Thesis Research

Robert Shipley - University of Waterloo School of Urban and Regional Planning

SUMMARY OF PROCESSES USED IN DEVELOPING MUNICIPAL VISIONS — Page DEFINITIONS

Place	*Participation*	*Timing*	*Change*	*Leadership/Facilitation*	*Monitoring*	*General Comments*
The agency or municipality, The planning exercise in which visioning was used and The date or approximate date of the exercise.	Who took part in the visioning process.	During what stages of the process was the public involved.	Did the involvement of the public result directly in any alterations in the vision.	What was the role of key participants and professionals (people paid to take part) in the process.	Was there provision made to follow up the visioning process.	Useful observations not covered under the other headings.

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SUMMARY OF PROCESSES USED IN DEVELOPING MUNICIPAL VISIONS

Place	*Participation*	*Timing*	*Change*	*Leadership/Facilitation*	*Monitoring*	*General Comments*
Ajax Somerset Cove Neighbourhood 1995	- town staff, Region staff, public agency representatives and public	- public involved from the beginning	- unknown	- professionally facilitated at least partly at the developer's expense	- unknown	- this process is intended to help develop urban design guidelines prior to development
Barrie Strategic Plan 1994	- community leaders identified, info gathered in ward meetings, questionnaires	- public only involved after main direction set	- unknown	- staff initiated and managed	- provision in the implementation plan for annual review	- appears to have been well structured and based on defined models
Brampton Internal Strategic Plan for Planning Department 1996	- all planning staff except senior management who were not allowed to participate	- n/a	-n/a	- staff directed - a small core writing team drafted the vision statement based on staff input - senior staff invited to buy-in	- departmental vision is to be basis for 5 year business plan	- the process was short, 2 sessions, and described by staff facilitator as perhaps "hokey" but did create excitement
Burlington Official Plan 1992	- Gallop Survey, large sample, 40% return, local club leaders, interest groups consulted	- began with public survey	- unknown	- professional survey - staff direction - final report by committee of 6 council, 6 senior staff using public input	- new round of strategic planning when each new council elected	- process began with strong public input and then leadership assumed by council and staff
Cambridge Official Plan 1994	- a round table consultation involving range of citizen and interest groups	- public involved for a 4 month period	- unknown	- professionally facilitated by The Randolph Group - council appointed Economic Development Committee responsible for report	- Economic Development Committee to implement and monitor	- concentrated time frame - only 3 community forums - 8% of workbooks returned from groups and citizens

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Place	*Participation*	*Timing*	*Change*	*Leadership/Facilitation*	*Monitoring*	*General Comments*
Dundas Official Plan 1996	- sent out public info on OP Review in 1995 - stopped process	- intended to involve public	- n/a	- issued terms of reference for OP Review incuding visioning but consultant hired recommended against current practice		- council seemed to feel visioning was standard but were advised against going to public for nitial ideas
East York Offical Plan 1995	- no information					
Flamborough Strategic Plan 1996	- 3 partners, the municipality, the community and Regional Renaissance Committee	- selected members of public at first then general consultation	- unknown	- professional facilitation (person unknown) with selected community participants and focus groups then involvement of general public	- a committee of council is to undertake periodic review of plan	- 300 people from 38 varied community groups created vision; reviewed in a public workshops then action plans done by selected committees
Gouldbourn Community Development Strategy 1996	- public meetings - - "dozens" of small meetings - every houshold recieved discussion paper	- public involved from start	- final strategy seems to reflect community concerns	- professional consultant (Sherwood) facilitated consultation and drafted discussion paper	- no information on implementatin or monitoring	- this is a very focused development plan for the Stittsville community and is quite site specific
Haldimand-Norfolk Official Plan 1993	- planners began consulting with politicians then involved the public - staff drafted final vision statement	- staff prepared background reports then sought public input through workshops, mail-outs and media	- linked natural areas and certain forestry provisions in OP came directly from public input in visioning	- the visioning was facilitated by Regional Planning staff who first obtained "buy-in" to the process from politicians - staff based their program on models that had been used in other municipalities	- it is intended that the 5 year OP review requirement will be used to monitor the level of achievement of the vision	- staff who undertook the process acknowledged that getting people in their area to think creatively about the future was challenging

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Place	*Participation*	*Timing*	*Change*	*Leadership/Facilitation*	*Monitoring*	*General Comments*
Halton Official Plan Review 1991	- planning staff, politicians, focus groups, general public	- problem getting public involved at first	- unknown	- process facilitated by Regional planning staff	- this stage was to feed into new OP so no need to monitor separately	- both the review vision and the final OP version are considered here because of the complexity of the process
Official Plan 1994	- as above	- involved from start	- final version far less detailed - specifics such as severances excluded	- as above	- provision for state of the environment reporting every three years	- staff recognize that they played a major role in shaping the vision
Hamilton Official Plan 1996	- planning staff worked directly with citizens - contacted 60 groups	- public input from beginning	- unknown	- led by staff who believed they "needed public participation to get vision" and "vision could be general or specific picture, issues or just something to react to"	- unknown	- very sophisticated and extensive public education program explaining the planning process and issues
Hamilton-Wentworth Official Plan 1993	- staff, politicians, a citizen task force made up of community leaders, interest groups and public	- public responded to reports of the vision task force	- most of 400 suggestions from citizens were included in final recommend-ations	- initial impetus for vison came from technical committee made up of health field professionals - citizen task force and staff guided process although there was a staff change part way through process	- comprehensive program for annual citizen involved progress evaluation based on community measured indicators	- selected as a UN Agenda 21 Sustainable Community pilot project, this Region implemented a very sophisticated and well supported program of which visioning was a key part
King Strategic Plan 1995	- staff, politicians, stakeholders in focus groups and public	- general public consultation only late in process	- indication of some changes	- process facilitated professionally by Randolph Group and overseen by council/staff committee	- provision for an implementation strategy but not for monitoring	- consultant's program did not call for a vision statement - one appears in the final plan - extent of public input in creating the vision is not known

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Place	*Participation*	*Timing*	*Change*	*Leadership/Facilitation*	*Monitoring*	*General Comments*
Kingston Strategic Plan 1995	- elected and appointed officials and general public	- public invited to respond part way through process	- public desire for fairness in negotiations came through	- public responded by voting preferences to questions set by politicians - a consultant, Mary Lazier, tabulate results to surveys	- unknown	- while there was genuine enthusiasm for parts of this process there is recognition that voluntary involvement is socially selective
Lake of Bays Vision 1996	- council, general public, ratepayers, permanent and seasonal residents	- public consulted after process formulated by steering committee	- unknown	- steering committee of councillors with a professional facilitator, Drew Huffman - claimed 2000 volunteer hours, 55 public meetings with 995 people attending	- committee recommended that a process for auditing progress be set up	- process seems to have been genuinely open with a relatively high participation rate
London Vision 1996 (Basis for Strategic Plan, OP and other plans)	- political and staff leadership, range of community groups, general public - took place over 3 year period	- public surveyed early then invited to participate in structured way	- unknown	- process facilitated by IER consultants with staff/council steering committee - after selective consultation a workbook was prepared and distributed to Vision Circles	- unknown	- process was very successful in involving hundreds of participants but there are indications that there is now resistance to implementing much of what was derived
Markham Markhan Centre Vision Plan 1994	- respondents to general call for volunteers	- volunteers from public took part in a pre-desined structured process	- n/a	- Visual Preference Survey™ is a proprietorial technique of Nelessen & Assoc. of NJ which involves showing visual images to people and measuring their response in a systematic way	- n/a	- unlike many of the other exercises in this survey this is a well developed and very specific technique with the clear purpose of developing design guidelines
Milton Strategic Economic Development Plan 1994	- council, staff, government and community representatives	- public involved in surveys at first then workshops	- unknown	- professional facilitation came from IER consultants with theme task forces made up of invited community and goovernment reps and chaired by councillors	- implementation plans but no follow up on vision indicated in documentation	- public input appears to have been an invitation to react to plans developed by task forces and committees and expressed by consultants

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Place	*Participation*	*Timing*	*Change*	*Leadership/Facilitation*	*Monitoring*	*General Comments*
Mississauga Strategic Plan 1992	- Senior Staff Management Team with council input and public response	- vision draft begun 1989, public input 1992	- amendments to objectives and actions but not to 9 vision statements	- the creation of the strategic plan based on vision statements was seen as a senior staff responsibility	- annual review by senior staff management team	- 100 groups were invited to comment; 6 responded including 1 residents group, the arts council, 1 environmental group and 3 government agencies
Niagara Parks Commission 100 Year Vision, 20 Year Plan 5 Year Action Plan 1988	- the vision was prepared by consultants	- stakeholders including commission members and local leaders consulted	- unknown	- vision drafted by the firm of Moriyama & Tashima with sensitivity to the ideas and knowledge of stakeholders but not with any formal public input mechanism	- Parks Comm encouraged to revisit vision and update but no formal monitoring	- in one way this is a classic master plan by the master but the approach may be as consultative as those with much more formal provision for input
North Bay Economic Development Plan 1996	- unknown	- public does not seem to have been involved	- n/a	- unknown	- document encourages business leaders to implement plan	- the process seems to have been done within the Economic Development. Advisory Board
Ottawa Alta Vista Neighbourhood 1994	- city appointed vision committee - residents through questionnaire, meetings and discussion groups	- public responded to material prepared by committee & consultants	- unknown	- consultants L. Tyler & J. Tipper conducted vision exercise for committee; very statistical; it is not clear whether the initial survey was open ended or solicited responses to pre-set questions	- action plan to have recommendations included in official planning documents was included	- this exercise seems to have been initiated in response to perceived pressure on the neighbourhood with visioning seen as a tactic in dealing with city hall
Ottawa Carleton Community Vision 1995	- public through random survey, 17 targeted interest groups, Regional council and staff, public in meetings	- public involved in various ways from early in 4 to 5 month process	- unknown	- overall process led by staff with different consultants engaged to compile survey results and to facilitate focus groups	- vision intended to inform OP and other plans but it is not clear from documentation how that is to be monitored	- this was a very energetic consultation process but it took place over a relatively short period of time and its follow-up is not clear

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SUMMARY OF PROCESSES USED IN DEVELOPING MUNICIPAL VISIONS — Page 6

Place	*Participation*	*Timing*	*Change*	*Leadership/Facilitation*	*Monitoring*	*General Comments*
Peel Corporate Strategic Plan 1994	- Regional Council in consultation with staff	- n/a	- n/a	- a series of workshops were facilitated by staff, and hired consultants, Environics (for environmental scan) and Randolph Group (for vision)	- undertaking to revisit plan as needed but no formal follow-up	- this was very much a leadership exercise
Pickering District Plan Review (official plan) 1992/96	- first vision drafted by staff then wide public input - first version more like a slogan	- public involved after initial draft	- 2nd version revised considerably based on public input	- REIC Consulting engaged to facilitate a range of public consultation on vision and other aspects of District Plan revision	- n/a	- the public consultation appears to have been very extensive and well organized - however, vision exercise was done in 1994 and Plan was not yet approved in mid 1996
Port Colborne Vision 2005 Strategic Plan (?)						- no information about the process was acquired
St. Catharines Strategic Plan 1995	- city politicians, staff, business and community groups, agency reps and general public	- task forces initiated vision then surveyed and held public meetings	- unknown	- appointed task forces for the themes of Planning, Business and Social Services with professional facilitation (IER Planning) - City encouraged to "champion" the implementation of plan	- formal community based monitoring structure recommended by consultant	- it is not clear from the documentation how extensive the public involvement was but it appears the process primarily involved the task force members
Sault Ste Marie Focus 2020 Strategic Planning Process and Official Plan Review 1993/95	- municipal staff and public	- public involved in a series of 5 workshops	- unknown	- the city staff facilitated the workshoops along with professional volunteers both from the city and former residents - there does not appear to have been formal involvement of local politicians	- unknown	- the citizen involvement appears to have been entirely through the medium of workshops, surveys, questionnaires or other means - that may have limited numbers but provided more intensity and learning

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Place	*Participation*	*Timing*	*Change*	*Leadership/Facilitation*	*Monitoring*	*General Comments*
Scarborough Information Technology Vision 1995	- a staff team made up of city employees	- n/a	- n/a	- it is assumed that the initiative for this project came from city staff	- the plan included an implementation phase including budget and staff positions to put it into effect	- the City of Scarborough has a staff person who facilitates this kind of process and it is assumed that there are other administrative 'visions'
Stoney Creek Visioning Exercise 1995	- a general focus group and 2 sectoral groups - it is assumed these groups were appointed	- a resident survey and evaluation of vision was done months after vision exercise	- in report on public survey the vision was not mentioned although it was in survey Terms of Reference	- Lifetime Consulting was engaged to conduct visioning and Goldfarb Consulting to do survey - there is no direct indication in reports of how many were in the focus groups or whether staff and politicans were included	- the opinion survey was to evaluate effectiveness of visioning in improving life but made no mention of it	- it is questionable why an attitude survey was done after a visioning exercise - also the survey stressed a number of different points than the selected focus groups
Sudbury Ramsey Lake Community Improvement Plan 1991/92	- 54 selected residents and a steering committee of various public agency representatives	- there was a public survey before vision and input invited after release	- some revision to plan after public input	- the visioning process was facilitated by Moriyama & Teshima who used their experience from the Meewasin Valley and Niagara Parks studies	- provision was made in the vision for establishing a Trust to oversee implementing and monitoring	- there seems to have been a balance here between public input, good professional facilitation and clear comunity leadership
Metro Toronto Draft Official Plan 1992	- there were background reports and staff discussions	- public not consulted on vision statement as such	- n/a	- the vision statement was actually written by one planning official after much discussion that was described as difficult to document	- provision for periodic monitoring but in cases of conflict OP details are to prevail over vision/goals	- the word vision is not used as major heading but only in the text to describe the first principles of the plan in the intro
Metro Toronto Waterfront Plan 1994	- a series of forums, questionnaires, focus groups with adults and children and interest groups	- public involved from early stages in 1991	- the final vision appears to be cumulative incorporating many points from earlier	- the Waterfront Committee was made up of Metro Councillors with 2 staff technical committees - consultation facilitation appears to have been done by planning department staff	- the plan is intended to reinforce the OP but is subsidiary to it and there does not appear to be specific provision for follow-up	- it was clearly stated that the public consultation was not intended to establish consensus but was a mosaic of ideas from which the committee would craft a plan

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Place	*Participation*	*Timing*	*Change*	*Leadership/Facilitation*	*Monitoring*	*General Comments*
Thorold Strategic Plan, Task Force Reports 1996	- 5 task groups, each made up of council members, citizens and staff	- info initially gathered in public meetings	- unknown	- approach began with public input then 5 task forces (heritage, leisure, lifestyle/planning, business & corporate) shaped sectoral vision	- unknown	- there is a good case to be made for a process that begins with public input but allows for appropriate civic leadership
Vaughan Vision 1996	- senior staff drafted vision "tailored to be sensitive to council"	- public only consulted on finished form	- n/a	- several consultants had offered to do strategic planning but senior staff adapted and facilitated their own exercise in house	- a vision coordinator was hired to implement the plan	- this is an example of forthright staff leadership which seems to have been picked up by politicians
Wainfleet Community Strategic Plan 1995	- an appointed steering committee with community input	- public involved in meetings from outset	- unknown	- the town council initiated the project "then left it mainly to the public to develop;" some staff help but largely volunteers	- provision made for an implementation group and state of township reporting	- this project showed strong leadership from the voluntary sector
Waterloo Official Plan 1996	- general public, interest groups, staff, people invited to forums and politicians	- began with public town hall meetings	- public first asked to choose among 3 visions but people wanted approach changed	- Regional planning staff led the overall process with some meetings facilitated by volunteers	- there is no formal monitoring program other than 5 year OP Review	- consultation went on for 4 years and the approach changed; while it began with an attempt at "blue sky" or creative thinking it ended up being very policy oriented
Welland Mayor's Task Force 1991	- 9 community leaders appointed to task force with a 6 month mandate	- meetings open to public part way through mandate	- unknown	- some task force members were volunteers, at least one was a city employee; some of those involved were associated with a federally funded local development agency	- recommendations of this group turned over to other committees to implement	- this effort was one of a long series of attempts to stimulate the local economy; there was at least one prior attempt to create a community vision
Community Strategic Plan 1994	- city committee and a broad range of public groups and individuals	- 'public input at every step of the way.'	- unknown	- the work of the Mayor's Task Force was recognized but city vision involved different people led by councillors	- Review Committee set up to do annual report on progress toward achievement of the vision	- the city plan seemed to duplicate the consultation carried out by the previous Mayor's Task Force

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Place	*Participation*	*Timing*	*Change*	*Leadership/Facilitation*	*Monitoring*	*General Comments*
Windsor Community Strategic Plan 1996	- city politicians and staff, reps from 22 sectors, public, children	- public involved from fairly early in process	- final statement almost the same as draft; more details in early stage	- process facilitated by Randolph Group who trained volunteer facilitators to work specific groups - public asked if they agreed with prepared vision/values statements	- staff to develop implementation plan and council to revisit strategy at the beginning of each term	- during the consultation phase people identified many specific vales and detailed visions but the vision statement was just 1 sentence
Woolwich Community Vision Statement 1996	- council, staff, public, youth	- public forum and youth and business forums held early in process	- public involved in initial drafting of vision	- professional facilitator, Brian Hunsberger, collected input from meetings, drafted vision and presented it to council; public review before council approval	- township staff asked to prepare report on how to implement - citizen healthy communities committee preparing monitoring process	- this Township initiative followed a healthy communities visioning process; many of the same people and ideas involved in both
York Official Plan 1994	- council and staff - public was asked for ideas but did not take part directly in the drafting of the vision	- public canvassed early in the process in random mail-outs, cable TV and forums	- n/a	- process facilitated by Intersol - info gathered from public, senior staff and council involved in weekend retreat during which time the vision statement was crafted	- provision for re-visiting vision once during every council term	- this was an unapologetically leadership driven process

Appendix D

Interview Guide

Vision Research - INTERVIEW GUIDE - page 1

TOPIC	LEAD QUESTION	SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS
1. Goal/Purpose of Visioning	Why is visioning done.	- is it to set goals - is it to establish a tone - does visioning primarily involve abstract ideas or concrete pictures of the future; is it about how things will be or how things will look - if you think the visual element is important do you think that all people have the same capacity to create mental images
2. Application	How are the outcomes used.	- is it a way to start strategic planning - is it a step in strategic planning - is it an alternative to strategic planning - is the process more important than the outcome - is all planning based on a vision, that is do you have to have a clear idea of what you want in order to plan to achieve it - is there a difference between an individual's vision and a consensus vision - is a shared community vision possible
3. Origin	Where did you learn how to conduct visioning exercises.	- if you developed the method on your own, what were the influences - if you learned the techniques from someone else, do you know where they learned it, how they developed it or what influenced them - have they heard of or read: - Polak, Barker, Nelessen, Ziegler, Laslow - others

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TOPIC	LEAD QUESTION	SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS
4. Underlying Philosophy	What are the ideas behind the approach.	- is there anything that might be called a theory - if there is a theory or theory-like set of ideas, is it testable and/or has it been tested - does it matter whether or not there is a theory-like underpinning or even a philosophy
	Is visioning different than participative planning and if so how.	- is it a way of including people in the planning process who might not otherwise be involved - can you give examples of specific elements in a plan that originated from the involvement of people who would not have been included except through visioning
5. Practice	How do you go about facilitating visioning.	- who participates - what are the pre-conditions - what techniques/exercises do you use - what is the sequencing of events - what is essential for visioning - do people participate as individuals or as representatives of others - do participants in visioning become leaders

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TOPIC	LEAD QUESTION	SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTIONS
6. Evaluating & Monitoring	How do *you* judge the success of a visioning exercise.	- what are your short term and long term measures or criteria - do you know of examples of vision based planning that was done in the past and which has had good results
	How do we monitor the outcome of visioning.	- who should be involved in monitoring outcomes - should there be a formal process - what should the criteria be - looking at a specific plan that has resulted from a visioning exercise, what elements do you think would be most likely to persist and affect outcomes and what parts would be most likely to be ignored
7. Alternatives	What are the possible alternatives to visioning.	

Appendix E

Summary of Interviews

THE USE OF VISIONING IN URBAN PLANNING - PH.D. Thesis Research Robert Shipley - University of Waterloo School of Urban & Regional Planning - 1996	
SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW NUMBER 1	Page 1
Question	***Response***
Why is visioning done?	- to set the framework for preparing a new official plan - to give the community a chance to establish goals - to establish a clear picture of where we would like to be in 20 years time
Does visioning primarily involve abstract ideas or concrete pictures of the future?	- a bit of both - tried to put things in concrete terms because public has trouble grasping abstract concepts, particularly in planning
Do all people have the same capacity to create mental images?	- no, it's very uneven - at first the vision was stated as though we were looking back from future and many people had difficulty understanding that so we had to re-write it so we were looking forward from the present
How are the outcomes of visioning exercises used?	- the main reason for the visioning was to help prepare the Official Plan - also used for marketing the Region to potential developers - vision is being used by senior managers and politicians in preparing their strategic plan; it is part of strategic planning
Is the visioning process or the resulting vision itself more important?	- the public consultation process is very important but one is not more important that the other (one interviewee) - both are important but the the process is more important (second interviewee)
Is a vision of the future an essential part of all planning?	- yes, to give you the overall goals to work towards
Is there a difference between individual vision and a consensus vision?	- there is quite a difference; you could have rural people who want as many severances as possible off their property but that might not be in the best interests of the whole region
Is a shared community vision possible?	- it was easier to get a real shared vision in our economic development planning - in the Regional Official Plan it was difficult because many people are opposed to the Regional Government in the first place; there are many agendas
Where did you learn how to do visioning?	- we obtained a copy of a vision statement from another municipality and talked to them about what they had done - we adapted our approach from that

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Question	***Response***
Is there anything that might be called a philosophy, a theory or theory-like set of ideas underlying the vision approach to planning?	- more interested in the practical than theoretical - not aware that any writing was available at the time we worked on our vision - since then many thing have become available such as a Strategic Planning Guide from the Ontario Community Economic Development Council - not familiar with any of the titles or authors mentioned - a local citizen participated in vision process and emphasized the need for clarity in expressing the vision; avoiding words with multiple meanings
Is visioning different than participative planning?	- it is difficult to get people to participate in planning - we had to explain the role of a visioning exercise so that we could get people to give us their input and ideas - usually people won't participate in planning matters unless an issue affects them directly but those who had participated before could see the importance of getting involved in the vision and policy setting
Are there examples of specific elements in a plan that originated from involvement of people who would not have been included except through participation in visioning?	- field naturalists and others wanted a connected system of natural lands - people in forest industry wanted ability to sever woodlots from existing farms
How do you go about facilitating visioning?	- staff facilitated workshop with Council to discuss visioning approach - realized we needed Council "buy-in" and needed to give politicians an idea of what the product would be like - prepared background reports that gave information and educated public about existing features - went out to public through workshops etc. for comment - from that came identification of issues and options, then a growth strategy and finally the Regional Plan - the steps were: - background - vision - issues and options - growth strategy - policies and plan - people participated both as individuals and as representatives of various groups

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Question	*Response*
How should we judge the success of a visioning exercise?	- level of public participation, contributing and not just complaining (short term) - whether the elements of the vision are realized (longer term)
How should we monitor the outcome of visioning?	- as part of the Official Plan review every five years the achievement of the vision will be measured - specific things can be measured: for example whether we have the connected system of natural areas that was set out in the vision
What aspects of your plan that resulted from visioning are most or least robust; most or least likely to survive and be implemented?	- the question of cottages becoming permanent residence... there is a real difference of opinion there; council is opposed to permanence now but they might change - the desire for small town character was clear in this vision but new townhouse, big-box stores and commercial strip developments might be allowed - clear consensus in vision on desire to retain agricultural character of Region - we hope the actual goals stated in the vision are realistic and can be implemented
What are the possible alternatives to visioning?	- the more traditional approach would have been to prepare issues papers and send them out to people for comment

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Why is visioning done?	- "blue sky approach," not so much goals as a picture of what people wanted in the future, what things would look like in 2016
Does visioning primarily involve abstract ideas or concrete pictures of the future?	- it was more about pictures - began by producing information about growth potential using fairly traditional quantitative modelling; municipalities and public didn't buy-in - many people wanted to talk about strategy and policy, not pictures
Do all people have the same capacity to create mental images?	- we found it difficult to write the vision and when we went out to people we didn't get much response at first to the alternatives we presented: people didn't identify with what was presented; people felt they were asked to choose - there was a lot of static
How are the outcomes of visioning exercises used?	- didn't have a clear idea at first but wanted to involve public - the review of the Official Plan was the main reason for doing visioning - we hoped to get people to confront some of the hard decisions, to choose one of the option and then the vision would be in plan
Is the visioning process or the resulting vision itself more important?	- in our case the process ended up leading to a very different product than we expected - what resulted was not a vision but a set of principles we used to guide policy
Is a vision of the future an essential part of all planning?	- many of the professional planners never agreed that this was a great idea - you need to have a vision about the general direction you want to go but perhaps not as concrete a picture of the future as we thought
Is there a difference between individual vision and a consensus vision?	- some people had very specific descriptions but the consensus we got among people was on policies
Is a shared community vision possible?	- it is possible but it has to be generic - too hard to get agreement on any specifics - people did buy-in to ideas such as keeping the rural and urban areas separate
Where did you learn how to do visioning?	- we got some ideas from the Healthy Communities initiative - I read something, a short article, but I can't remember; didn't do a lot of reading - knew it was supposed to be a description of the future

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Is there anything that might be called a philosophy, a theory or theory-like set of ideas underlying the vision approach to planning?	- we figured it should work; people should like to think about it and it should be easier for people to think about concrete things than abstracts - we might have done it differently if we'd understood more of the theory
Is visioning different than participative planning?	- you can involve people in different ways; visioning is one of the ways - visioning is a friendly way to get participation
Are there examples of specific elements in a plan that originated from involvement of people who would not have been included except through participation in visioning?	- support for the idea of firm urban boundaries came from the visioning process - equitable growth in the townships was popular - provision of clean water and good waste treatment was supported - rural character, general idea of compactness (intensification) and staying within existing settlements - the idea of greenbelts was not supported
How do you go about facilitating visioning?	- started with 'town hall' meetings - at first people were asked to comment on three alternative visions but they didn't respond by choosing one or the other; they wanted to create hybrids and combinations - eventually we came back to the drawing board and came up with vision principles which were like guiding values for decision making
Who participates in visioning?	- attempted to get general public and specific groups
Do people take part as individuals or representatives?	- whether or not they are from specific groups people feel they are representative of certain interests
Are people who take part leaders?	- people who participate in visioning are generally leaders

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Question	*Response*
How should we judge the success of a visioning exercise?	- we didn't have anything consciously in mind when we started
How should we monitor the outcome of visioning?	- we know this is an issue because people asked about how well the former Official Plan had performed but there were no ways of quantifying that and evaluation pretty well has to be quantified - we have nothing in place although there is provision in the OP for that
What aspects of your plan that resulted from visioning are least robust; least likely to survive and be implemented?	- the idea of compact urban form was probably least likely to hold up
What are the possible alternatives to visioning?	- we could just give people development policies and get their reaction

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Why is visioning done?	- part of a goal setting process; chance for a group to get a handle on their *raison d'etre*; why they exist - a way for them to philosophize in a way they wouldn't do on a day-to-day basis
Does visioning primarily involve abstract ideas or concrete pictures of the future?	- done effectively it bridges the two, the practical and theoretical - easier for people to think in concrete terms and they get confused if you ask them to respond to questions that are too abstract - visioning helps people who are not used to thinking abstractly to do that; you want to end up with concepts (abstracts) but have a practical dimension
Do all people have the same capacity to create mental images?	- people think and learn differently; visual, auditory, kinesthetic (by doing) - the ability to think more conceptually (abstractly, the big picture) is partly a function of higher education and training - important to use different learning approaches to include everyone
How are the outcomes of visioning exercises used?	- the danger is that these exercises become ends in themselves - to be useful there must be some sort of implementation plan, a strategy - the vision statement must be reinforced through the organization; printed on documents, hung on the wall - so that people can connected with it
Is visioning part of strategic planning or an alternative?	- I became cynical about strategic planning; it became an end in itself - haven't read Mintzberg (*Rise & Fall of Strat. Plan.*) but understand he talks about strategic thinking and that is what visioning is about
Is the visioning process or the resulting vision itself more important?	- the process is the whole thing - planners know that no sooner have you produced a plan than you are amending it and maybe visioning is similar - what visioning does is help you get started thinking long range
Is a vision of the future an essential part of all planning?	- I guess if planning is done well it would have some futuristic aspect but you can get locked in to certain ways of doing things - you have to make course corrections but that implies having a destination - now I'm arguing with myself - you need to have goals but you also need to be flexible and prepared to change
Is there a difference between individual vision and a consensus vision?	- yes; if you develop a vision for an organization and don't have the key figures buying in it won't go far - in a democratic organization the vision of key people can get confused with that of the organization

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Question	***Response***
Is a shared community vision possible?	- yes it is possible but you have to make compromises to get there and sometimes that means compromises and an inevitable ambiguity - people will see and interpret the picture differently but it must be a unifying force to the extent that people can buy into it and say we may not agree with details but that is the kind of community we want to be - there must be certain fundamental agreement on general direction
Where did you learn how to do visioning?	- (interviewee laughed) can't remember when I first heard the term visioning but these ideas are a repackaging of older things - my general sense of planning even before I studied it is that communities should be looking to the future, should be thinking ahead and should have an idea of why they do what they do - I've heard of Covey more recently but earlier ideas came from Toffler's *Future Shock* and Club of Rome notions of limits to growth and the environmental movement's questioning of where the world is going - my first formal understanding of this process came from planning study in the 1970s when we learned about setting goals and objectives and alternative courses of action; the classical plannng approach - visioning goes a step further; the old idea of goal setting was perhaps more concrete where visioning is more abstract
Is there anything that might be called a philosophy, a theory or theory-like set of ideas underlying the vision approach to planning?	- since I've never done any reading on the subject my ideas are kind of "home made" and the way I use the term doesn't relate to any theoretical construct - idea of knowing where you want to go is important and involving people - (interviewee agreed that the philosophy here is that agreeing on goals and involving people will result in better decisions)
Is visioning different than participative planning?	- the visioning process helps to legitimize constructive daydreaming and spiritual reflection in a culture where these things are usually held to be impractical
How do you go about facilitating visioning?	- the standard group facilitation techniques where people are encouraged to express themselves, where quieter members are coaxed out to state their opinion and people are made comfortable

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Question	*Response*
What is essential to the visioning process?	- some stage-setting is necessary to get people into the idea of thinking into the future and to give them permission to daydream
Do people participate in visioning as individuals or representatives?	- some come clearly as individuals but many are invited to speak on behalf of a larger interest group; they are there to make sure the values of their group are put into the hopper - groups involved in political process want to stake out a position
How should we judge the success of a visioning exercise and how do we monitor the outcomes?	- there is evaluation at the informal and formal levels - at the time there is some sense of whether people found it useful or enjoyable - there is also the question of what happens in the longer run - my recommendation was that there be a formal evaluation of whether any of the vision filtered into the operation of the township
What aspects of the plan that resulted from visioning are most or least robust; most or least likely to survive and be implemented?	- I think that when politicians make decisions they have to express balance between different values - visioning may provide a more non-threatening kind of forum to express views and people come out of the exercise having heard different ideas; they can't help being affected by that - it is different than just reinforcing their views by meeting their own circle
What are the possible alternatives to visioning?	- off the top of my head I can't say what an alternative might be - visioning is what we now call what we've been trying to do for a long time - we're trying to get at the same questions of what are the community's goals and where are we going

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Question	***Response***
Why is visioning done?	- visioning is done to create a shared purpose; what is often lacking is people knowing what they have in common - it is to involve a large number of people representing a cross section - to get people away from taking about deficits and problems; to talk about positives instead of negatives
Does visioning primarily involve abstract ideas or concrete pictures of the future?	- a goal has been described as a 'timeless statement of aspiration' but a vision is more tangible, real, visual and sensual; it must be able to touch people emotionally - literally a picture of the future as it should be
Do all people have the same capacity to create mental images?	- in my experience, absolutely yes, people know what they want - often people's pictures are similar
What is the relationship of vision to long range or strategic planning?	- quote from John Naisbitt to the affect that 'a strategic plan is worthless without a strategic vision' - strategic planning is about getting from here to there but visioning is about setting out the there
How are the outcomes of visioning exercises used?	- you can record the visions and use them for community awareness - once you have a vision you can use it to set priorities for action - the pictures can be used to identify common issues
Is the visioning process or the resulting vision itself more important?	- it is 50-50; the process gets people thinking about the future - people who might not agree about how to get there can often agree about what it is they want; it can create a community cohesion - the vision can get to be too generic and imprecise so you have to come back to reality and decide what needs to be done in the next six months
Is a vision of the future an essential part of all planning?	- good planning is vision driven or perhaps vision directed muddling through
Is there a difference between individual vision and a consensus vision?	- individual vision is limited; most people are only concerned about a couple of issues but when they get together they realize there is more - the weakness of traditional individual visionaries was this narrowness

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Question	***Response***
Is a shared community vision possible?	- yes, consensus is possible but it has to be renewed every few years; the players change and people's idea of what they want changes; not dramatically perhaps but with more knowledge it can be fine-tuned - I don't have any problem with a moving target
Where did you learn how to do visioning?	-I don't know much about it but there was a group called the ICA - Institute of Cultural Affairs out of Chicago, a sort of inter-faith, quasi-religious, but more humanistic organization in the late 70s and early 80s and it had developed a whole series of community participation tools - some of the people I worked with in the late 70s had worked with this ICA and I think had picked up the idea of 'guided imagery' and we developed some workshops using that in the Health Department from 1984 on (people involved were Suzanne Jackson, Rick Edwards, Khristine Sisson) - perhaps earliest use of vision concept was at "Beyond Health Care" Conference held in Toronto c1984 which gave rise to Healthy Communities movement - the process involved not drawing but putting ideas on cards and then sorting the cards into categories, very left brain activity, that was ICA but I can't remember where guided imagery came from - Roy Amara article in *The Futurist;* 2 attributes of Futures work i) creating images of the future and ii) involving people in creating their future
Is there anything that might be called a philosophy, a theory or theory-like set of ideas underlying the vision approach to planning?	- I've been involved in futures work for 20 years; part of the underlying philosophy has to do with the fact that the future is plastic, malleable, that the future doesn't happen but we create it and vision is part of that - there are 4 possible futures (according to Norman Henchey) - the probable - what is likely (the official or business as usual future) - the possible - all the things you might imagine - the plausible - a subset of possibles that are plausible (these are sometimes explored by using scenarios) - the preferable - way you would like things to be - I am interested in the preferable future and believe to a certain extent that the future can be created - the WHO definition of Healthy Communities is based on "enabling people to increase control over and improve their health;" it's about participation
Is visioning different than participative planning?	- visioning is a technique of participative planning that specifically involves images and visual things in the very literal sense; most people can get the same images in their minds eye; it is very powerful

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Are there examples of specific elements in a plan that originated from involvement of people who would not have been included except through participation in visioning?	- in one place everyone's ideal picture had people playing in the local river; swimming, fishing, walking beside it... but that was not happening in reality, so as a result of the visioning they formed committees to deal with water quality, walking trails and so on
How do you go about facilitating visioning?	- I start by gathering information from people; they already know what a healthy community is - I have them imagine themselves in a balloon looking down on their community at some time in the future; what do they see, what is going on ? - I use some clinical hypnosis techniques to encourage a meditative experience - I try to be value free but I ask questions such as how are people getting around; and almost inevitably there are no cars; what people see is a 21st century version of a 19th century European market town - some people have a better auditory or olfactory imagination so I ask them what they hear and smell and it's music, laughter, coffee, grass, flowers
How should we monitor the outcome of visioning?	- a vision should be revisited and revised from time to time - the people involved change and perhaps the idea of what is desirable in the future changes
What are the possible alternatives to visioning?	- all good planning is vision driven

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Question	***Response***
Why is visioning done?	- to get people listening to one another and to create something that everyone could buy into, something beyond the day-to-day issues - not necessary to have specific goals
Does visioning primarily involve abstract ideas or concrete pictures of the future?	- it was deliberately left vague and general so that no one or no organization would not want to be part of it - it's a mixture of detail and abstract - more of a broad general concept, things that can be agreed on
Do all people have the same capacity to create mental images?	- no, you have to design different ways for people to contribute - to begin with, people mainly wanted to gripe about stop signs etc. - you have to look for the hooks, the motivators, the things that get people involved
How are the outcomes of visioning exercises used?	- in a number of ways: internally to help direct projects, as a starting point for the Regional Official Plan and to increase the profile of community as a leading edge place where public consultation has been done - as anchor for considering other things, general goals - there are pros and cons to having a vague, general statement; sometimes it gets bastardized; organizations twist the words to justify things that clearly don't fit with original intent
Is visioning a part of strategic planning?	- you need two thing for long range community planning: you have to have community involvement and the way to get them involved is through the visioning process
Is the visioning process or the resulting vision itself more important?	- the final vision statement is less important than the process used to get there - however recent focus groups have recommended not touching the vision statement; it still serves as a good anchor; if you open it up again now that there is more awareness it could get sidetracked by special interest groups
Is a vision of the future an essential part of all planning?	- it should be the case but a lot of land-use planning is more reactive
Is there a difference between individual vision and a consensus vision?	- a few years ago this Region had no clear idea of its purpose; the planners idea was to slow down urban sprawl and the engineers' purpose was to keep building roads and provide water to everyone in the Region no matter where they were; visioning helped to get people working together

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Is a shared community vision possible?	- yes but it won't just happen right away, it is ongoing - the reality is that just because the vision statement is there that doesn't mean it will be implemented
Where did you learn how to do visioning?	- (interviewee laughed) I came into the process after it had been set up; background was GIS and population projection but I was given the project when it was not considered important and then stayed with it - it was the brainchild and creation of a mixture of people in the Regional staff but the sustainability movement was the impetus; one of the originators had done her Masters at York with Trevor Hancock - we had a library of things on consultation and sustainability; Interim Council on Local Environmental Initiatives, National Round Table etc. - we had a technical advisory committee made up of people who had experience of visioning in the District Health Council, Social Planning Research Council, the university and so on; people from the community
Is there anything that might be called a philosophy, a theory or theory-like set of ideas underlying the vision approach to planning?	- there were things written about this sort of thing back in the 60s (interviewee laughingly admitted not having read them then being too young) - idea of community empowerment goes back to the Greeks - the goal was a vision; if you don't have goal then you can't get there; you need a destination
Is visioning different than participative planning?	- visioning is all these things (participation, sustainability etc.) together
Are there examples of specific elements in a plan that originated from involvement of people who would not have been included except through participation in visioning?	- the visioning task force put forward almost 400 recommendations for action and decision making of which about 100 were put into the Official Plan almost word for word - many of these had to do with transportation

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How do you go about facilitating visioning?	- there were workshops, town hall meetings, a task force of citizens with staff support that directed the process and reported to council, publications etc.
What is essential for visioning?	- critical things are two way communication, hearing people, consensus, informing people about sustainability and building partnerships
How should we judge the success of a visioning exercise?	- the press uses the vision as a guide in commenting on decisions - it has changed the nature of the debate in council - we have developed a set of indicators, a report card; these are all good things
How should we monitor the outcome of visioning?	- there definitely needs to be monitoring - one member of the task force expressed it this way: all the people who live in the Region are shareholders and the council is the Board of Directors and every year there should be a shareholder's meeting to review the progress of the corporation - you have to be able to show links, how has the vision resulted in this or this or these changes and improvements in the quality of life; without that it will die - without checking it won't be valid in people's minds any more
What aspects of your plan that resulted from visioning are most or least robust; most or least likely to survive and be implemented?	- one recommendation from the visioning task force that seems to have been adopted is that changes to Official Plan boundaries only be considered every five years - the infrastructure and land-use planning recommendations are probably quite strong but the social service ones are out of date because of changes in government funding
What are the possible alternatives to visioning?	- there might be other hooks or ways of getting people involved, such as healthy communities or carrying capacity but health might have been seen as being about hospitals and perhaps it was too airy-fairy for business while carrying capacity might be too technical - we had a huge increase in interest when we stopped using words like sustainable development - people responded better to the word vision - I don't think there is an alternative in the broad sense that we were using

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Why is visioning done?	- to provide a municipality with a common direction and framework that allows them to coordinate action and focus on the future - to allow the staff, politicians and community, when asked on the street to say where the community is headed
Does visioning primarily involve abstract ideas or concrete pictures of the future?	- the vision needs to be inspirational and about striving for some lofty concepts - it needs to move from the conceptual to the concrete, actual pictures of things, when you form objectives - so the vision might be of a safe community and well lit streets would be one of the actions or ways to achieve that
Do all people have the same capacity to create mental images?	- there are varying abilities but I always work in groups rather than with individuals so there are always different dynamics going on - people tend to use what they see and like today and project that into the future - people are able fairly easily to think about the future by extrapolating from the present
How are the outcomes of visioning exercises used?	- I am nervous when the vision floats around and isn't attached to some action - you run the risk of having wildly different interpretations - there should be a defined framework where the vision (and objectives are part of the vision) is followed by action and everyone signs on - it is a start to strategic planning; addresses how to allocate scarce resources
Is the visioning process or the resulting vision itself more important?	- the process is more important than the product - the fact of meeting, debating, talking about differences - you see a coming together of decision making around other issues - the product can be anticlimactic
Is a vision of the future an essential part of all planning?	- no, we've had some very good plans done in the absence of vision - but there is then a question of how relevant they are because no one sat down and said where are we going
Is there a difference between individual vision and a consensus vision?	- my only experience is with group visions not individual ones - people can begin by throwing out words or phrases about what they value but I always work with a consensus where people are listening to each others ideas
Is a shared community vision possible?	- not only possible but I would argue it is necessary

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Where did you learn how to do visioning?	- (interviewee laughed) I cut my teeth doing private sector strategic planning then applied what I learned to communities - in 1970s planning was almost entirely focused on projects - by the late 1980s smart municipalities were doing strategic planning - I have read some things but they were after the fact, after I'd learned how to do this on my own (recognized the names Senge, Bryson and Ziegler)
Is there anything that might be called a philosophy, a theory or theory-like set of ideas underlying the vision approach to planning?	- the value of the visioning we have done is that it is not based on theory but on practical application - I drew on models of private sector strategic planning; the first part of a good plan is a vision; where are we going, what is important to us? - municipalities didn't want to look at theory but how were private sector companies managing, how were they expanding their markets and so on - no one was saying, 'let's do a literature search before we go further,' or 'we can't do this because nobody has written about it.'
Is visioning different than participative planning?	- some municipalities began to undertake strategic planning early in the 1990s - then the provincial government got involved in promoting community based strategic planning; their model was a real grass roots visioning where everyone would get involved and funds were available if you did it that way - but for us visioning is a top down exercise, it is about elected leaders taking responsibility - there is no confusion for us between visioning and participation; visioning is setting the future direction of the municipality and involving a lot of people is a vehicle that is important in getting it right
How do you go about facilitating visioning?	- we talk to people about three simple basic steps: knowing where you stand, determining where you're going and devising the steps for getting there - no fancy words or techniques, just straight forward things that people can understand; people are very pragmatic, not touchy-feely - visioning does require some dedicated time and space; people shouldn't tack visioning on to other agendas and they should get out of their regular work spaces; we have ground rules about equal participation, respect and so on - we write everything down at the end of sessions - we start with the municipality (staff and politicians) and then go out and ask people for their input; we test the ideas - we get community leaders talking to various interest groups to find out what they think and feeding that back

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What is essential for visioning to work?	- for this kind of thing to work the process really has to be driven by the people who want it; it can't be simply complying with a regulation - the municipality has to want it and has to pay for it and design it themselves - the real decision makers (the political leaders) have to own the vision - if the leadership don't buy in then they can abdicate their responsibility; the vision becomes something to keep those people out there happy but when the times comes to spend money they will say we can't do that
How should we judge the success of a visioning exercise?	- it is quite simple, if you talk to people in the municipality a year later, are they using the ideas in their decisions about budgets and work plans and so on
How should we monitor the outcome of visioning?	- if it's a good vision then in a way you don't need any formal monitoring because people will be embracing it and using it - if you have to use a check list to see if this or that has been done then it can take away from the power of the vision - nevertheless we are increasingly suggesting that municipalities have some performance measures, some end results to use as progress checks
What are the possible alternatives to visioning?	- good planning should have a vision and a strategic direction

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SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW NUMBER 7	Page 1
Question	***Response***
Why is visioning done?	- when I use the term visioning it is part of the strategic planning process - municipalities do strategic planning to get a better sense collectively from the community about the type of future they want: it is an attempt to provide a focus for planning - the practical reason many communities did visioning was because money was made available from the former NDP government; it varied from $20,000 up to vary large sums and didn't depend much on the size of the community
Does visioning primarily involve abstract ideas or concrete pictures of the future?	- it is all over the map; some people come forward with very idealized versions and others say that is unrealistic while some people are very detailed and concrete about things like how wide the roads should be - this is one of the problems, there needs to be some education about what strategic planning is all about; many communities embark on this without having a good idea of what this is all about
Do all people have the same capacity to create mental images?	- all people have the capacity of defining a future for themselves and for the type of the community they want to live in but some people have difficulty participating in a process and articulating that - when you talk to people one on one they don't have any trouble but in groups they don't have the comfort level; they are intimidated by others who have a clearly articulated view
How are the outcomes of visioning exercises used?	- at this point I don't think anyone can give you a good answer; the history in Ontario so far is that no one has ever done any follow-up or critique to see how vision statements and the articulation of goals and objectives have been used to guide and direct and change the development of the community - in many cases vision is hardly ever mentioned after it is done; in one place where I worked some of the goals were used to develop programs but in the same place it was directed that some social goals that came from the visioning process specifically not be mentioned in subsequent work programs - there is a scepticism that the community is really taking these things seriously
Is the visioning process or the resulting vision itself more important?	- they are both important; the process needs to excite and inspire people and it has to have a champion and credibility; if those things are true then the product will be a good one and its implementation can take place - if you don't have a champion and if decision makers are just going through the motions for other reasons it will just sit on the shelf

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SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW NUMBER 7	Page 2
Question	***Response***
Is visioning a part of strategic planning?	- vision is a way to start the strategic planning process: to identify the type of future a community wants, from that it cascades down, you can identify the goals, objectives, action plans and so on to achieve the vision
Is there a difference between individual vision and a consensus vision?	- yes there is a difference [the interviewee then described very visually a picture of gardens, streams trees etc.]... my neighbour would have a different idea
Is a shared community vision possible?	- it is possible if the vision statement captures in a general way the values of the majority of the people in the community - no one has any trouble with a general statement about wanting a safe, clean community; it is when you start defining what that really means that you run into problems
Where did you learn how to do visioning?	- I'm not sure I know how to answer that question - our company has been in business for over 20 years and our expertise is in involving people in decision making; we responded to a need to broaden our techniques from projects and apply them to municipal strategic planning - we did a fair bit of research although I can't remember authors, and looked at other places such as Calgary and Houston... about applying strategic planning - we also looked at private sector examples and did some work there but it is different than communities: more missions than visions
	- following the interview the respondent produced two books cited by the firm in proposals to do visioning; Goodstein et al (1993). *Applied Strategic Planning* and Kemp (1992). *Strategic Planning for Local Government: A Casebook* (note - the content of these books tends not to coincide with interview responses: Goodstein is written "for managers, especially senior managers" not communities while Kemp contains only one case involving vision and that "did not include strategies to deal with those issues identified [in the vision].")
Is there anything that might be called a philosophy, a theory or theory-like set of ideas underlying the vision approach to planning?	- the interviewee stated a number of principles that should be followed in order to ensure success: must have a leader, must have community participation, must be community driven (not captured by special interests), must have partnerships other than municipality and plan must be seen a management tool for guiding decision making into the future - [interviewee was asked if the completion of the thought was: if these principles are followed better planning decision will result... that was confirmed]

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SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW NUMBER 7	Page 3
Question	***Response***
Is visioning different than participative planning?	- yes; you can bring people in on specific questions such as a recreation master plans or a transportation issue, but visioning is holistic, the whole picture - visioning is a way of including people in strategic planning who might not otherwise be included
Are there examples of specific elements in a plan that originated from involvement of people who would not have been included except through participation in visioning?	- I have confidence in planners to understand and act in accordance with the public good but they don't always see things the way the public does; they might think something is important but not necessarily significant - in one city the people expressed not only the importance but also the significance of streetscapes and retaining the trees along the streets and that influenced the transportation policies - it is a case of what the public values
How do you go about facilitating visioning?	- depends on client, some want more public involvement, some less - we often start with key leaders who identify certain ideas and then involve the public in commenting on those things - other places want to get public involved from the beginning
How should we judge the success of a visioning exercise?	- client satisfaction is important for us; a recommendation for us - we have not been involved in monitoring so I don't know
How should we monitor the outcome of visioning?	- I think it is important to check whether this approach works or not - has it affected budgeting and are plans tied to the vision - this has not been done and it should be followed up
What are the possible alternatives to visioning?	- strategic environmental assessment, which is an attempt to integrate the economic planning of the community with the physical capital - this is more expert driven but would have to start with common values

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SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW NUMBER 8	Page 1
Question	***Response***
Why is visioning done?	- it's a way of getting people to move outside their conventions, their day-to-day ways of thinking, to think globally - to identify differences and then move on to establish the core values that are shared and identify the areas where there is unlikely to be agreement
Does visioning primarily involve abstract ideas or concrete pictures of the future?	- people get frustrated if you leave it at the abstract; the closer it comes down to quantitative things the more comfortable people are - it needs to be "tighter;" things that people can grasp; for example it's not enough to say this community wants to be a leader in the environment; people have to say we will reduce emissions by so much, that sort of thing - [when asked if those things were more like policies or means of accomplishing ends than visions in any visual sense the respondent said specific items such as pollution emission targets were what he meant by vision statements]
How are the outcomes of visioning exercises used?	- "the terminology in this field just sucks, big-time..." - [the interviewee drew a diagram of a pyramid and began an explanation of it starting at the apex and working down to the base] - everyone will agree that you can start off here with vision or what they would call mission, and regardless of whether this is being done on an urban basis or a business planning basis there is confusion between these terms; then there are 5 or 6 things you have to do to achieve the statement/vision/mission and people argue about whether these things are goals or objectives; then for each goal/objective there are many things that need to be done and those are strategies or work plans - the trick is that for each thing being done down here you can ask, is it consistent with what was said up here [vision] - it is a sort of guide, a report card, a check and balance - it comes down to this: where do you want to be (one paragraph statement on future), what do you have to do to get there and what are the specific steps?
How does visioning relate to strategic planning?	- it is the first step in strategic planning
Is a vision of the future an essential part of all planning?	- you can't do planning without it [interviewee's first response] - [at another point in interview] there is a lot of planning at the detailed level in communities and in the country that does not seem to have a focus, consistent vision or leadership directing it

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SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW NUMBER 8	Page 2
Question	***Response***
Is the visioning process or the resulting vision itself more important?	- the most valuable thing that happens is the process: if you ask people to examine things for hours there is a lot of eye opening; they see the other values and concerns in the room - if you agree on a vision statement too quickly then it is probably not a good one - if it is not challenging, too loose, then it is probably not visionary - once you have a product, a vision statement, it has to be continually brought back in front of people so they can see if the details make sense - it's no good if it just gets shelved
Is there a difference between individual vision and a consensus vision?	- if you have ten people they will not have the same vision up front - eventually whatever consensus is reached has to be taken and endorsed by the politicians (who are usually not visionary) and then given to bureaucrats to work out the details
Is a shared community vision possible?	- that's the entire exercise; if you are looking for a package which the broader community can buy into the only way you can know they will accept the implementation steps is by saying this is where we all want to be and some part of it may not be good for you but it is consistent with making this into the sort of place you and the broader community said you wanted it to be - without this you don't have the ability to build consensus
Where did you learn how to do visioning?	- business planning; why am I in business, what are the issues; it's much cleaner - [interiewee chuckled when asked to identify specific influences] literally it's just winging it; the school of hard knocks; do things and change when necessary - our firm is made up of friends who have been together for many years; went through a number of different stages from education to environmental planning; doing business education seminars since 1980 for people in the construction industry; a 10 day MBA for people who have made a lot of money but never had a business plan and never thought about their purpose - many communities/municipalities have also never considered why they are doing what they are; applied our experience to that
Is there anything that might be called a philosophy, a theory or theory-like set of ideas underlying the vision approach?	- if you have good vision, if it's clear what you want and if there are champions in the community who have bought into it (especially if they were opposed at first), then all the detailed parts of the plan will fall into place without problem - in order to get a good vision you need to have as diverse a group as possible working on it and they need to either hammer out a consensus themselves or be manipulated into arriving at one

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SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW NUMBER 8	Page 3
Question	***Response***
Is visioning different than participative planning?	- conventionally people were asked to comment on specifics of plans but what hasn't happened is asking people "why" and that is what visioning does
Are there examples of specific elements in a plan that originated from involvement of people who would not have been include except through participation in visioning?	- there was a case where people in a community were talking about having a strong agricultural presence but it turned out there were only four farmers actually left working in the area and they were ready to pack it in; they got involved in the visioning process and said if you want agriculture then you better listen to our concerns; normally four people wouldn't be listened to but because everyone wanted farming in the area they did listen - our firm has worked in 10 municipalities and generally politicians and planning directors hate this process and don't believe in it; they usually end up with 7 instead of 5 specific goals because of the extra involvement of people
How do you go about facilitating visioning?	- we're pretty "off the wall" around here; there's always an element of entertainment, shock, something that forces people to think in different ways - in one town people were asked to write a postcard as though they were visiting the place 10 years from now; what was it like but they had a limited space - we sometimes use debates between extreme views, scripted out in order to get people going; have to get them going right away - sometimes we are manipulative in order to stimulate and challenge - each time the group decides on something, say a vision statement, we type it up and hand it out for all to see; they see the plan growing and don't backslide
Do people participate as individuals or as representatives of groups?	- often as representatives and we ask them to go back to their groups and discuss the interim points and when they come back to either have buy-in from their groups or new things to discuss
How do you judge the success of a visioning exercise ?	- do people come back the second day; how uncomfortable are they - does it represent consensus, do key players champion it, is it realistic, doable
Should the vision be monitored?	- it is difficult to measure but a vision should be a check list that people can look at and ask, are we getting closer to the vision?
What are the possible alternatives to visioning?	- someone can play God and say this is the way it's going to be - a person who really had a sense for the community could write something that might work, but that probably wouldn't work any more

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SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW NUMBER 9	Page 1
Question	***Response***
Why is visioning done?	- to set common goals; to achieve clarity and alignment among stakeholders - not just goals but rather to build shared understanding and committment - "unless you know where you're going, it is hard to get there... people often work at cross purposes"
Does visioning primarily involve abstract ideas or concrete pictures of the future?	- the shared vision ought to be a picture of what people want but that can have both abstracts, i.e. qualities and values and concrete or specific things - the best visions are a marriage of the two
Do all people have the same capacity to create mental images?	- yes, everyone is capapble to a greater or lesser extent - all people's views are important
How are the outcomes of visioning exercises used?	- the most important thing is communications; everyone should understand what the vision is; then the organizational structure should be reviewed to make sure it reflects the vision - the dynamic of visioning drives strategic planning in the sense that strategic planning is the way in which decisions are made - hopefully the old idea of static strategic plans is passing; it is too hard to have set plans when things are changing so fast
Is the visioning process or the resulting vision itself more important?	- the process is more important; it serves to broaden understanding
Is a vision of the future an essential part of all planning?	- one would hope so but not all is; some planning is, of necessity, very mechanistic - it should be an essential part of strategic planning
Is there a difference between individual vision and a consensus vision?	- yes there is a difference but vision should not just be wordsmithing; that tends to promote compromise instead of consensus and that is no good - can't just be horse-trading; need to find the areas of agreement
Is a shared community vision possible?	- yes, it is possible

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SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW NUMBER 9	Page 2
Question	***Response***
Where did you learn how to do visioning?	- this is just common sense, it has always been in my mind i.e. what do we hope to accomplish? - but in an orgnizational context the first time I saw it was when I worked with the Ontario Government in the late 70s and early 80s; there was some propaganda around then and the idea of shared goals/visioning process was used in the pay equity process - worked with a consultant, Linda Pickard who does strategic planning - have read Ziegler, Senge but it is just common sense; read them after the fact
Is there anything that might be called a philosophy, a theory or theory-like set of ideas underlying the visioning?	- the reason why visioning is critical has to do with the nature of the way people work together; everyone has their own values and ideas about the community and they need to be bound together - story of a maritime village where there were ethnic and religious differences but which worked together for the common institutions
Is visioning different than participative planning?	- there can be a difference - participative planning may just be a chance for sectors to comment on a given plan or on individual visions but no process to form a collective vision - visioning is the effort to build a real understanding
Are there examples of specific elements in a plan that originated from involvement of people who would not have been included except through participation in visioning?	- the way in which the city and township are approaching amalgamation may be an example - there was a genuine desire for fairness and an opposition to nastiness and that may have led to the present negotiations that are more equitable than they might otherwise have been
How do you go about facilitating visioning?	- in the case of the exercise I was working on I didn't have much control of the process; there was too much of a set process, answering only certain questions, voting on options; I would have liked more openness - for me what is important is having enough time to really understand other people's views in order to build bridges so a sequence of events that allows that depth of discussion is necessary - my approach probably comes from my background in labour mediation

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SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW NUMBER 9	Page 3
Question	***Response***
Who participates in a visioning exercise?	- in the community setting where I worked the participants who responded to the invitation self-selected and were probably not truly representative of the cross section - they were probably an educated elite and those with particular interests
Do people particiate in visioning as individuals or representatives of groups or interests?	- all sorts of people participated, some as individuals and some representing others; some in both capacities
Are participants leaders or do they become leaders?	- people are not necessarily leaders when they get involved but if they participate in building a consensus then in a way they do become leaders - in the end the vision should be the view of the community leaders as informed by the citizens - there is a lot of cynicism about visioning; people feel leaders are just picking off the best ideas from the process and using them to get re-elected
How should we judge the success of a visioning exercise?	- the exercise is successful to the degree that a consensus is built and that there is a sense of commitment to a more or less common goal
How should we monitor the outcome of visioning?	- if it has worked then there will be a follow-up; the people who have participated will be motivated to continue to be involved and there will be no need for formal monitoring although there will be a need to encourage and channel this in practical terms
What are the possible alternatives to visioning?	- the alternative is elitism, just those in power or a small group formulating a plan and then getting comments - if you intend a limited dialogue with the public then you should be honest about that

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SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW NUMBER **10**	Page **1**
Question	***Response***
Why is visioning done?	- you can't plan twenty years ahead without just extending the baggage of today - we try to get people to imagine a very long time into the future, 100 years
Does visioning primarily involve abstract ideas or concrete pictures of the future?	- [the interviewees chuckled and said they had never analyzed this] - it is about both but mostly about abstracts, attitudes and even organizational dynamics but we need to use certain visual images for some people in order for them to understand what we mean - if people drink the water from the lake in front of them that is very concrete but they can come to understand that there are many other more abstract connections; the water is part of a whole system and understanding ecological health is important as is community continuity - we are constantly going across and making connection; it comes on like an image on a computer screen a little bit at a time - there are weird combinations of abstract ideas and concrete reality - we keep going back to things that are real
Do all people have the same capacity to create mental images?	- we find people's ability to see things is surprisingly good; the ones who have the most difficulty are the bureaucrats and politicians; the general public and kids know pretty well what they want; the rigid ones are the decision makers - we handle that by building up a good background of information and having clear conceptual response and then get concrete and find an image to operate it out on paper for people; now we work more with computers and 3D images; we are starting to understand the kind of visualizations and connections you can make
How are the outcomes of visioning exercises used?	- the process leads to a document, a written plan but in a larger way it is about empowering a community to make choices - we try to use it to show people what they've got and to leave them thinking that if we like what we've got how do we keep it and if we don't like it how do we change it
Is the visioning process or the resulting vision itself more important?	- we try to set up a whole attitude about the future so the process is more important; a fixed plan is out of date almost before it's finished; a process can change, it can adapt new knowledge, it can throw out old knowledge - people need to keep going back to their community and their landscape and keep interacting with it and drawing strength from it - there can be principles that people maintain such as keeping the environment healthy

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SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW NUMBER 10	Page 2
Question	***Response***
Where did you learn how to do visioning?	- [one interviewee] when I was young I went through some difficult experiences and it taught me 3 things: first that democracy is very fragile, second is that when society turns its back on you then nature is what you can count on and finally that you need to be sensitive and so what I do now is to try to work with people to accomplish their purposes with these things in mind - [second interviewee] there are a number of planners and landscape architects who developed various process ideas in the late 60s where they looked to nature as a base and understood how communities grew and evolved; people like Ian McHarg and Michael Hough
Is there anything that might be called a philosophy, a theory or theory-like set of ideas underlying the vision approach to planning?	- philosophically speaking we're practicing phenomenology [there was no further elaboration on this in the interview but the Concise Columbia Encyclopedia (1983) defines phenomenology in part as a "method devoid of presuppositions... focussing purely on phenomena and elucidating their meaning through intuition. Anything that cannot be perceived, and thus is not immediately given to the consciousness, is excluded.] - it is an exercise in existentialism, of empowering a community to make decisions
Is visioning different than participative planning?	- you can't just ask a diverse group of people to "participate" in thinking about the future; we've found that you have to give them ideas
How do you go about facilitating visioning?	- we try to get a broad consensus; we listen to people and then they listen to us - we think of the 3 Ls: listen, learn, then leadership; you have to do the first 2 before you can lead; you have to breath in before you can breath out - our approach is not really a system, not a formula; it is water logic rather than rock logic; we try to stay open - [second interviewee] we focus on the task rather than the process; we try to understand the specific situation, needs, dreams of the people we are working with; if you do your homework there is such a rich group of things to work with that ideas aren't a problem; we try to keep our antennae out and understand what kind of dynamics you face; we don't run it through a matrix, it is not prescriptive' it is very associative - we really do listen to people; we work very hard and put ourselves on the line and constantly demonstrate that you are learning and building real relationships with people - in the end the facilitator has to lead, to get closure, that's why they hired you

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Question	***Response***
How should we judge the success of a visioning exercise?	- it needs to start a whole community process; it's not just the resulting plan or the institution but what happens in the schools, what happens in the community, what happens out in the landscape - in one of our projects it made the whole river valley more visible and more tangible to the community; now 18 years later it's their river; they use the planning document in schools to teach history
What is essential for visioning?	- these are intense, long term involvements - we find it easier to work in smaller communities where people know each other, the feedback loops are shorter, they are more receptive, the experience is more direct - for us it is very high energy, concentrated - what is important in our work is the life skills of the individuals in our firm and the attitudes we bring - there needs to be a genuine commitment on the part of the community leaders and an empowerment of the people

Appendix F

Interviewees

Mark Bekkering	Hamilton-Wentworth Region Box 910, 119 King St. W. Hamilton, ON, L8N 3V9	(905) 546-2195
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Trevor Hancock	York University 29 Napier Kleinberg, ON, L0J 1C0	(905) 893-2808
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Carolyn Kearns	The Randolph Group 111 King St. E Toronto, ON, M5C 1G6	(416) 368-7402
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Brian Marshall	REIC Ltd. 15010 Yonge St. Aurora, ON L4G 1M6	(905) 841-5551
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Appendix G

Journals Reviewed

Journals Reviewed	Library Call Numbers
Australian Planner	NA 9280 A9
Berkeley Planning Journal	HT 390.B46
Built Environment	NA 1 O38x
Cities	HT 101 C57x
City Magazine	HT 169 C3C58x
Ekistics	HN 1 E45
Environment and Planning (B) Planning & Design	NA 2005 E58
Futurist	CB 161 F8x
Journal of Planning Education and Research	HT 165.52 I6x
Journal of Planning Literature	HT 166 J67x
Journal of the American Planning Association	NA 9000 A45
Journal of Urban History	HT 101 J68x
Landscape and Urban Planning	QH 540 L3x
Places	NA 2540 P52x
Plan Canada	NA 9000 T582
Planning	NA 9000 P52
Planning Perspectives	HT 166 P55x
Planning Quarterly	HT 169 N4T6x
Planning Theory Newsletter	HT 165.5 P53
Planning Week	NA 9000 P52
Regional Science and Urban Studies	HT 390 R4x
Regional Studies	NA 9000 R35
Small Town	HT 166 S6x
Socio-Economic Planning Sciences	HN 1 S66
Third World Planning	HT 390 Ta
Town and Country Planning	NA 9000 T5
Town Planning Review	NA 9000 T6
Urban Affairs Quarterly	HT 101 U67
Urban History	HT 103 U65x
Urban Studies	HT 103 U7