



Linking the Old University Neighbourhood to the City of Guelph since 1897

# Old University Neighbourhood Residents' Association Inc.

## Spring Newsletter June 2015

Edited by John Campbell

### Old University and Centennial Neighbourhood Community Improvement Plan - A Review

Joan Jylanne, Senior Policy Planner, Guelph

Almost a decade ago the Old University and Centennial Neighbourhood (OUCN) Community Improvement Plan (CIP) was received by Council in August 2006. *(The Plan is 86 pages long with 214 pages of appendices. To find it on the City website (guelph.ca) enter CIP in the Search box of the home page and scroll down the resultant list. Ed.)*

In those nine years the CIP has influenced a number of neighbourhood changes, and impacted city-wide policies. The neighbourhood has a rich cultural heritage dating back to 1854 when the City's boundary expanded past the John Galt Plan into the Brooklyn area, with a second boundary expansion in 1966 bringing lands south of Forest Street into the City. Most of the neighbourhood's development occurred during the 1950s and 1960s. The neighbourhood naturally evolved from one mostly populated by young families to one with a wide range of household types such as an increasing number of retirees, some young families and many temporary residents.

The CIP was developed to help integrate changes in land use with infrastructure, transportation and recreational reinvestment initiatives in order to enhance the quality, safety and stability of the community. It provides criteria for the evaluation of development applications, presents a number of potential physical improvements for the area, and serves as an input to departmental work plans, budget processes and city-wide policy development, including the City's Local Growth Management Strategy, foundational to the update of the City's Official Plan.

Since the CIP was initiated in October 2002, according to Census data (2011) the population of the neighbourhood has declined by about 200

### NOTICE OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

Thursday, June 11, 7 pm

**Guelph Community Christian School Gym  
195 College Ave W**

President's Report - John Gruzleski

Treasurer's Report - Roy Allingham

Election of Officers and Members-at-large for 2015-16

Guest Speaker - Joan Jylanne

"Review of the Neighbourhood Community Improvement Plan"

Councillors' Corner

people while the number of private dwellings has increased by about 160. Also the neighbourhood's share of the City's shared rental housing has declined to 10% from 13%, as other parts of the City have increased its supply of registered accessory apartments and certified lodging houses. *(No data exists on other forms of shared rental housing. Ed.)*

The CIP was developed with the community through extensive public consultation including, the establishment of an advisory committee, four community workshops, a two day design charrette looking at key change areas, project newsletters and a formal public meeting. We heard how community members valued the older established character of the area including cultural heritage properties and landscapes, mature vegetation and tree-lined streets, extensive open space networks, trails and the river system. The proximity of the neighbourhood to both the downtown, university and a number of local schools, now mostly private, makes it attractive to a diversity of household types and populations.

This has increased pressure to intensify, reinforced by changes in Provincial growth management policies, especially Places to Grow legislation. The City needed to determine where and how it was going to meet provincial growth targets. Meanwhile the

neighbourhood's population was aging and two local schools, were closing. Infrastructure was also aging and a number of recreation and community facility improvements were surfacing. Change was inevitable and managing it, rather than reacting to it in an ad hoc manner, was imperative.

The CIP identified five key change areas along with a desire to designate a heritage conservation district within the neighbourhood to ensure change is respectful of the cultural heritage significance of the neighbourhood. The CIP also assessed neighbourhood opportunities to support the City's growth needs while still protecting the character of the neighbourhood valued by the community. The CIP identified the opportunity to accommodate approximately 300 additional units within the neighbourhood, largely on the sites of two local schools, scheduled to close. The two local public schools ended up being reused as two private schools so the additional units did not materialize.

The City's Official Plan Update (OPA 48), currently under appeal to the Ontario Municipal Board (OMB), provides an updated policy framework against which to review development applications, including development within the five key change areas. The new policies take a more directive approach to shaping the type, form and location of future growth in the City than the current Official Plan. The new policies direct growth to specific nodes and corridors within the City reducing the need for other areas of the City, such as the OUCN, to intensify and change. Change within these other areas is anticipated to be more modest in nature and compatible with their immediate surrounding area. Development within the neighbourhood is also better protected by OPA 48's enhanced urban design policies to ensure high quality urban design consistent with the directions approved in the City's Urban Design

Action Plan. The new urban design policies provide for a stronger pedestrian orientated environment, sustainable streetscape designs, landscaping, and built form, including the regulation of exterior building design through site plan control.

In September 2014 Council approved the Brooklyn and College Hill Heritage Conservation District (HCD), protecting approximately 160 properties. The designation of the HCD is currently under appeal to the OMB. The completion of the CIP was a factor in choosing this neighbourhood as the City's first heritage conservation district given the cluster of cultural heritage resources and general community support.

Other neighbourhood changes include the addition of bike lanes to College Avenue, the renovation of John McCrae Museum, and the forthcoming development of ten townhouses on Gordon Street near the confluence of the Speed and Eramosa Rivers, the recipient of over \$300,000 in brownfield redevelopment funding. There have been some city-wide policy changes and initiatives that will help protect the character of the neighbourhood. These include 74 properties within the neighbourhood included on the City's Heritage Register, the City's Urban Forest Management Plan, shared rental housing regulations, and Brownfields Community Improvement Plan and programs. Infrastructure improvements will continue to be made within the neighbourhood, including parks improvements.

The CIP starts with a quote from Heraclitus which still holds true, "Nothing endures but change". The value added by the CIP is the engagement of the community in managing the change so that neighbourhood character is protected and improved while still addressing city-wide needs and opportunities.

### Old University Neighbourhood Residents' Association Membership Registration Form

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ Postal Code: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_  I am willing to deliver some Newsletters

**Annual membership is \$20.00 per family. Please make cheques payable to OUNRA. Bring form to the meeting or deliver to Roy Allingham, 18 Mary St., N1G2A7. Thank you for your support.**

## **PRESIDENT'S LETTER, JUNE 2015**

This is my last letter to you as President of the Old University Neighbourhood Residents' Association. We will elect a new president and a new executive at our annual business meeting on June 11. Instead of my usual discussion of what OUNRA has done over the past year, I have decided to reflect on my own involvement with the Association and on the subject of Guelph neighbourhood associations, in general.

I first became involved with OUNRA in the spring of 2007, less than a year after moving to Guelph from Montreal. A telephone call from one of the past presidents sparked my interest. I am not certain how he obtained my name, but I suspect that one of my neighbours mentioned this new person who had moved into Old University the summer before. In Montreal, it was very difficult to become involved in neighbourhood and city matters simply because of the large scale of things, and so I thought this would be an interesting thing to do and a good way to get to know Guelph better.

The eight years of working with OUNRA proved to be a very rewarding experience. Along the way, I was able to interact with the city government, with many of the city staff, and, of course, with many of you. I learned a lot these past eight years, and am hopefully a better citizen for it.

However, as I leave the position of president, I realize how important and difficult it is to maintain the long term health of any neighbourhood association. The Old University Neighbourhood Residents' Association is the oldest, continually operating residents' association in the City of Guelph. Residents' associations rise and fall with local crises. Recently, we have seen the rise of the McElderry Group created to oppose the construction of purpose built student housing at the corner of Edinburgh Road and Kortright. The immediate crisis will pass, but will that association survive to serve the neighbourhood on smaller issues?

During the past 10 or 12 years, OUNRA has served the neighbourhood well in providing input on several major issues: the Guelph Campus Co-Op Development on Hales Crescent, a proposed mixed-use development of the St. Paul's school site on Forest Avenue, the potential sale of the College Avenue Public School site to developers, and the whole issue of shared rental housing and the interaction of the neighbourhood with the University of Guelph.

A vibrant neighbourhood association such as ours continually watches and comments on neighbourhood development plans, big and small, and stays current on City Hall activity. Thus it is able to respond quickly to

inevitable serious threats. Citizens who value their neighbourhood should ensure that their association is viable and working even in times when there is no large crisis impending. So it is essential that a significant number of residents continues to volunteer some time to playing an active role with OUNRA, for example by delivering newsletters or becoming a member of our executive committee. Sure, we live in an overly hectic society and everyone is busy, but remember that changes to your neighbourhood may impact the quality of your life. So it makes sense to be aware and involved in what is happening before a new crisis occurs.

If you wish to become involved with the maintenance and betterment of Old University, please volunteer for OUNRA. You can do this by contacting the president or a member of the association executive. The contact list can be found on our website [ounra.wordpress.com](http://ounra.wordpress.com) or in the semi-annual newsletter.

Best wishes for a continued happy, vibrant neighbourhood

John Gruzleski  
President, OUNRA

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### **Fixing street lights.**

John Campbell (suggested by Bruce Ryan)

Bruce Ryan and I who live one house apart had trouble with the two adjacent street lights in front of our houses. They either kept going on and off or didn't come on at all. It wasn't too dark when one of them stopped functioning but when both of them failed he decided he should do something about it, but what? Eventually he found the answer on the Guelph homepage as follows:

Go to City of Guelph homepage ([guelph.ca](http://guelph.ca)).

Click the link "How can we help you."

Scroll down to and click "Traffic Control, Street Lights, Signs and Signals."

Scroll down to and click "Street Lights - Maintenance."

Click "Report Street Light form."

This brings up a form that requests your name and email address along with information about the malfunctioning street light.

Now we have working streetlights once again.

That "how can we help you" heading links to all kinds of useful information from figuring out if your neighbour has a permit for the large garage he is building on his property to how to complain about suspected by-law infringement. You can't expect the City to know you have a localized problem unless you

tell them. What a great site we have at [guelph.ca](http://guelph.ca)! Works better than using the telephone. Check it out.

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## Tree-planting 2015

John Campbell (information from Moritz)

Moritz Sanio, Old University resident, is a tree fanatic who loves to plant trees anywhere he's allowed to and also loves to talk about them. He's a missionary persuading converts to share his love and help him with the planting. This year on May 2 over a hundred people – he guesses 175 but I didn't see him actually counting - from the neighbourhood and beyond turned up to help him plant trees in Hugh Guthrie Park (HGP) in a great community-building exercise!

Moritz wrote a piece on tree-planting for the Spring 2013 Newsletter but it's worth writing about his work again. Naturally, I am most familiar with what he has done in Centennial and Hugh Guthrie Parks although he works all over Guelph mostly with volunteer students on school days but also residents on weekends. He works for the Grand River Conservation Authority and has been the Trees for Guelph (TFG) Coordinator for seven years. He has worked with most schools in the City and estimates that since it was founded in 1990 TFG has planted 125,000 trees in parks, greenways, school grounds and other sites . That's 5,000 per year.

The city prepares planting sites on city property, delivers mulch, provides tools, provides funds to purchase tree stock and other plants. GRCA furnishes office space, access to their native plant stock from Burford Nursery and others, a truck and some tools. McNeil Consumer Healthcare has consistently provided funding to help offset their carbon foot print. School Boards supply staff

and students to plant trees and provide additional sites to be planted. The tree-planting experience is combined with lessons on the environment and the virtues of native species.

Most planting sites are linked with a pool of volunteers that live close by (usually school students). Planters build a sense of ownership with "their trees" and take an ongoing interest in their progress, which improves their chance of survival.

During the frenetic planting season for five weeks Moritz drives daily to the GRCA Forestry barn in Cambridge and selects 150 -350 trees and shrubs from the cooler, picks up the truck with 30-80 shovels and buckets and drives into Guelph to a different school or Park and engages between 30-500 students for a day of planting. He also works Saturdays on community plantings. On Sunday he rests ... very well.

Most planting sites are city parks but school yards are gaining favour. Typically he works at 9-13 school sites and 5-9 Parks and greenways every year. This year he estimates volunteer participation at 2500-3500 students and other Guelphites.

Most plantings follow the same format as our Hugh Guthrie Park which was the first to include a wide variety of wildflowers to populate the understory. This planting is all native in origin including some rare and endangered native species. HGP will take several more years of planting to complete, mature in the middle of this century, and eventually be a seed source for native species that are hardy in Guelph. HGP is a prototype that is finding favour in other locations in Guelph and elsewhere.

We are building these mini-arboretums for ourselves and our successors. May they get the long-term TLC they need to thrive!

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## Executive Committee 2014 – 2015

### Officers

President	John Gruzleski	519-829-3225	<a href="mailto:j.gruzleski@sympatico.ca">j.gruzleski@sympatico.ca</a>
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**OUNRA Website:- [www.OUNRA.wordpress.com](http://www.OUNRA.wordpress.com)**

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