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Chair

Mr. Mark Warawa

Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development

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• (1530)

[English]

The Chair (Mr. Mark Warawa (Langley, CPC)): Welcome, colleagues. We will call the meeting to order, this being our 55th meeting of the Standing Committee on Environment and Sustainable Development, as we continue our study on urban conservation practices in Canada.

I want to welcome each of the witnesses with us today. Each witness group will have up to 10 minutes for their testimony. As you approach the 10 minutes, I will give you a one-minute signal. Then we'll open it up for some questions.

Thank you so much for being with us today. We're really excited to hear your testimony.

We will begin with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, Ms. Ceschi-Smith, for 10 minutes.

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith (Vice-Chair, Standing Committee on Environmental Issues and Sustainable Development, Councillor, City of Brantford, Federation of Canadian Municipalities): Thank you, Mr. Chair and members of the committee, for this opportunity to speak to you today.

On behalf of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, I am pleased to contribute a municipal perspective on urban conservation practices as you consider a national conservation plan.

We have been the national voice of municipal governments since 1901. We represent nearly 2,000 municipal governments which, in turn, represent more than 90% of Canada's population. Local governments share stewardship of the environment with other orders of government. Municipalities designate local parks, protect the urban tree canopy, local lakes and rivers, and ensure that Canadians can continue to rely on the environmental, social, and economic benefits of these spaces.

Urban forests are hugely beneficial to communities. They keep neighbourhoods cool, improve air quality, provide wildlife habitat, remove CO₂ from the atmosphere, retain stormwater runoff, and prevent erosion. Urban forests also add esthetic, recreational, and economic value to communities, all of which enhance the quality of life. In 2011, Oakville valued these benefits at \$2.1 million annually, and Peel Region at \$22.7 million annually.

Canada's urban forests face significant threats from invasive pest species such as the emerald ash borer and the mountain pine beetle, as well as climate change, which supports the expansion of invasive species, or in some communities leads to conditions such as drought

which kills trees. Municipalities bear the high costs of managing these challenges, although the problem is national. The emerald ash borer illustrates the conservation challenges and costs faced by municipalities.

First identified in Canada in 2002 in the city of Windsor, the emerald ash borer has spread into many parts of southern Ontario and Quebec and is expected to soon hit Manitoba. The emerald ash borer will cost Canadians over \$2 billion in treatment and replanting activities. The city of Kitchener estimates the cost of \$10.4 million to eradicate the emerald ash borer, \$7.5 million of which would need to be spent within the next five years. Toronto's emerald ash borer management plan was estimated to be \$1.14 million in 2011. Toronto is spending \$7 million per year in preventive treatment of trees.

Climate change is creating in Canada a warmer and, in some areas, a drier climate, which adds to the challenge of managing urban forests. The mountain pine beetle has decimated millions of acres of B.C. forests and has now spread to Alberta and Saskatchewan, partly because of successive dry summers and mild winters. Communities such as Prince George, B.C. have seen parks completely decimated, negatively impacting property values and creating high management costs. Between 2005 and 2011, the city spent over \$9.52 million operating its mountain pine beetle and community wildfire protection programs.

Other urban canopies face different climate problems. In the city of Edmonton over the last decade, an average of 43,000 trees have died annually due to drought conditions, compared to previous annual loss rates of 600 to 900 trees. Despite spending millions of dollars, Edmonton has been unable to keep pace with tree losses. Edmonton's urban forest management plan is helping the municipality manage their canopy, but significant adaptation costs remain.

The federal government plays an important role in addressing this problem, from both statutory and economic perspectives.

•(1535)

The Canadian Food Inspection Agency is mandated to prevent the importation, exportation, and spread of plant pests under the Plant Protection Act. Under this act the Canadian Food Inspection Agency can place restrictions or prohibitions on items that may enable the transport of forest pests, and designate quarantine zones, or areas or zones free of specific tree species.

Although municipalities have incurred high costs to comply with these federal orders, no compensation has been provided to municipalities. These federal orders are designed to slow infestation across the region and provincial borders rather than limit infestation to the affected municipality. This means that any compliance costs incurred by infected municipalities are borne for the benefit of the country as a whole.

In terms of financial support, the now defunct Environment Canada invasive alien species partnership program enabled municipalities to apply for funds to control and eradicate forest pests. Between 2005 and 2012, \$5.7 million of the invasive alien species partnership program was allocated to the control of pests, and \$85 million of that budget was allocated to 170 projects focused on preventing, detecting, and managing invasive alien species. The maximum request for funding under the program was \$50,000, too small to have much of an effect compared with the millions spent annually by communities. The funding for the invasive alien species partnership program was terminated as of March 31, 2012.

Short on effective funding, the program also had structural inefficiency. For example, in the context of B.C.'s mountain pine beetle infestation, uncertainties about the definition of invasive species made communities struggling with this pest ineligible for the funds. This, in turn, led to an insufficient response and continued propagation into Alberta and Saskatchewan. Although Prince George and others were able to access other federal programs, such as the two-year community adjustment fund, it also ended in 2011, while the problem persists.

This brings me to solutions.

Municipalities are doing their part to implement a range of strategies to protect the health of urban forests. However, threats to urban forests are often beyond the control of local and even provincial and territorial governments. There is an important role for the federal government to play, and we have some recommendations.

Our first recommendation is to make partnerships between all orders of government official policy with respect to urban forest management, including climate change and forest pests, across municipal, provincial, and territorial borders. Partnerships between all orders of government on strategies to contain forest pests, adapt to climate change, and other forestry initiatives will lead to the best outcomes for Canadians.

The second recommendation is that the government should take a leadership role in urban forestry through a broadened research mandate. Neither the federal nor the provincial governments currently include urban forestry in their mandates, except for a limited role with respect to exotic invasive pests. Other jurisdictions, such as the United States Forest Service and the European Urban Forestry Research and Information Centre, include urban forestry as

a program and research area. With climate change and other stresses expected to play a greater role, this work will be important in enabling communities across the country to adapt to future risks.

Our third recommendation is that the government provide financial support to combat urban forest threats of a national scope.

The cost of managing the impacts of invasive pests and climate change on urban forests is in the billions of dollars. The government should establish funding assistance to municipalities for the control and management of species, such as the emerald ash borer, and any future significant diseases and insects. The government should also create and fund programs designed to support the ongoing sustainable management of urban forests.

Thank you very much.

•(1540)

The Chair: Thank you so much.

Next is Monsieur Garand and Madame Bellemare. I believe you'll be sharing your 10 minutes. Please proceed.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Garand (Managing Director, Conseil régional de l'environnement de Laval): Good afternoon, Mr. Chair.

Good afternoon, members of the committee. I am very happy to be here with you today.

The Conseil régional de l'environnement (CRE) covers the territory of Laval. There are 16 regional environmental councils in Quebec, serving the entire region, with the exception of the far north. The regional councils are created by environmental organizations and by the public. They are grassroots organizations.

For the past 16 years, the Conseil régional de l'environnement de Laval has been working on the protection, conservation and development of natural environments, land use planning, public transport, waste management and so on. We have a small team of four professionals. We have an urban planner, a geographer, an ecologist and myself, working in environment and ecology.

Since the 1950s, our land use planning has had a major impact on our ecosystems and natural environments. We are actually exceeding the capacity of our ecosystems, meaning water, air and soil. That means that we are currently eating up capital. We are spending more than we are making in interest, and we no longer benefit from ecological services.

The loss of natural environments in urban areas and urban fringes, especially in southern Canada, is affecting climate change. We are seeing a loss of natural environments and biodiversity, a loss of flood plains, a loss of farmland and poor management of rainwater. We have been looking at what is happening in our region, in Richelieu, as well as around Red River. We have been looking at everything that is happening in the other provinces. We are seeing erosion because of excessive logging. We are seeing the poor quality of our waterways because we are now building along them. We are channeling the waterways and draining asphalt and all sorts of chemicals from cars into our waterways. This has been largely documented. We are also seeing the erosion of shorelines and sewage discharges, meaning everything that flows into our water.

There are also heat islands. I am actually leading a research project, one of the most extensive research projects ever conducted in North America. It covers the Montreal area. The university consortium includes the University of Montreal, the Université du Québec à Montréal and the Institut de recherche de biologie végétale. In the metropolitan area, from 1985 to 2005, we lost between 6 to 7 hectares of farmland and natural environments per year. That means that we are losing 12 to 14 hectares of natural environments and farmland every year because of urban sprawl.

We can see urban sprawl, the poor quality of our landscapes, the one person per car pattern—which produces substantial CO₂ emissions—air pollution, smog, the use of wood-burning stoves in some urban fringes and even in urban centres because of condominiums. There are a lot of households, and the energy demand is high. We are constantly using too much and requiring more energy.

So the CRE feels that one of the issues that deserves special attention is the management of lands so as to be mindful of the capacity of our ecosystems. On the north shore of Laval, where there are more than 500,000 people, we have had water supply problems since 2001. Following an order in council, we are required to blast the rocks between the Lac des Deux Montagnes and the Rivière-des-Mille-Îles to provide 400,000 or 500,000 residents with water.

If we had not done that, we would have jeopardized people's lives last summer. In terms of heat islands, there was a loss of biodiversity in 2010. Yes, it is important. We are talking about invasive plants, which is also important. However, climate change and heat islands are part of the reality. In 2010, in a seven-week period, 106 people died in Montreal during the heat wave. Those figures have been documented. If we do not think about that and about what a life is worth, we have some serious questions to ask ourselves, and we must reconsider our values. We are not just talking about economic values, we are talking about the life of the planet. I urge you to seriously look at everything that is being said and everything that is happening. The clock is ticking. It is one minute to midnight, not five minutes to midnight. We are running out of time.

It is now important to pay attention to the densification of lands to reduce the pressure on natural environments and farmland, as well as land use planning based on public and active transportation. We also have to identify and define the natural environments that need protection, conservation and development. In all the development plans in cities across Canada, when we determine the industrial areas, business areas and residential areas, we forget to specify

which natural environments we are going to protect, preserve and, above all, make available to Canadians.

• (1545)

We are also talking about creating buffer zones. Depending on where you are in Canada, some regions have industrial areas, and people live close to some of those areas. Buffer zones should be created to limit the impact on health.

It is also a question of looking at legislation, guidelines and government regulations from a sustainable development point of view. The legislation is falling by the wayside and it is not being applied. We are afraid to apply the legislation and we are often wondering where we are heading and why the legislation is not enforced. The excuse is always that the environment harms the economy. But that is not true. The environment has to be a part of the economy. We have to pay attention to it more than ever.

Natural environments are important, be they wetlands that filter the water like kidneys or trees that catch the atmospheric dust and CO₂. They work for us around the clock, 365 days a year without asking for anything in return. That has always been the case and we are entitled to that, the same way we are entitled to high quality water.

Before I give the floor to Ms. Bellemare, let me point out that municipal taxes must be reviewed. Right now, in Quebec, the current government is talking about doing so, but to help people and municipalities across Canada, we must review the municipal taxes of all the territories and provinces. This is urgent because, in 15 or 20 years, 80% of Canadians will be living in major urban centres. It is important to make sure that those people will not suffocate and die at a younger age.

Thank you. I will now give the floor to Ms. Bellemare.

Miss Marie-Christine Bellemare (Project Officer, Conseil régional de l'environnement de Laval): Good afternoon. I would like to thank the committee for inviting us today.

I am a biologist by training. I started working with the Conseil régional de l'environnement in the summer. My mandate requires me to study the wetlands of Laval. I have discovered that there is a very rich biodiversity in southern Quebec and southern Canada. Actually, most of Canada's biodiversity is in the south, but so is a lot of the urban sprawl. Let me just say that we are doing a lot to protect the north and we are exerting a lot of pressure, but we should pay attention to the situation in southern Canada.

We talked about urban conservation initiatives that can be taken into consideration. There are greenbelt initiatives. I am not sure if you are familiar with that concept. There is a greenbelt in Toronto and Vancouver, and we are in the process of creating one in Montreal. As part of the studies that are under way right now, we are trying to assess the ecosystem goods and services of a potential greenbelt in Montreal. We are talking about more than \$4 billion a year in services provided by the environment.

All this to say that ecology can be of service to us. We are part of this ecosystem. I feel that Canada has what it takes to lead the way on the world stage, given that we still have many of our native natural environments, which are still viable. Unfortunately, I get the impression that there are not a lot of regulations in place to protect this heritage. In my view, this is a natural heritage that we can pass on to future generations.

Finally, I would like to say that we often talk about forests, meaning land areas, when we talk about conservation. But we should also talk about aquatic environments and farmlands. They are all part of the same system. We have to work toward biodiversity, which also includes the diversity of available habitats.

• (1550)

Mr. Guy Garand: In closing, I would like to thank Fisheries and Oceans Canada for helping us save dozens of hectares of wetlands in eastern and western Laval. We have saved about a dozen hectares in the eastern sector and around 60 to 70 hectares in the western sector. There were fish and rare birds in those wetlands, and it is this department—not the Government of Quebec—that stepped up. So my thanks go to Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Unfortunately, the Fisheries Act was amended. Section 35, I believe, was amended for reasons that are unknown to me. It would be useful to bring it back because it is related to biodiversity.

Thank you.

[English]

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Next we'll hear from Mr. Dion. You have 10 minutes.

Mr. Ken Dion (Senior Project Manager, Watershed Management Division, Toronto and Region Conservation Authority): Good afternoon. My name is Ken Dion. I am a senior project manager with the Toronto and Region Conservation Authority.

I wanted to thank you, Mr. Chair and members, for this opportunity to address the committee regarding urban conservation in Canada. Today I am addressing the committee in the capacity as project manager for the Lakeview waterfront connection environmental assessment project on behalf of the Credit Valley Conservation Authority.

As you may be aware, Credit Valley Conservation and Toronto and Region Conservation Authority are two of 36 conservation authorities in Ontario. Conservation authorities are community-based watershed management agencies delivering services and programs to protect, manage, and conserve water and land resources in Ontario.

We operate through partnerships with government, landowners, and other stakeholders. In Ontario, more than 90% of the population lives within the jurisdiction of a conservation authority, including virtually all the urban areas. CVC and TRCA have a long history of collaborating on cross-watershed issues.

Today we were hoping to have Mr. Mike Puddister, director of restoration and stewardship from CVC join us, but he was not able to attend so I am opening up today's chat.

Jim Tovey is a councillor from the City of Mississauga and Region of Peel. He also sits on the boards of both CVC and TRCA. He will be following me and will be talking about Mississauga's Inspiration Lakeview vision, which the Lakeview waterfront connection project is tied to.

We have a convoluted management structure for the Lakeview waterfront connection environmental assessment. Ultimately this is being led by the Region of Peel. Their main interest is infrastructure, and they have a lot of projects to be undertaken over the next 10 years involving pipes and roads that have to be upgraded. That's going to generate a lot of fill over the next many years.

Costs for these capital works are increasing significantly with regard to the handling and disposal of this material. It's anticipated that about \$38 million to \$50 million is simply budgeted approximately for disposing of this material over this timeframe. They were looking for a better way to use and reuse this material that's generated through their other capital works locally to have strong public benefits locally.

The majority of the work that's going to be undertaken for this project is within CVC's jurisdiction. However, TRCA has a lot of experience working on these waterfront projects and we were asked to provide project management services. We also have an extensive team of ecologists between both conservation authorities, and a strong consultant team.

As will be seen on the screen, the project is located on the borders of Toronto and Mississauga, Region of Peel jurisdiction. TRCA's jurisdiction is with the City of Toronto, of course, and CVC's is with the City of Mississauga. The main project area is located within this area, in blue.

There are a number of issues with regard to the project. The project site that we're talking about is along Lake Ontario's shoreline and it's associated with the Region of Peel's G.E. Booth waste water treatment plant. It's tying into the east side of Ontario Power Generation's former Lakeview coal-powered power plant site and TRCA's jurisdiction with Marie Curtis Park and the Arsenal Lands.

I have identified Hanlan feeder main, which happens to be one of the main capital projects that the Region of Peel is proposing to undertake over the next several years, which is going to generate a significant amount of clean fill. It's this proximity to the project site, as well as the conditions that are along this existing shoreline, which helped us spearhead this project moving forward.

Of course there are other issues we have to be very aware of. We have water quality intakes for the water sources for the City of Mississauga and the Region of Peel, and a significant local community and residential community in the area as well.

This project is also being tied in with the City of Mississauga's Inspiration Lakeview vision. This is a community-led visioning process that occurred throughout 2010. It basically is looking to revitalize brownfields in a largely industrial area, working with OPG to come up with one of the most sustainable communities within the city. Jim will be talking more on that.

As a toehold for this process, the community, through that visioning process, identified a strong desire to see a naturalized waterfront park created as part of this overall Inspiration Lakeview. Our EA moving forward for this project is the first step of many that will be coming forward in the city of Mississauga.

• (1555)

This next image is a great one of the site that we're talking about. We're looking southwest from the air. It's a large industrial site. It's the treatment plant. We have the formal coal pile area for the OPG, Ontario Power Generation, power lots, the power plant area, as well as large piers that go out into the lake. We have a nice green space that ties in with Etobicoke Creek, in TRCA's jurisdiction, with the parks at Marie Curtis Park and the Arsenal Lands, which has a long military history, within this area.

Of course the main feature of this site is water. Lake Ontario is right next door and is a main focus of why this project is moving forward. We also have multiple streams within this area that we hope to incorporate into the design for this waterfront park: Applewood Creek, as well as Serson Creek, which was actually split years ago, so that low flows go through a culvert underneath the plant and discharge into the lake, whereas storm flows go through a channel further to the west between the two industrial sites. Part of the plans we're looking at are to consolidate these flows together and to incorporate them into future coastal wetlands.

There are also a lot of heavy impacts that led us to deciding on the location of this site. Historically this site was heavily mined for aggregate materials in the 1800s using a process called stone-hooking. Port Credit was ground zero on Lake Ontario as the main focus for this activity. The shoreline has been heavily infilled to accommodate industry, and all the shorelines have been heavily armoured as well. There are very poor processes. The public is not able to get to the waterfront or along it, and in this area the coastal wetlands have all since been filled in.

As I mentioned, the Region of Peel is producing over 1.2 million cubic metres of fill as part of their day-to-day operations for expanding their infrastructure, as is the City of Mississauga as part of their bus rapid transit system.

Currently, this is all clean material, and it's being treated as waste. They're shipping it long distances to landfill sites at huge and ever-increasing costs, which creates a major drain on local municipal tax dollars. The main focus of this is to determine whether there is a way we can create this material as a resource that can provide a source of funding for us to move forward and bring back a lot to the community.

This project is generated through the collaboration of numerous municipalities and regional governments and conservation authorities to create a new natural park along the shoreline that will establish an ecological habitat and public access to this part of the waterfront.

Some of our objectives are to create new wetlands, coastal wetlands, coastal meadows, and forests, and to allow opportunities for the public to get to the water, to celebrate the water, to move along the water, and to connect to various waterfront parks between the cities of Toronto and Mississauga.

A major objective, of course, is the fiscal innovative funding approach that we're looking at using. The idea behind this is that if the Region of Peel was looking for \$50 million to haul and treat this as waste and we can provide a local source, the difference in costs to get the material to the source becomes our funding that we can use for all the planning, land acquisition, and habitat creation to create a new local waterfront park that will greatly improve the environment within this area. There are also huge community spinoffs to not throwing this capital investment away to long-haul disposal.

Of course, we also have to work within the existing infrastructure framework. There are the waste water treatment facilities, and we also want to coordinate with Inspiration Lakeview work, which Jim will talk about shortly, the Lake Ontario integrated shoreline strategy, which CVC is leading, and other provincial and federal objectives for the environment.

We're leading this project right now through an EA process. That's an individual EA through the provincial process. That's a two-phased approach. We spend the first part of the process identifying how we're going to do the EA, which is through the EA terms of reference. We started in January. We submitted our EA TOR, terms of reference, for approval in July. We're waiting any day now for the approvals of that. Once we receive approvals, we'll move forward with the EA itself, which we hope to complete by the end of June 2013. We'll have approvals that will get us to the end of 2013. We're hoping to have construction of this great project some time in the summer of July 2014.

Thank you very much.

• (1600)

The Chair: The final witness is Councillor Jim Tovey from the City of Mississauga.

Mr. Jim Tovey (Councillor, Ward 1, City of Mississauga, As an Individual): Point of order, Madam Clerk has to set things up for my presentation.

The Chair: We will pause and wait.

Mr. Jim Tovey: Thank you very much. I do apologize for that.

I'd like to thank you very much for allowing me to appear today. I'm actually an accidental politician. The image you're looking at right now is my community. That's what my community looked like for 43 years. At the time it was built, it was one of the largest coal-generating stations in North America and it was right smack dab in the middle of my community.

I started to investigate what the emissions were. This was when the coal-generating station was operating with scrubbers at 15% capacity. There is a grade school 300 metres from here that was the third lowest rated grade school in the entire region of Peel for over 20 years. They closed this generating station in 2005 and then they decided they were going to give us a 1,000 megawatt gas plant right on our waterfront.

If you put a compass on the site we're looking at, it's right at the epicentre of the golden horseshoe. It's the southeast corner of Mississauga, which means it's right beside the city of Toronto. It's 10 minutes by car to Yonge Street and it's 10 minutes to Pearson International Airport.

The site you're looking at outlined in red is approximately 285 acres. With the lakefill project, an additional 85 acres will be created.

I thought it was completely wrong that they should give us a coal-generating station for 43 years and then turn around and give us a 1,000 megawatt gas plant on seven kilometres of beautiful waterfront. I determined that this wasn't going to happen, so I put together a group. We partnered with the University of Toronto and we spent three years modelling with the community and we asked them if this was a blank slate, what they would like to see. We educated them on best practices. We did a complete cost analysis of the entire project. We became the first citizens group in North America to ever create its own master plan and have it accepted by all levels of government.

We defeated the power plant and we got both the City of Mississauga and the Government of Ontario to adopt what we called the legacy project. Our goal is to create the world's most environmentally sustainable community, and I know we can do it.

Then I spent two years chairing Mayor McCallion's task force on waterfront development and environmental sustainability. I got to work with some really terrific people. We got the power plant defeated in 2008. I did two years with madam mayor and the committee, and then everybody sat me down and said, "Okay, if we're going to get this job done, we have to get you elected". I ran against a five-term incumbent and won by 128 votes. It was fun. It was like a horse race. I'm sure the politicians here can appreciate a good horse race. That was great.

Then we immediately wound up negotiating with the Province of Ontario and got a memorandum of understanding for a proper development of the site by 2014. We then started yet another round of what we now call Inspiration Lakeview. We went through a number of processes where we engaged the public. We allowed the community to design this new sustainable community. That's after we signed the memorandum of understanding with Charles Sousa, madam mayor, our city manager, and some people from OPG.

The site also has a terrific history. The very first airport in Canada was on this site. In 1915 J. A. D. McCurdy, the first man to fly an airplane, was the flight instructor there in 1915, 1916, and 1917. Eight of the top fifteen aces from World War I were trained there. They came over from England. There was this incredible history that was almost lost.

Here are more images of Inspiration Lakeview. We broke it down into eight principles. I'm going to go through them very quickly. We wanted to link the city and the water. In other words, we wanted to bring not only the city to the water, but the water to the city.

We had people from Hammarby, Sweden here. I don't know if any of you are familiar with Hammarby. It's currently the world's most environmentally sustainable community. We've actually just received a \$175,000 grant from the federal government to bring some of the designers from Hammarby back over to help us with the next master plan, which we'll be starting in a week and a half.

We wanted to open the site and make it publicly accessible because it hadn't been accessible since 1896 when the Garrison Common used the entire site for firing ranges and artillery ranges.

●(1605)

We wanted to create a green, sustainable community. In Hammarby, Sweden, instead of using stormwater pipes, they use stormwater channels. They're quite beautiful, and they also help to filter the water. There's an economic benefit, too, because they're cheaper in the long run to maintain than a major stormwater system is.

We wanted to create a vibrant community that was at human scale. People like human scale. We also wanted to connect. The City of Mississauga is spending an awful lot of money on higher-order transit right now. Mayor McCallion was once considered to be the queen of sprawl, but no longer. She now gets transit, so that's really great.

We'll also create destinations down at the waterfront. The other thing we're going to do is commemorate history. We had the largest coal-generating station in North America, but now it's part of our heritage. It's a great heritage, and some of the best engineers in the world worked on this project.

We also want to make sure that it's financially viable. This is where a project like the one Ken has been referring to comes into play. These are all our sustainability things.

We've now done two different plans, and we'll be starting a master plan in a week and a half. It'll be finished in 18 months. Then we're going to start building. We're not asking for any money. We're going to do this ourselves. We've been doing it all along with private investment and with City of Mississauga money.

In the master planning, the 85 acres fit in quite beautifully. There are seven and a half kilometres, and the only place we didn't have public access is around the sewage plant. We have two creeks that are very badly degraded, and our wetlands project is going to help us with that. We're going to bring the water up into the site so it will create a lot of really interesting environmental opportunities.

We've already established our green corridors. Then, too, there's culture. Mississauga does not have a cultural centre and we want to bring in arts, heritage, science, and culture. We want to converge them all on this one site. If we can take a site with 120 years of military use and industrial abuse and turn it around to create a model for how to do things, then this can be done anywhere in the world. We can use this site, and we already have partnerships with three universities, to train a new generation of Canadians, and we can export that knowledge to the world.

Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Before we begin our round of questioning, I want to share with you the scope of the study.

We had seven questions to answer in designing the scope of the study: One, what is urban conservation? Two, what are the goals of connecting urban Canadians with conservation? Three, what are the best practices in Canada for urban conservation? Four, what urban conservation initiatives are currently in use? What are the best practices and challenges? Five, what are the economic, health, biodiversity, and social benefits associated with urban conservation? Six, how do we define a protected space? Seven, what role should the federal government play in urban conservation?

What I've heard is very interesting, though it is at times broad in scope. What will be reported back to Parliament will be within that narrow scope, so I appreciate the comments focusing on dealing with those seven questions.

We'll begin with Ms. Ambler.

• (1610)

Mrs. Stella Ambler (Mississauga South, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and my thanks to all our witnesses for being here today. It is indeed interesting, and I'm just delighted to have all of you here.

I'd like to begin by asking Councillor Tovey how he first got the idea of a sustainable community on the waterfront.

Mr. Jim Tovey: I was in construction project management for years and years.

In 1994 the government of the day had said that we needed to start to densify our communities and we needed to start getting more use out of the infrastructure that we had, and we needed to stop degrading the environment. I took that very seriously. I was walking my dog and standing just north of a power plant and the moon came up and its reflection hit the water. I turned around and looked over my right shoulder and I could see Cawthra Road and Lake Shore. I looked over my left shoulder and I could see Lake Shore and Dixie Road. They're a mile and a quarter apart. This was such a massive site, but it was just a complete industrial wasteland. I thought that if we could get rid of the coal plant and we could do something else with this site, we could create a better future for our children and our grandchildren.

I think that's really the focus and the goal of this committee.

Take the example of the wetlands project. The Region of Peel was willing to spend \$75 million to take all of that dirt and drive it out of the GTA and dump it in a hole. We have a crisis in the GTA in that there is nowhere to put fill.

This young lady's point is really great, that we have to concentrate on the south. Across the waterfront of the GTA, we've eliminated 93% of our wetlands and we've armoured 85% of our shores. As soon as you eliminate wetlands, you stop helping nature clean the water for you. When you talk about having the environment in an urban forum, what we need to do is reinstitute more things like this.

With a project like this we're going to reinstitute wetlands for \$41 million as opposed to the \$75 million that the region was willing to spend to dump the fill. Not only are we going to reinstitute wetlands, put in fish spawning beds, and fix two totally degraded creeks, we're going to create a much better experience for the people who live in that community because now they will be able to connect to nature.

We can start to understand what it's really all about and what we all need to do, as leaders, in the future. Fiscally, it's the right thing to do, so to me, that's what we need to be focused on.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: That's exactly what this study is about. You're right, thank you.

How would building or enhancing any city's waterfront benefit the people living nearby? Is it just the people who live nearby who benefit, or are we talking about attracting other urban Canadians to the area, more so than would otherwise be there now?

Mr. Jim Tovey: It's really interesting. I've been studying planning for at least a dozen years now and I love reading planning studies. It sounds a little odd, but I do love reading planning studies.

There is a fellow named Jan Gehl, in Copenhagen. He's a professor. He's famous all over the world. He designed downtown Copenhagen. He just finished Times Square. He did downtown Sydney. The man is a genius.

They do all kinds of studies. There is a challenge you will find with people who live in an urban environment, as more and more of us tend to do. If you live in a concrete jungle such as they've created across Toronto's waterfront, it's a sterile, boring atmosphere. There are studies to prove that.

Jan Gehl did two studies, which I'm going to refer to very quickly.

One study was on how much stimulus the cerebral cortex required to not be bored. Well, every three seconds we need stimulus on our cerebral cortex or we're bored. When you walk through a place that has massive condominiums and 300-foot concrete facades, you're not going to be engaged in that. That is detrimental to your health and it's certainly detrimental to your sense of place.

There was another study done. I thought this study was absolutely incredible. You will notice in a lot of our images that none of them were more than six storeys. Jan Gehl's group did a study and they found that a mother could actually make eye-to-eye contact with her child from a six-storey balcony, yet she couldn't do that from seven storeys. Therefore, he doesn't design anything over six storeys for that reason.

These are all really interesting things, but it tells you a lot about the place. It tells you a lot about the urban forum.

• (1615)

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Thank you, councillor.

Mr. Dion, you have experience not only on the Lakeview project, but you have done a fair bit of project management with Waterfront Toronto, in particular Tommy Thompson Park and the beautifully remediated beach area at the end of Leslie Street in Toronto.

Can you tell us what some of the best practices in urban conservation are that you used in Waterfront Toronto and that you're going to bring to this next waterfront community?

Mr. Ken Dion: Yes. Thank you very much.

I think that the first principle, when planning new communities, is not to lose what is already there in the first place. If there is a new greenfield area, take advantage of the natural systems already there and plan that up front in the overall development of a community.

We had a lot of work within the Toronto area, downtown around the Don and the port lands area. That opportunity has long since gone. What has been important, and this is something that's been recognized by all three levels of government and the community stakeholders, is that all the planning for this area is basically to put the river and the natural features up front, as a central component of the design for planning a community, and then meet your overall development targets around that, adding value to the community with the natural features, adding value to the overall development plan.

The Chair: Time has expired. Thank you.

Monsieur Pilon, you have seven minutes.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Pilon (Laval—Les Îles, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you, everyone. Your testimony was very interesting. I am going to start with the representatives from the CRE de Laval.

You talked about a greenbelt around Montreal. Could you tell us what that consists of? What is your vision for a greenbelt around Montreal?

Miss Marie-Christine Bellemare: The greenbelt movement in the greater Montreal area was launched last week. It brings together a number of environmental organizations, including the David Suzuki Foundation.

The objective of a greenbelt is to ensure a minimum level of protection around the City of Montreal by making room for 17% of natural environments in the metropolitan area. This project involves natural environments, as well as farmlands and waterways. Since Montreal is an island on the St. Lawrence River, we cannot forget the waterway. It is a given. The goal is to work on protecting those environments by granting them protection status to secure a certain percentage of natural environments. At the same time, we want those places to be accessible from urban areas. So we want to make sure that the people who live in the greater Montreal area have access to nature.

We are told that, in previous years, it used to take Montrealers 20 minutes to be in nature. Now it takes them an hour on average. The purpose of a greenbelt is to curb urban sprawl. One of the best examples I use is the greenbelt in London, the first one in the world. But, unfortunately, it is like a doughnut. The city is surrounded by it and that is not what we want to have in Montreal. We want to set up a network of natural environments and work on connecting them, because that makes it possible for flora and fauna species to spread out and migrate. That is something we are going to set up because we can do that around Montreal.

We seek to curb urban sprawl and to achieve environmental sustainability.

• (1620)

Mr. François Pilon: Thank you.

I have another question for you.

In terms of wetlands, everyone who knows me can tell you that I think they are very important. In addition, we know that almost all the wetlands in Laval are disappearing. In your view, should they be included in a conservation plan, and what are the risks if they are all destroyed?

Mr. Guy Garand: If we look beyond Laval at the whole St. Lawrence river system, 85% to 87% of wetlands have disappeared. There are 15% remaining. If we continue to eliminate them to make room for development and if we don't want to integrate them, that will have a major impact on water quality and on renewing our water resources. You just need to look at the statistics for the Rivière des Prairies and the Mille-Îles River. This year, the flow rate went down to almost 34 m³ or 35 m³ of water per second. I was talking about an order in council that was adopted by the Government of Quebec in 2010. The Mille-Îles River reached 9 m³ to 10 m³. When there is high water in the spring, the flow rate can reach up to 800 m³ or 900 m³ of water per second. That started in 2001.

Wetlands are affected by climate change, deforestation, the channeling of streams, the filling in of the shores, the artificialization of the banks and the loss of flood plains along the waterways. Flood plains are another type of wetland. So that has a major impact on the regularization of the water level, water filtration, groundwater recharge, groundwater and water tables. If we keep mishandling them, the biodiversity is going to disappear. They are the richest environments in southern Quebec. The same goes for all the provinces in Canada.

Mr. François Pilon: Thank you.

My next question is for Ms. Smith. As the vice-president of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, could you give us a concrete example of a city that had an urban environment plan or initiative that really worked well?

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: You are talking about a plan that really worked well.

Mr. François Pilon: Yes or, if you prefer, a plan that did not work at all.

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: Can I talk about the urban forest?

I am going to speak in English, if you don't mind. I can get by in French, but that's about it.

[*English*]

Just to let you know, I am a city councillor and I am on the board of directors of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities. I think I forgot to say that when I began.

What I'd like to talk about is environmental issues within municipalities. I'll focus on the urban forest. It is extremely important for the kinds of benefits that trees have within an urban environment. They're green spaces. They're forests. They provide economic, environmental, social and health benefits to cities. Trees within a city are hugely important.

I will use the example of my city, the population of which is less than 100,000, about 95,000. We have a tree canopy that has fallen to below 20%. Our tree canopy now is probably about 15%. This is devastating for us as a city, as I said, because of the environment, the cooling and all the other benefits that trees bring. The emerald ash borer began to hit us about two or three years ago. We're now at the point that we're beginning to lose trees. In our city, where we have a canopy of about 15%, we're going to lose about 90,000 trees, 10,000 of which are on municipal property. The other 80,000 are in private hands.

To give you an example of what this means to our city, the loss of 90,000 ash trees would diminish our canopy by from 1.5% to 2%. We would then be at 13%, or maybe 12%.

The cost of this to our city is huge. This year we're just starting into the phase in of which trees are being hit and damaged. We have a 15-year strategic plan whereby we're going to try to work through this.

I'll go through this really quickly, but in 2013 we'll spend \$60,000 just for treatment, \$140,000 to take the trees down, and then an additional.... We'll spend about \$265,000 next year just to deal with taking the trees down and planting some more.

Now, given the number of trees we have and how large this effort of replanting is going to be—when we replant, we would like to work towards that 40% canopy, which would be a 1:3 ratio—it's going to cost us \$1.5 million in tree planting to deal with this impact.

An urban forest is very important to all cities and all communities across this country. I think it's important that we deal with it.

Thank you.

• (1625)

The Chair: Thank you very much.

Next is Mr. Woodworth. You have seven minutes.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth (Kitchener Centre, CPC): Thank you very much.

Thank you to each of the witnesses.

[Translation]

I speak some French, but it is not enough for the current context.

So I apologize, but I will speak in English.

[English]

In any event, I have a question, first of all, for Ms. Ceschi-Smith.

I understand that the Government of Canada has cooperated with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities in a green municipal fund and has endowed it with \$550 million.

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: It is \$550 million, \$100,000 of which is dedicated to brownfields.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: You are familiar with it, obviously.

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: I am. I was actually on the green municipal fund council.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: As I understand it, it's to improve local air, water, and soil quality and to promote renewable energy with grants and below market loans.

Was any of that money available to combat the emerald ash borer problem you've been describing?

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: At this point, no, it hasn't been. I may ask my staff to fill me in.

My understanding of the green municipal fund is that it actually is for projects. It is for projects that are infrastructure related that will make improvements. It's not necessarily to handle the devastating biological event happening to our trees.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Is that your staff person with you?

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: Yes.

It is really an infrastructure fund. It's for water and buildings and those kinds of things.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: It would be for construction projects that would be in aid of the environment. Is that what you're saying?

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: It is for projects that actually have a benefit for the environment and that are an aid to it.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Can you give us a few examples, by chance?

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: An example could be a green building, such as a LEED building, in brownfields. For example, it would maybe be a site that gets cleaned up and then has some buildings on it that are LEED buildings or that have a very good environmental impact.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Is the fund entirely administered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities?

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: It is, and it has a council that is dedicated solely to the environmental projects that come before the green fund.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: The applications are made to that council and not to the federal government. Is that correct?

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: They are made to the Federation of Canadian Municipalities through the green fund council, absolutely. Then we have a lot of people behind it, as specialists in the area, who analyze the proposals that come in.

• (1630)

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Has the Federation of Canadian Municipalities found this to be a good benefit?

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: We have found that fund to be absolutely amazing. The reason I'm saying that is that every year, for the last number of years, FCM has had a sustainable communities event. It's usually in February. Last year I was a judge, and this year I was actually chair of the judges. The projects coming in from communities across this country in the water area, in building, and in roads give you hope for what is happening to this country.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: That's very good.

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: It's very worthwhile, and it works very well. Municipal governments are taking a lot of leadership in putting forward projects that will handle and deal with environmental changes.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: That's exactly the hope the government wants to inspire, and we do it in partnership with municipalities. It sounds as if it's working in a very good way.

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: If I may throw one thing in, my staff has just said that the green municipal fund, to date, has saved 1.1 billion kilowatt hours for 460 communities in 900 projects. It's been a good investment.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: There are energy savings, and therefore, I suppose, they are indirectly reducing carbon emissions. Is that correct?

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: Absolutely. It is also saving water and doing a whole series of things.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Is there a website that would inform everyone about this good news?

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: There is. If you go to fcm.ca, that will get you to it. Have a look at the sustainable communities projects. They'll blow you away.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: I appreciate it. I know that some of the skeptics often refuse to acknowledge the good things the government has done, so I'm glad that we got that out, and I appreciate that. Thank you.

[Translation]

Ms. Bellemare, I read with interest your 2012 study entitled "Report on the Status of Laval's Wetlands".

[English]

It was distributed to us. I noticed that it paints a rather grim picture of wetlands that have been lost in the non-agricultural area of Laval. I think some 50 hectares were lost in eight years and another 74 hectares were disturbed in that time.

You are familiar with this report, because you wrote it, didn't you?

Miss Marie-Christine Bellemare: Yes, I wrote it.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Very good. Am I correctly reporting that eight-year loss and disturbance?

Miss Marie-Christine Bellemare: Yes.

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Very good. I also noticed that at another point in the report, there was a reference to nature sometimes playing tricks. This was in relation to what seemed to be new wet areas developing. Is it possible that some of the wetlands that have been lost are due to natural causes, or is all of this loss and disturbance due to man-made causes?

[Translation]

Miss Marie-Christine Bellemare: I will continue in French, if I may.

If I've understood correctly, your question has to do with new wetlands. They are sometimes created naturally and often allow for water to be absorbed naturally. These areas are like sponges. But when we fill in a wetland—

[English]

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: May I stop you for a moment just to make sure the question is correct. Of the lost and disturbed wetlands,

is that loss and disturbance due entirely to man-made causes or might it also be the result of natural changes?

[Translation]

Miss Marie-Christine Bellemare: No, it is only caused by urban sprawl.

[English]

Mr. Stephen Woodworth: Very good.

I understand from your report that Quebec's Environment Quality Act would require applications for certificates of authorization to permit partial or total filling in of wetlands. Am I right about that?

[Translation]

Miss Marie-Christine Bellemare: Yes, absolutely. For every wetland that needs to be filled in, authorization must be obtained from the Quebec Ministry of the Environment. Currently, the majority of the authorization requests are approved. So there might be a problem with this legislation.

[English]

The Chair: Your time has expired. Thank you.

Mr. Cotler, you have seven minutes.

Hon. Irwin Cotler (Mount Royal, Lib.): Mr. Chairman, I thought you framed some of the questions we might be dealing with very well in your opening remarks.

Let me turn to the panel. Welcome.

Last week I met with three councillors from the FCM, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, to discuss some of these issues. Very briefly, they shared with me infrastructure concerns, the concerns of the absence of a national transit strategy—I think we're the only OECD country that does not have a national transit strategy—with the environmental fallout that this obtains. There were water treatment concerns and less so urban conservation concerns.

Maybe I would put my question to you, Marguerite, because you are the vice-chair of the FCM.

How does the federal government prioritize among these concerns? To go back to the chairman's question, what is the role of federal leadership here? Let me make it more specific to assist the reply. You chaired the FCM's brownfields committee. You also served on the brownfields task force of the National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy, which developed a national brownfield strategy in 2003. Regrettably the national round table, formerly chaired by our Governor General, has been terminated, as has the invasive alien species partnership program, to which you referred.

Do we have alternative or replacement instruments or frameworks in place for these two instruments or initiatives that I found were fairly important in this regard? Reference has been made to the green municipal fund. That has played a very important role.

How do we secure funding for the urban conservation strategy? What kind of policies should there be? For example, should there be a doubling of the gas transfer tax for that purpose?

Those are just some of the issues I thought you might address. If any other members of the panel wish to answer, that's fine.

•(1635)

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: I didn't write down all the comments that you made, so you'll have to help me a little bit.

I'll start with the long-term infrastructure plan. That has been the latest piece. This last week, as you indicated, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities had its board meeting here in Ottawa and that's when we speak to members of Parliament about our various issues.

The gas tax was one of the big things we had spoken about long and hard in the last federal budget, because the build Canada plan and a couple of other programs are ending very shortly, and the gas tax, of course. With that, the federal government had promised there would be discussion with the Federation of Canadian Municipalities when the federal budget came through, particularly in relation to the long-term infrastructure plan. I'm sure you are all aware that our bridges are falling down and the roads aren't all being done and the green infrastructure comes into play there as well, many of the things that we deal with as municipal governments.

Those are issues that we certainly have been working on. We have been working with the federal government. We have been trying to work together. The federal government said that it would work with us. Again, we all know that infrastructure is the wealth of this country and it is getting old and it isn't being kept up enough. We simply don't have the resources as municipal governments to do it all ourselves. We really don't. We need partnerships. We need partnerships with provincial governments, the federal government, and municipal governments in everything we do.

For the infrastructure, as you said, we're looking to have the gas tax indexed. That's one thing. There's the building Canada fund. We want to work with you so that we can work collaboratively for the entire country, with the municipal governments, the federal government, and provincial governments as well. It's very important that all three orders of government work together on all the things that are done on the infrastructure. We need to keep our country going and to create the wealth that we have. We simply can't do it ourselves. The federal government needs the other orders of government as well, so we all need to work together.

I don't know if that answers your question.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Do we have, and if we do not, do we need a kind of comprehensive strategy? There are infrastructure concerns, transit strategy concerns, water treatment concerns, urban conservation concerns. Should there be some overall umbrella generic strategy that deals with it on a tripartite level with the federal, provincial, and municipal governments?

Do we have something resembling that? Is this something we need? As the chairman put it, what is the role of federal leadership in this regard?

•(1640)

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: I think federal leadership is huge in this regard. We can't do it all alone. We all need to work together. The federal government needs to listen to the municipal

government and the provincial government. All of us need to work together in those orders, because we're all in this together.

We all have different roles. I think the role that is important to remember with municipal government is we're the order of government that is closest to the people. We're the ones that take care of the water and the garbage and all of those things. If we're not able to support all of that, including urban forests, which is what we're talking about here, if we can't work on all of this together... We simply don't have the money at the municipal end. We get, as you've heard, 8¢ on the dollar, which is what we use to operate what we have.

If we can work on all of this together, we can deal with all the environmental and the green issues in every area. As you said, it's water, air and again, the urban forest. It's everything we need as people to exist and to create jobs and to create the wealth of this entire country. We really do need to work together. It's vitally important. Cities and municipalities are the wealth of this country. That's where things happen. We are all in this together. You can't forget about us.

I think we need to find a way whereby we can work together on all of this. That's where the budgets are. If we're all in there and you're listening to what our needs are, they're your needs as well.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Mr. Tovey, I noticed you were just....

The Chair: Time has expired, so could we have a very quick answer, please.

Mr. Jim Tovey: I'll give a quick answer.

I agree with you. I think all three levels do need to work together.

I spent 30 years in the private sector. I was absolutely stunned with how little money our city has, even though we're one of the few cities in Canada that has no debt. We issued our first-ever debt this year. I started in the basement at city hall. I went to shipping and receiving. I worked my way right through every department. I asked to see their books and asked them what they did. They are lean and mean and deliver services in a very cost-effective way. Then I wondered what the problem was.

To me the problem is that municipalities own 65% of the infrastructure and we get 9¢ on the dollar. That is absolutely the number one problem. I wonder if anybody in this room can tell me how that math works. How can you maintain, build, and replace 65% of the infrastructure in the country when you've only got 9¢ on the dollar? It absolutely makes no sense.

I agree with you. I think all three levels need to sit down. We really need to understand that what makes Canada successful, and what will make Canada successful in the future, is how vibrant our cities are and how great our infrastructure is.

A friend of mine is doing some jobs in China right now. He's building precincts in China. This is funny. They built 40 kilometres of LRT in two years. How in the heck did they do that? They had no environmental assessment. He was the lead architect. He asked the Chinese fellows about environmental assessments, and they asked him what he meant. He told them they are done to find out whether it's going to be positive or negative, and his Chinese counterpart looked at him and said that it's going to be positive because it's public transit.

There are a lot of ways we can find efficiencies at all three levels and help each other, I'm quite sure.

The Chair: Those are interesting suggestions.

[Translation]

Ms. Quach, you have five minutes.

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach (Beauharnois—Salaberry, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you to all of you for coming and giving us more information about this.

I will continue along the same lines. I would like to speak about how to make all our ecological activities beneficial. Ms. Smith and Mr. Garand, you both spoke about this. You spoke about the impact of climate change on urban conservation and how, by taking on climate change, the federal government could help reduce the climate disruption that destroys infrastructures, farmland, waterways and so on. The National Round Table on the Environment and the Economy indicated that, by 2020, the economic repercussions of climate change could reach \$5 billion a year.

What role could the federal government play with respect to climate change, a role that could have a positive impact on urban conservation?

• (1645)

Mr. Guy Garand: I think the Government of Canada should become a leader in this respect by trying to prepare management plans and working with the municipalities.

A little earlier, Ms. Smith said that there is great need in the urban and urban fringe areas. She spoke about the emerald ash borer and the loss of trees in her area. I think most of the municipalities are having problems with that. Montreal has the same problem. That is because the cities have injected millions and millions of dollars into what we call "monoculture". It would be better if there was greater biodiversity. The insect, the emerald ash borer, does not attack maple trees or elms. There have been other diseases, like Dutch elm disease. Every plant species in the urban environment that can help fight climate change is attacked by an insect, a parasite or a fungus. So when we develop monocultures in cities, we have to expect a shock wave, expect to lose our plants and our forest canopy. We are doing a lot of work on that.

The other problem is infrastructure. Nobody ever asks developers how much the environmental impact of commercial, industrial or residential development costs, but we always wonder how much it costs not to develop natural environments. When we develop in the regions, any region of Canada, we put up malls, we put up power centres far from everything that require people to get there by car.

We forget to ask developers to keep the land or give land. But they are legally required to do so for school, cultural and leisure infrastructures.

Ms. Anne Minh-Thu Quach: I'll stop you there for a moment. In this case, do you have any advice for the federal government about getting involved in a concrete way? Are there any measure you would suggest? Should there be standards? How could the federal government encourage—

Mr. Guy Garand: The federal government should inject funds in the municipalities or RCMs in Canada that are development models of local services. That would be the first thing to do. We should stop developing cities the way we are. Services are far away. People have to drive to get where they need to go. Our cities are built around the automobile. That is useful in some way, but we can make local service models.

We spoke about six storeys. I think buildings should never be higher than four storeys because they are less expensive to air-condition, and we would be respecting the tree canopy and the height of trees that offer different and mild climatic cover. Also, in the northern countries, trees cut the wind in winter. It also decreases energy use.

I am looking at cities like Montreal, which I know very well, or Toronto. I'm looking at Ottawa, which I think is quite a beautiful city. When we open the streets to rebuild infrastructures, why do we always make very wide streets and boulevards? Why not bring it back down to a more human scale?

Take for example Saint-Denis Street in Montreal, which is 14 km long. Take away one lane of traffic and put in some greenery. When you go to redo the storm sewers, you will use much less expensive pipes. You will save some money. You will be able to plant trees and better manage rain and precipitation. There will be a percolation of water in the ground, a decrease in greenhouse gases and, as a result, a drop in climate change. The temperature will be milder in the winter and in the summer. The natural environments are there to be integrated.

If the Government of Canada wanted to do something, it should fund projects that truly are green and well adapted to society and to city dwellers in Canada.

[English]

The Chair: Merci.

Mr. Sopuck, you have five minutes.

Mr. Robert Sopuck (Dauphin—Swan River—Marquette, CPC): I was fascinated to hear the witnesses, I think to a person, talk about the value of wetlands. I represent a rural prairie constituency, and wetlands have been disappearing at a rapid rate.

Ms. Ceschi-Smith, you were talking about the green municipal fund regarding infrastructure.

We know the value of wetlands in terms of doing certain things such as filtering water, flood prevention, and so on. Mr. Dion, as a watershed expert, would it be wise for us to consider support for natural infrastructure, like wetlands for example, as part of the green municipal fund?

•(1650)

Mr. Ken Dion: Thank you for that.

It's funny that you should ask this question. At TRCA right now we're doing a strategic review of where we're going with our own agency, and a major focus is further enhancements within our green infrastructure within our jurisdiction.

Traditionally, green infrastructure referred to bioswales or storm-water ponds, but this is much further beyond what we're looking at now. It's actually trying to be strategic in the protection of wetlands, where they exist, trying to actually create natural wetlands rather than stormwater ponds. It's not only for enhancement but, as I alluded to earlier, it really is protecting what is there and building onto that.

Going directly to your question, there's a lot of value in including some sort of funding scenario in support of providing the space necessary to get into the establishment of these infrastructure components.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: I might get into trouble for what I'm about to say, but I think there are way too many engineers involved in these kinds of things and not enough ecologists. I can see that some of the members agree with me.

On the notion of green, we need to look at what nature does, not quite for free, but I think you know where I'm coming from. A study was done in my constituency by Ducks Unlimited in a place called Broughton's Creek that quantified the values of wetlands. I recommend that you look at this.

Mr. Dion, in terms of the watershed work that you do, ultimately that whole area, everything drains into Lake Ontario. What have been the trends in water quality in Lake Ontario over the last 20 or 25 years?

Mr. Ken Dion: You'd be surprised. It's actually improving somewhat.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: I actually expected that answer.

Mr. Ken Dion: Ironically, it also has a lot to do with some of the invasives that are coming into the lake.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Yes.

Mr. Ken Dion: There is a contribution as better management practices in the urban settings. The problem is there's still a lot of intensification, a lot of development. With the improved management practices, it is not keeping up with the growth that occurs.

Trying to localize development areas, rather than broad sprawl, and then continued improvement of protecting key areas within the drainage basins for the Great Lakes would go a long way to try to offset that.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: One of my concerns, as a rural MP, is building a relationship between rural Canada and urban Canada. Mr. Dion, are you familiar with the New York City watershed project?

Mr. Ken Dion: No, I'm not.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: New York City was mandated to improve water quality within the city, and they decided to take a watershed approach. They funded agricultural producers in the upper reaches of

the watershed to change farming practices. This resulted in a significant improvement in New York City's water quality and helped the agricultural community.

Ms. Ceschi-Smith, do you think we should start thinking that way in Canada?

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: Actually, we do some of that.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Could you elaborate? I'd be interested.

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: We have the Grand River Conservation Authority, and I'm on its source water protection committee. Brantford gets 100% of its water from the Grand River. You can imagine the kind of treatment we have to do.

We also have the rural water quality program, in which the municipality puts some money in and so does the country. It was instituted to help agriculture practices.

Mr. Robert Sopuck: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Monsieur Choquette.

[*Translation*]

Mr. François Choquette (Drummond, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I would like to thank all the witnesses for being here today. This is very interesting, and you are very passionate.

We started with a national conservation plan. We then had a tour of Canada. We were, in fact, able to see the damage caused by urban sprawl, in particular.

I was at the Forum québécois sur l'énergie last year, in Shawinigan. My questions are for the CRE Laval and will concern that event.

When we developed the national conservation plan, we insisted that the Aichi targets, so 17% for land areas and 10% for marine areas, be written into the plan. Unfortunately, we are saying that these targets are something we "should" achieve and not something the conservation plan must achieve.

Do you think these targets would be a good start for a national conservation plan and an urban conservation plan?

•(1655)

Mr. Guy Garand: The 17% Nagoya objective is part of an international agreement through the United Nations program. However, I would suggest you go and consult the Environment Canada site. In 2004, the Government of Canada stated—and scientists are saying this, as well—that we need to maintain 30% of vegetation cover to conserve biodiversity. The 17% objective is a step in the right direction, but the Montreal metropolitan community ratified its metropolitan land use and development plan and is planning to have a 30% canopy by 2031. So we are talking about scientific objectives. It's serious.

Before going any further, I want to point out that I gave the clerk five copies of this document, which is only in French, unfortunately. You can read about the history of the last 20 years, from 1985 to 2005, of the loss of natural environments, the agricultural area and the correlation between the heat island, health, and so on. Everything is in that big report.

Mr. François Choquette: Thank you, Mr. Garand.

We attended a good number of talks at the Forum québécois sur l'énergie. One of them was about urban sprawl and the importance of reviewing the structures in our cities. As you mentioned, our cities are designed for cars. That's the case in Drummondville, where I live. We need to review this. Olivia Chow introduced a bill on establishing a national public transit strategy.

Do you think that would be a good first step toward limiting urban sprawl and reviewing how our cities are structured?

Mr. Guy Garand: It is definitely a step in the right direction. The 16 regional councils mandated by the Government of Quebec are drawing up an energy diagnostic that also deals with greenhouse gases. Regional tables have also been created in all regions of Quebec to create viable development plans that respect the capacity to support ecosystems while fighting urban sprawl and climate change. First and foremost, we need to move toward being independent from gas and see if we can strengthen that independence in Quebec in the next 20 or 25 years.

Mr. François Choquette: Thank you.

Mr. Garand, after the Forum québécois sur l'énergie, I was sort of flabbergasted by the extent of urban sprawl and how quickly it was spreading. The municipality of Drummondville is making serious efforts to grow the city. It's going very well; it's growth is incredible. But this is the old development model. What should we review?

Could the government adopt a national strategy to review urban planning? Right now, we are still talking about low density and many big stores, as mentioned earlier. The downtown is not very developed. There is more and more development along Highway 20, and we are forgetting the rest of the city.

Do you think the federal government should take this initiative? There are cities across Canada and, as we saw during our tour, this problem affects the entire country.

Mr. Guy Garand: If the Government of Canada had to do something, it would be to establish a strategic plan to fund the municipalities. It should be consistent with a plan that you would impose, based on criteria, to determine which cities should receive ecological funding, in an urban setting, with respect to transport and so on.

Mr. François Choquette: Thank you very much.

[English]

The Chair: Merci.

Next is Mr. Toet. You have five minutes.

Mr. Lawrence Toet (Elmwood—Transcona, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to our panel.

Ms. Ceschi-Smith, I want to clarify something. We were talking about all these different funds ending and you included the gas tax fund among them.

• (1700)

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: That is not ending, though.

Mr. Lawrence Toet: Okay. I wanted to give you an opportunity to clarify that, because I'm sure you didn't—

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: I didn't mean that one was ending, not at all, but we have been asking for another piece to it so that it keeps up with inflation.

Mr. Lawrence Toet: Okay. It's important to note that the fund has been made permanent by this government.

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: We know it's permanent, and we're very appreciative of that.

Mr. Lawrence Toet: Very good. Thank you.

Mr. Dion, I have a question for you.

We heard from representatives from the City of Winnipeg who talked about developers integrating the wetlands into their new developments. It was part of what they wanted to do, going forward, not really because there were rules or regulations on it, but they were seeing citizens showing their subconscious desire to be part of that, to have that part of their environment.

You said that 90% of the Ontario population is living in a greenbelt or conservation area now. First, perhaps you could confirm that I got that percentage right and that statement correct. That would be a good thing. Do you see how that is also working in those environments, that people have this desire in and of themselves, without regulation, to go forward in those kinds of developments?

Mr. Ken Dion: Actually, 90% of the population of Ontario is living within one of the jurisdictions for the conservation authorities. It's watershed based. We cover a large watershed area.

We have been finding that there's a lot of public interest to see greenbelts within their overall communities. Particularly in the GTA, a lot of people spend big bucks to have their cottage four to six hours away, but a lot of people don't have that luxury. These green areas in the urban centres provide that cottage country locally. That includes wetlands, the forests, the corridors. It includes being able to see Lake Ontario.

It's kind of ironic that people in Toronto go so far to have their little piece of lakefront when they have this massive lake that very few people actually use. With regard to your other questions on water quality improving, out of the eight beaches in Toronto, seven of them meet Blue Flag status. You can jump into the water most times during the year these days, but people don't take that opportunity.

We're building this intrinsically within development plans. In a lot of the work we're doing now, we're bringing back brownfields to become new future revitalized communities, instead of trying to maximize every square foot for development. Then, there's that darn river in the middle of our block. How do we minimize it and tuck it away behind someone's backyard? Let's celebrate it. Let's bring it out as the core piece of the development plans. Let's enhance it to make it function, and that brings value. There have been a lot of studies in Canada and the United States showing that this adds value to the properties provided.

Don't treat it as this thing that minimizes the effect on your bottom dollar. It could actually bring value, if properly planned overall.

Mr. Lawrence Toet: Thank you for that.

Mr. Tovey, I see you nodding your head. I think it ties in with some of your opening comments. What I'm getting to is that, to a large degree, private enterprise is really starting to buy into this, and to want to be part of the solution. I'm wondering if you could make a quick comment on where private enterprise fits into this and actually has a desire to be part of it.

Mr. Jim Tovey: Absolutely. We found that they were really worried when they built Hammarby in Sweden. They built six storeys. They built it as green as they possibly could. It's the most environmentally sustainable community in the world. It's actually the highest valued real estate in the entire country because people are attracted to it.

I've been involved in the Inspiration Lakeview project since 2005. People love it. They are willing to spend extra money to be green. They want their children to grow up being green.

As Ken said, we're going to take a completely degraded waterfront, two degraded streams, and we're going to celebrate those. Everybody who's involved in this plan can't wait until the sales office opens. There is tremendous, tremendous value in doing this kind of stuff.

The Chair: Thank you very much. Time has expired.

Ms. Leslie, you have five minutes.

Ms. Megan Leslie (Halifax, NDP): Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Thank you all for being here.

I have two questions, so I'll throw them out there, and you can take turns answering.

As you heard from the chair, one of the questions we should consider is what the best practices for Canada are concerning urban conservation. Mr. Tovey, you gave the example of it being cheaper to have stormwater channels than pipes. That's probably a best practice.

• (1705)

[Translation]

Mr. Garand said that we must, for example, avoid monocultures in order to fight invasive species.

There are practical examples.

[English]

What could be a federal role to ensure the sharing of best practices, making sure that everybody across Canada would understand what those best practices are?

My second question is about the federal role as well. Mr. Sopuck asked a question about looking at natural infrastructure as part of the green municipal fund. I'd like to pick up on that. I find that to be really interesting. We've heard some testimony about infrastructure spending generally, and the fact that urban conservation is not eligible for federal infrastructure funding. Some witnesses have suggested rethinking the way we grant this funding, especially the tripartite funding. Maybe we need more of a carrot by saying that these kinds of projects would be eligible.

Do you think it's time to re-imagine how we grant funding? Again, there is the role of the federal government and the sharing of best practices.

We can start with Mr. Garand.

[Translation]

Mr. Guy Garand: I would say that what's been done can't necessarily be completely redone. If you launch a national hard or green infrastructure funding program, the primary objective of such a program must be to establish goals that respect the support capacity of ecosystems. That's what is to come for future generations.

Each ecosystem has a capacity for absorption. Take the Great Lakes. I haven't stopped looking at the photo since this afternoon. The Great Lakes are dropping, the St. Lawrence River is dropping and all waterways in Canada are affected. There are a number of reasons for that. You have climate change, evaporation, vegetation being cut down along the water because we want to be close to the water—people always want to be close to the water. This has a negative effect. We want to channel more and more.

We are going to fight to reopen streams and waterways in Montreal. This is in the process of being done. They disappeared because of poor management in the past. People didn't have the knowledge. Today we do and we need to use it.

There is a way to achieve these models of sustainable development. Mr. Sopuck said it very well: there are probably too many engineers involved in the projects and not enough ecologists or sociologists. This requires multidisciplinary teams and each of them should respect each other and take into account the issues of each of discipline.

I also think that we will manage to have better development models and a better quality of life. Humans are also part of biodiversity.

[English]

Ms. Megan Leslie: Merci.

May I have your comments, Madam Ceschi-Smith or Mr. Tovey?

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: I think it is important that there also be research done on the impacts of climate change, which is affecting municipalities, and everybody, without our knowing what all the impacts are. There should also be research on what's happening with our urban forests and the emerald ash borer. We should have Canadian-based research that relates to our environment. We need those kinds of things.

We need to build municipal capacity. I am proud to say that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities has been working very hard on this matter. The programs and projects we have are there to build capacity within municipalities. However, building this capacity is not just a municipal concern. Other orders of government, including the federal government, need to build that capacity. A lot can be done through research and through working with municipal governments on pilot projects.

Ms. Megan Leslie: Mr. Tovey.

Mr. Jim Tovey: The question was on whether the federal government should have more funding for—

The Chair: Time has expired. Sorry about that.

Ms. Ambler.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

Mr. Dion, we've heard a lot today about the economic benefits of brownfield remediation. If you have another comment about that, I'd be happy to hear it.

I want to know about the environmental benefits of the Lakeview project, especially the remediation. Maybe you could tell us a bit about that aspect of the project.

• (1710)

Mr. Ken Dion: There are not really a lot of economic benefits in brownfield remediation. It's a very costly process to clean up brownfields. With regard to the OPG site, the thing is not to get lands to that point before you start trying to improve things.

As for the overall environmental benefits of the fill being generated to create the new waterfront park, that material is clean. We're not dumping impacted soils within the lakes. We already have a very degraded shoreline habitat in this part of the waterfront. There is a very poor fisheries habitat. There is no terrestrial habitat within the area, and there are no wetlands. The shoreline doesn't have natural coastal processes with functioning eroding beaches. There are some remnant sand beaches, but they're fairly static and not very mobile.

The project is about land creation. We can't bring the existing shore back to the way it was. That would require removing the treatment plant. That would require removing large-scale pieces of the existing OPG site. Our only real approach in this location is to create a transition zone between the existing industrial land and the degraded part of the waterfront on Lake Ontario.

The clean fill from other infrastructure projects will allow us to create a land base on which to establish the diverse wetlands that the streams would feed into, enhancing the coastal dynamics where the wetlands interact with the lake. We'll be creating a terrestrial base that will allow the meadows and the forest habitat features to provide a diverse range of ecological functions to tie in with the wetlands.

We shouldn't be doing just wetlands or forests. It's the suite of different habitat structures that provides the value. It's more than just the sum of its parts.

We're also proposing a dynamic beach system that allows a transition as you get from the shoreline to the water. This system will allow the movement of the materials necessary to create new fisheries habitat in the open lake areas. It's a combination. It's looking at the ecology from the broad perspective. We're not just looking to create a duck pond or a fisheries area. We're trying to provide a maximum range of opportunities for a suite of wildlife and fisheries for the public.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: I find it a little ironic that that fishing habitat was degraded under the old fisheries act that some people seem to want to bring back, but I digress.

Will people be allowed to fish? Will children be allowed to fish in that area, once this is done? How many years are we talking about here?

Mr. Ken Dion: Once we receive approval, the project can take about five to seven years to complete.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Five years. Wow, that's fantastic.

Mr. Jim Tovey: Sorry, I wanted to make a comment on the economics part of it.

The OPG site, the 275 acres, staff has estimated the cost of remediation of that to be between \$300,000 and \$500,000 an acre. Of course, being that it's in the central part of the GTA, that land, once it's remediated, will now be worth about \$1.5 million to \$2 million an acre, so it's certainly worth it.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Right, thanks for pointing that out. I appreciate that.

I believe there is a program, Mr. Dion, of federal offsets, but I don't know how it works. Do you know the formula or how it works, or if it's going to be used at all in the Lakeview project?

Mr. Ken Dion: I'm not aware of that right now. I'm sorry.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Councillor Tovey, do you know anything about it?

Mr. Ken Dion: Are you talking about the habitat banking?

• (1715)

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Yes, the offset.

Mr. Ken Dion: Yes, we understand there's a program going forward, that if we have additional habitat created as part of the project beyond the fisheries compensation, we can provide a sort of banking process for other projects that have impacts elsewhere.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: If you build a certain amount—

Mr. Ken Dion: Yes.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: —you can get credited—

The Chair: I'm sorry, Ms. Ambler, your time has expired.

Mr. Mayes, welcome to our committee. You have five minutes.

Mr. Colin Mayes (Okanagan—Shuswap, CPC): Thank you, Mr. Chair, and thank you to the witnesses today.

I'm not part of this committee regularly and it's been very interesting. As a mayor of both communities that I've lived in, I understand some of the challenges presented by the FCM.

I want to talk a little about water conservation, but before I do that, I want to go back to the funding.

Our government has partnered with provinces and municipalities and has been part of the biggest investment in infrastructure in 50 years in this country. It's not only that we ramped up the gas tax fund, but we also have the community adjustment fund, the building Canada fund, the green municipal fund, and the stimulus funding. When I was mayor, the federal government stopped charging GST on all projects for municipalities, saving literally hundreds of millions of dollars. When you talk about 8% or 9%, we are partnering and we're doing our part to support municipalities.

The one issue I have about water conservation, and I think it has a little to do with planning, is that our community built a \$21-million water treatment plant that had ultraviolet light treatment, the chlorine treatment, filtration. We pump all this great safe water to our residents and they use it to sprinkle on their lawns. Now, that's the challenge, the way our infrastructure is structured. The capacity of that water treatment plant had to be built to accommodate people watering their lawns. It's at great cost and is an expensive way to water your lawn.

Another issue concerns things like low-flush toilets. In Australia, the federal government came in with the regulation that everyone had to have a low-flush toilet that had two buttons on it, and you know what the two buttons are for. It literally saved billions of dollars in costs of infrastructure—billions—because of the lower amount of water they used.

There are all kinds of ways, I would think, at the municipal level to actually provide bylaws to make sure there is conservation.

We talked about drainage. In the United States, they actually collect the drainage and some of the grey water in the subdivisions and recycle it and use it to irrigate their landscaping. Those are the kind of things I think of as water conservation, that would help the water table and those trees that you wanted to ensure got good water.

Madam Ceschi-Smith, are there any best practices that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities is working on to look at water conservation in a larger context to ensure that we also protect the other components of our ecosystem?

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: I'll try to answer. In terms of conservation, the green municipal funds provide funding for municipal governments to look at ways, for example, to reduce consumption of water. We do an awful lot of research and we have tools and materials that municipalities can use, but for projects that are done through the green funds, conservation measures are often a part of the project.

When we have a project, for example, through the green funds that may have a LEED standard, it will have low-flush toilets and will have all of those kinds of pieces in it. These things then become part of what we do. Many of those kinds of projects are showcased through the sustainable communities initiative and the awards that we have. There are materials that are shared with other municipalities across the country whereby they can learn what the best

practices are from watching a DVD or joining a webinar or talking to other municipalities that are doing those things.

I don't know whether this answers your question, but certainly an active piece of what we do is building capacity and sharing information on the best practices we have learned.

The Chair: Mr. Tovey.

Mr. Jim Tovey: I want to make a quick comment on the Inspiration Lakeview site. We're going to be using two different water sources. You're absolutely right that we spend way too much to clean and chlorinate water. We don't use chlorine anymore; we ozonate our water at my water plant. It's a much better system. We're going to have two taps in each house: you'll have one tap for drinking and the other for using for showers and everything. The water that's now coming out of the sewage plant that's right next door is actually potable. We're going to be using it also to pump up and to help clean the stormwater canal. We're looking at all those programs.

• (1720)

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Cotler, you have five minutes.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

As you know, I'm also not a regular member of this committee, but I have been happy to be here today, because I have found it to be very informative and helpful across the board.

I want to pick up on a comment that Mr. Tovey made.

I was struck by your comment to the effect that the municipalities bear 65% of the costs and get back 9¢ on the dollar. I'm wondering whether, from your private sector experience and your success with the legacy project, you have any suggestions as to how we can redress that imbalance.

Mr. Jim Tovey: Actually, many of my friends, when we sit down and talk about this, wonder why we need provincial governments, to be honest with you. I know it sounds crazy, but they're all thinking that. The city of Mississauga has 740,000 people. It's the size of some provinces.

Something has to be more equitable. I like your idea that all three levels should sit down to sort this out. Our infrastructure in the city of Mississauga is incredibly well run. We're running an annual capital replacement deficit of \$85 million a year. We're going to raise taxes 7.8% again this year and we're only able to put \$9.75 million towards that \$85 million. This means that every year on an ongoing basis we're running \$74.25 million in the hole.

My concern and my responsibility, I believe—I'm a first-term councillor, so I'm a little idealistic—is to start talking about this and addressing it, because when my grandchildren want to go to a community centre or a swimming pool or want to drive along a road, I don't want them coming back to me when I'm sitting in my wheelchair saying, "Hey, Grandpa, what did you do?" because they're all closed.

What makes this country great is that we help each other. I think we all need to sit down and say that we have to work a little more closely together to make sure that everything's sustainable.

Hon. Irwin Cotler: I have one quick question, because I know time is running out. This may be to Marguerite Ceschi-Smith.

[*Translation*]

Mr. Garand spoke about environmental protection at the regional level, in Laval.

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: You can speak in English, if you like.

[*English*]

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Mr. Garand was speaking particularly about joining with other groups for a greenbelt for Montreal. I'm putting the question to you because of your FCM experience.

Using Ottawa's greenbelt as a reference point, there has been some tension, apparently, between the preservation and expansion of a greenbelt perimeter and the need to facilitate public transport and access to the city for commuters from outside the greenbelt area. Some of you even said that there may be a risk, if you reroute transportation to take account of the greenbelt, that doing so could result in greater commuter times and even in greater transportation-related pollution.

Have you had any thoughts or experience about how you address that particular tension between the greenbelt on the one hand and access to public transportation on the other?

Mrs. Marguerite Ceschi-Smith: To be really blunt, it's land use planning. It's how you decide what you're going to do. I know many cities now have their roads. It's a difficult question, but I think by working with all the bodies that are there, you can figure things out. I guess in this case it would be the three orders of government.

Traffic is a huge issue, as we all know, in Ottawa, in Toronto, everywhere. We're all trying to deal with that. We need to do it also for health reasons and for all kinds of other reasons. I think the three orders of government should be sitting down together and working that out, using a template, a master plan, and a land use plan of what the city's going to be and what it's going to look like.

Ontario doesn't have a greenbelt but it has places to grow legislation that is trying to curb that urban sprawl so that cities have to plan within the envelope they have.

• (1725)

[*Translation*]

Hon. Irwin Cotler: Mr. Garand, perhaps you can answer the question.

Mr. Guy Garand: I would say that transportation needs to be limited. We need to move towards transit-oriented development or new urbanisms for city densification.

I don't have a problem with it if people live far away, but we need to densify. We need to let them get where they're going quickly with dedicated lanes, buses or electric trains or what have you, but we need to respect the capacity for support. It doesn't bother me if people jump further away.

[*English*]

The Chair: The clock is our enemy, is it not? Thank you so much.

Ms. Ambler, you are going to close out our last five minutes.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

I'd like to ask both of you how important it is to incorporate the history of a place into a plan. If that was done here, why is it important, and how did you do it?

Mr. Jim Tovey: I'll try to be brief. We all know that if you don't know where you came from, you don't know where you're going, so that's really clear.

I had the number one ward for graffiti. Everybody wanted to tag the waterfront. Kids were running rampant doing graffiti. That was prior to my being elected. We've now done a total of 14 different anti-graffiti projects with three different high schools. I also have a background in commercial art, so I go with the kids and I paint. We do garbage cans and park benches. We do murals. Everything we do has a heritage component to it.

We also had one of the largest munitions factories during the Second World War. It was 255,000 square feet, and 16,000 Canadian women worked there. I know 10 of those women, and they're great. We introduced them to the kids. Now my ward is no longer the number one graffiti ward in the city.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: It was also voted the greenest ward in the city.

Mr. Jim Tovey: Yes, we just got the greenest ward award.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Congratulations on that.

Tell me about the plan, about the economic case for the plan, how it creates jobs. Will it create jobs?

Mr. Jim Tovey: Are you talking about the legacy project? Absolutely, it'll create jobs.

When we started doing the modelling in 2006, we did 15,000 residential units at \$200 per square foot. Of course, nobody can build in the GTA for \$200. It was over \$2 billion, so there are all those construction jobs. We already have partnerships that we've developed since 2006, with the University of Toronto at Mississauga, the University of Toronto downtown, Sheridan College, and Seneca College. Seneca College has the first degree program for brownfield remediation. As citizens we couldn't afford to hire professionals, so we got master's students to do all the studies for us, and we in effect became the client.

Now that we have those partnerships with the Small Arms building, which is the only building left from the munitions factory, the TRCA, and the Credit Valley Conservation Authority, and some of these students are going to be working on projects. That's going to be the beginning of a centre for environmental excellence. It's all about building slowly, and that means more jobs.

Mrs. Stella Ambler: It sounds as if you're using your imagination.

Mr. Dion, you talked about an innovative funding approach. Aside from the partners Councillor Tovey is talking about, what were you talking about? What is this innovative approach for funding? Does it include the private sector?

Mr. Ken Dion: The innovative funding approach that we're talking about is....The Region of Peel currently has a pocket of cash budgeted to deal simply with the long distance disposal of materials that are generated as part of their capital works. It's increasing. The price of gas goes up. Distances are getting longer and longer. As time goes on, these costs are getting to be close to 25% to 50% of capital projects.

The idea is if there are ways that you can incorporate the material that's generated locally and use it as a resource so that you don't have those long distance and disposal fees, the difference in cost between the original estimated amount of the budget that contributed to the disposal, and the new cost for the local reuse of it, becomes your operating budget to deal with planning, land acquisition, actual construction of wetlands, actual planting plans, and development of trails. It can even go toward operating budgets, potentially, if they're sufficient.

It's using the same money in a constructive way that brings in benefits to the local community and improves the environmental conditions in the area as well.

• (1730)

Mrs. Stella Ambler: Fantastic.

Mr. Jim Tovey: We'll be using about two million cubic metres of fill and by doing that we'll be taking 200,000 diesel trucks off the road.

The Chair: Thank you so much.

I really do appreciate the witnesses being with us today. It was very interesting.

Mr. Cotler, you have some guests with you. Would you like to introduce them?

Hon. Irwin Cotler: I would like to say that sitting among us is a group of grade 8 students from Hawthorne Public School here in

Ottawa, accompanied by their teacher, Karen Kelland. It's great to have them with us on this occasion. It reminds us that we, in effect, are the trustees of the environment that they will inherit.

Thank you.

The Chair: That's so true. Thank you so much.

Monsieur Garand, do you have a guest you wanted to introduce, too?

[*Translation*]

Mr. Guy Garand: Thank you very much, Mr. Chair. I have one last point.

Everyone here is looking for Canadian solutions. The Conseil régional de l'environnement de Laval does not have a charitable organization number. We did manage to buy land in an urban area in Laval. We bought 7 million square feet, without a tax receipt. The asking prices ranged from 9¢ and 11¢ to 17¢, if not 40¢ a square foot. I bought over 7 million square feet, so more than 70 hectares.

If you had a program to put in place on a pan-Canadian level, it should perhaps focus on funding these non-profit environmental organizations to help them buy natural environments to protect them in perpetuity.

That is what we did in Laval. We encumbered them with notarial deeds.

[*English*]

The Chair: Thank you for that commercial message.

With that, we will accept a motion to adjourn.

An hon. member: I so move.

The Chair: The meeting is adjourned.

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