

# ONTARIO'S PLANNERS GATHER TO PLAN FOR SOCIETAL CHANGE IN PROVINCE'S COMMUNITIES

*Ontario's RPPs explore emerging societal topics at OPPI20 – affordable housing, demographics, equity, and placemaking*

**Toronto** – The Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI) kicks off its 2020 virtual conference (OPPI20) taking place over four days: September 23 & 30 and October 7 & 14, 2020 – discussing emerging topics and societal change in Ontario's communities and how Registered Professional Planners (RPPs) can plan for this change for now and the future.

Kicking off OPPI20 is Author, John Bousfield Distinguished Visitor in Planning, UofT, Jay Pitter, MES. Jay's keynote *"Facing the Future"* will historically spatialize this moment of reckoning while calling urban planners to embrace both aspiration and accountability for creating equitable cities. RPPs have a critical role in building sustainable communities for all, regardless of skin colour, sexual orientation and gender identity, age and every other element that make up our unique identities.

"This year has presented an opportunity to redefine the role of planners in Ontario, to remain resilient, and be a vital part of the solution in re-connecting Ontario's communities," says OPPI President Justine Giancola, RPP. "This historic moment of change has provided us a unique opportunity to learn a lot about ourselves and those around us, and I'm excited to bring the profession together virtually to hear from our amazing lineup of keynote and session speakers talking about the issues that matter most in communities across the province."

The [OPPI20 virtual conference program](#) offers attendees four keynote presentations, 50+ interactive training sessions and workshops relating to the conference themes of demographics and housing, including emerging issues such as equity and mental health. Each day of OPPI20 features a unique keynote session:

- Day 1 (September 23)** - Author, John Bousfield Distinguished Visitor in Planning, UofT, Jay Pitter, MES, kicks off Day 1 of OPPI20. Jay is an award-winning placemaker whose practice mitigates growing divides in cities across North America. She spearheads institutional city-building projects specializing in public space design and policy, forgotten densities, mobility equity, gender-responsive design, inclusive public engagement and healing fraught sites. What distinguishes Jay is her multidisciplinary approach, located at the nexus of urban design and social equity, which translates community insights and aspirations into the built environment.
- Day 2 (September 30)** – COVID-19 completely changed the world in the matter of weeks. While we are all living the realities of this new world in different ways, one common experience many of us now face regularly are difficult emotions, brought on by fallout from the global pandemic. In her [keynote session](#), Nova Nicole, Workplace Mental Health Advisor and Leadership Development Facilitator at Shopify, will share tools and techniques that you can use to better manage stress and anxiety, help to navigate grief and isolation, and deal with challenges associated with context switching.
- Day 3 (October 7)** – Ontario is currently experiencing a housing crisis. Existing affordable housing stock is limited and to make matters worse, the 2016 Census projects that the population of Ontario will grow by 38% by the year 2046, and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) is poised to be one of the fastest-growing parts of the province. How can planning, and planners, address current and future housing needs? Moderated by Jeanhy Shim, President & Founder of Housing Lab Toronto, this exclusive keynote panel will discuss this and other questions through the exploration of affordable housing initiatives from municipalities in the GTA.
- Day 4 (October 14)** – In his talk at OPPI20, David Wachsmuth, Canada Research Chair in Urban Governance at McGill University, will explore what professional planners need to know about short-term rentals. This includes their rise in Ontario and the world, their impacts on existing housing stocks, why some communities are fighting back, and how planners can contribute to regulating this industry in the public interest. David's talk will also include a first look at a forensic analysis of thousands of short-term rental hosts who have put their properties back on the long-term rental market during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Our annual gathering of the planning community will be especially welcome this year as we reflect on the global pandemic and societal issues that have surrounded us over the past six months," said OPPI Executive Director, Susan Wiggins. "From our keynote speakers to our student members presenting their work, this year's program will challenge our RPPs to really think about how they can inspire their communities in addressing the challenges we face together."

RPPs from across Ontario will gather virtually for the four-day conference to participate in forums to work through critical issues and case studies, gain feedback from peers and present their work, best practices and research. OPPI20 is the biggest annual educational and networking event for professional planners in Ontario. For more information on OPPI's 2020 Conference, please visit our website, [ontarioplanners.ca](http://ontarioplanners.ca).

## About the Ontario Professional Planners Institute (OPPI)

OPPI is the recognized voice of the Province's planning profession. Our over 4,600 members work in government, private practice, universities, and not-for-profit agencies in the fields of urban and rural development, community design, environmental planning, transportation, health, social services, heritage conservation, housing, and economic development. Our student members attend accredited undergraduate and graduate planning programs at six Ontario universities. Members meet quality practice requirements and are accountable to OPPI and the public to practice ethically and to abide by a Professional Code of Practice. Only Full Members are authorized by the Ontario Professional Planners Institute Act, 1994, to use the title "Registered Professional Planner" (or "RPP").

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## For more information, to set up an interview, or register for a media pass, please contact:

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