

**Canadian Regional
Development**
A Critical Review of Theory,
Practice, and Potentials



**Développement régional
canadien**
Un examen critique des théories,
des pratiques et des potentiels

The Evolution of Regional Development Policy and Planning in Ontario, 1940- 2013

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Introduction

The origins of regional development in Ontario are as diverse as the continuity of policy and practice are uneven. The post-War period saw a rapid increase in population, housing, transportation investments, mineral exploration and development, the gradual emergence of a more diverse manufacturing sector (beyond primary manufacturing), rapidly increased urbanization, and the trend toward a branch-plant economy. Up until relatively recently, provincial governments of all political stripes were reasonably comfortable in a mixed market society where government played a significant, and at times a leading role in sectoral (largely economic) and to a lesser extent spatial development.

In Ontario regional planning has been informed by four considerations. First, the burgeoning growth of metropolitan Toronto has preoccupied governments for the last half-century or more. Not unlike the Lower Mainland in BC, the Winnipeg situation, or the Montreal story, urban sprawl, the loss of agricultural lands, costly infrastructure, transportation gridlock, inadequate inter-municipal cooperation and collaboration, and many other pressing issues have brought in and kept the Provincial government as an active agent in regional design and restructuring, most of them associated with the challenges of growth management.

The second consideration relates to more peripheral areas and parts of the province that have lagged in economic and social opportunities, that have witnessed long term population stagnation or decline, that are characterized by endemic out-migration, and often have very narrow, resource-based and vulnerable regional economies. Here, rather than growth management the provision of basic public services (e.g. health care) and stimulating development have been the priority. This has been the agenda for much of Northwestern and Northeastern Ontario for some time, as it has been for much of Eastern Ontario. Sometimes rapid structural adjustment of the regional economy is the trigger, such as those emanating from technological changes, or from the competitive forces of globalization.

The Province's response to these polarities has sometimes been couched in the well worn Canadian public policy preoccupations with "balanced" interregional development, and the related challenges of welfare and redistributive objectives associated with spreading the benefits of development more equitably.

A third consideration influencing the evolution of regional planning in Ontario has been the presence of the federal government. It is no secret that the federal government has often been much more active than its provincial counterpart here, notably in economic development, though this is contested. Indeed, it could be argued that, notwithstanding the constitutional allocation of power and responsibilities, at times the former has supplanted the latter for extended periods of time. This is especially the case in

economic development planning contexts, such as those in Eastern, Northwestern and Northeastern Ontario.

A final consideration relates to the uneven and still largely incomplete integration of land use, infrastructure and physical planning at the regional level and economic, social, cultural and political/institutional development planning at this spatial level (Douglas, 1997, 2010). The ARDA collaboration showed some movement in this direction as it evolved after 1965. The *Design for Development* policies and regional planning programme through the 1960s and early 1980s was, for its time a very innovative and politically courageous initiative. Particularly in the survey and analysis phases of the regional planning process, using many of the methodologies of the nascent Regional Science discipline, this programme served to integrate social provision (e.g. health, housing, education) with economic perspectives (e.g. occupational profiles, employment trends) and with physical perspectives (e.g. land consumption, transportation, water and sewage infrastructure). Some of this is to be found in the more recent *Places to Grow* policies (2005). However, it remains an uneven and incomplete synthesis.

Notwithstanding the presence of some form or forms of regional planning in Ontario over the last 70 years, and the regional focus of a small number of Ministry programmes today (e.g. MEDT's *Eastern Ontario Development Fund*, MNDMF's mandate for Northern Ontario), at present (i.e. 2013) there is not a regional development planning programme in the Provincial government, and there is not one agency charged with designing integrated regional development strategies and associated policies for specified regions across the province. The recent *Places to Grow* legislation (2005) and associated initiatives provide for provincial priorities for two supra-regions, Northern Ontario and what is called the Greater Golden Horseshoe region around Toronto. Some 60 Community Futures Development Corporations, supported by the federal government, do their economic development (sometimes, essentially business development) planning for their smaller scale regions. The remaining small number of the Regional Municipalities (i.e. Halton, Peel, Durham, York) do statutory land use planning for their extended local government areas. Conservations Authorities, some of them with extensive watershed-based regions, do their environmental and related planning. And parts of the province that have long histories of regional economic development challenges and associated planning initiatives, such as Eastern Ontario, do a variety of regional development plans from time to time. But unlike Newfoundland & Labrador, Quebec and many European contexts, Ontario currently cannot be said to be engaged in regional development planning (Douglas, 2006).

The Story – A Summary Chronology

1944-60

The Department of Planning and Development was charged with an integrating function across all provincial departments and agencies, and coordinating with federal agencies , and sectoral organizations (e.g. business, mining, labour, trade), and with municipalities “ . . . with a view to formulating plans to create, assist, develop and maintain productive employment and to develop the human and material resources of the province and to that end shall coordinate the work and functions of the departments of the public service of Ontario.” (Government of Ontario, *An Act Respecting the Department of Planning and Development*, Bill 39, March 1944). No specific or explicit regional dimension to the development problem or challenge was evident here.

This public policy initiative was characterized by a strong emphasis on external investment recruitment, especially for manufacturing plants in the context of the emergent branch-plant economy that became mid-century Ontario. Regional cooperation was increasingly fostered among municipalities and business organizations.

1946

Conservation Authorities were established under legislation from this date. These blazed the trail for regional level partnerships and collaborative development. Using a watershed-based and therefore a regional perspective on water resources (and later, environment) management, these innovative organizations became involved in land use planning and management, recreation, municipal collaboration and project coordination. There are now 36 conservation authorities across Ontario planning and managing programmes for water resources, recreation, real estate, forests, wetlands, educational activities, biodiversity, heritage sites and resources, tourism development, inter-municipal cooperation, and many others.

1953

The Goldenberg Commission was set up which led to the creation of *Metropolitan Toronto*, as North America’s first federated metropolitan local government.

1953 and 1954

The two national regional development conferences held in 1953 and 1954 had a significant impact on Ontario. A 68 regional system for Canada was identified (Camu, Weeks and Sametz, 1964). The provincial government largely adopted those that applied to Ontario.

1954

In this year Ontario saw the introduction of ten Regional Development Associations (later “Councils”). A full ten were in place by 1966 across all nine regions. They were made up of private sector representatives, municipalities, and Provincial personnel.

Promotion and education were primary functions. Where there were Industrial Commissioners (later to be called EDOs), development promotion activities were already in place, at least at the municipal level.

The Community Planning Branch of the Department of Municipal Affairs was a proponent of community-based physical development at this time. This agency played a major role in the MTARTS project (see below).

1961

The *Agricultural Rehabilitation and Development Act* (ARDA) - a land-oriented programme, jointly sponsored by the Federal government and the Provincial government of Ontario, was introduced. This major programme encompassed land use planning, drainage, soil improvements, consolidation of agricultural holdings, and other physical development projects to modernize agricultural practices.

1962

The *Metropolitan and Region Transportation Study* (MTARTS) was inaugurated. It reflected increased awareness of the complex growth dynamics of this burgeoning metropolitan region. Issues such as housing, commuting, modal split issues, multi-agency interests and influences, the increasing scale of physical and other development issues were addressed in this formative project. The project involved a multi-year large-scale research project encompassing a 100-kilometre radius region around Toronto. The three-volume study was released in 1968.

1963

The *Area Development Agency* (ADA), a federal programme addressing slow growth or lagging areas (“designated areas”), with an emphasis on employment stimulation was launched. Manufacturing was the target industry. Incentives were the principal means of development, initially through tax relief, then loans and then grants. Areas were designated based on the level and the persistence of unemployment.

1965

The federal government convened a major conference on regional development, *Areas of Economic Stress Conference* (Queen’s University). See Woods, W.D. and R. S. Thoman (eds.) **Areas of Economic Stress in Canada**. The Province of Ontario organized a major international conference on economic change and regional development (Government of Ontario, 1965). These initiatives moved the discourse beyond economics, beyond manufacturing employment, and other narrow confines into a broader appreciation of regional development, and an increased awareness of the need for comprehensive

perspectives, the complexity of spatial development, and the need for enhanced intergovernmental coordination.

In this year the federal government's *Fund for Rural Economic Development (FRED)*, a comprehensive integrated programme (e.g. social development, labour force training, resettlement assistance, public services improvements, mobility support) was introduced. It was never implemented in Ontario, unlike northern New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, the Manitoba Inter-Lake Region, and elsewhere.

1966

A revised ARDA, now called the *Agriculture and Rural Development Act*, was launched. Now community land banking, rural labour force training, resettlement, the growing non-farm populations, as well as First Nations, were included in this more comprehensive approach to area development. After 1970 it provided funds for the development of small rural industries.

In the same year *Design for Development*, the Province of Ontario released a White Paper. This promulgated a clear commitment to regional development. It brought with it an explicitly strong, visible and multiplex role for government "to guide regional growth", facilitate specialization, smooth "out conspicuous regional economic inequalities...through the regional distribution of government budgetary expenditures, through the provision of technical, financial, and administrative services, and through the use of programmes carefully selected to encourage labour mobility, tourism, agriculture, resource development, manufacturing, and other forms of economic activity." The fostering of two-way communications between government and the local private sector and community organizations, municipalities, and others, was advocated. This brought with it a commitment to "comprehensive planning", including environmental, social as well as economic perspectives, and the development of regional centres. The coordination of provincial policies, programmes and agencies was a central consideration, as was Provincial and Federal cooperation. The Province committed itself to what it called "good regional planning".

This year also saw the Regional Development Councils receive additional financial assistance to act in an advisory capacity as partners with the Provincial government.

Paralleling these initiatives in 1966 the provinces set up its own Advisory Committee on Regional Development, chaired by the Provincial Deputy Treasurer, to develop and coordinate all Provincial policies and programmes and report to Cabinet. A Committee of Cabinet was also established, chaired by the Treasurer, with the Premier as an *ex officio* member.

The Ontario Development Corporation (ODC) was established at this time to provide funding for manufacturing in slower growth areas, including forgivable loans in selected areas (e.g. parts of Eastern Ontario).

At this time a Regional Development Branch was set up to prepare comprehensive regional development plans for the Provincial Advisory Committee, and the Cabinet Committee of Regional Development. The Province committed itself to “comprehensive regional economic research” for the formulation of development plans.

1967

Regional Advisory Boards, made of Provincial officials from the field offices of many departments and agencies, were constituted in each of Ontario’s ten regions.

In this year the Province commissioned the *Niagara Escarpment Study*, a major regional initiative that expanded the Province’s role in and commitments to conservation and regional-scale land use planning, leading to the designation of this part of the province as a UNESCO Biosphere Reserve.

1968

A pilot regional development project was conducted for Northwestern Ontario, using a three-phase approach from an analysis of needs and resources, a set of policy recommendations, and a final Provincial policy statement, which was released in 1971.

In this year Design for Development – the provincial government released Phase 2, connecting regional development priorities with the emerging Provincial interest in regional government.

1969

The Federal Department of Regional Economic Expansion (DREE) was created. It was designed to consolidate the growing diversity of the federal government’s programmes in development. Its programmes covered rural as well as urban areas. Growth centres, derived from growth pole theory, were a major facet of this programme. Slow growth areas were targeted. Activity from this programme in Ontario was confined to parts of Northern Ontario, and two special areas in Eastern Ontario.

1970

The federal government’s *Regional Development Incentives Act* (RDIA) was passed which provided development funding for 23 “special areas”. A variety of locational incentives was applied to attract industries and some services (e.g. hotels) to relatively underdeveloped areas, and to encourage expansion and development of industries (e.g.

fabrication, processing, assembling) already in these areas. The “growth pole” concept was incorporated in this focused development initiative.

The Province of Ontario built on the large-scale *MTARTS* study and the extensive feedback on the regional development alternatives generated by that to launch the *Toronto-Centred Region Concept* (TCR). This set out the Province’s policies and priorities for structuring and phasing the physical development of the metropolitan region, involving among other things, compact linear lakeshore urban growth, selected decentralization of urban functions and growth, new towns, and a large intermediary area (Zone 2) given over to open space, conservation and agricultural uses.

From this year on the *growth centre concept* was operationally incorporated within Provincial regional development planning, using the term “centres of opportunity”, and using a classification of primate centres (e.g. Toronto, Ottawa, London, Thunder Bay), linked centres (with primate centres) and strategic centres, or centres for propelling growth in lagging regions. Export base theory and central place theory were also adopted as the principal perspectives shaping the regional economic analysis, which underpinned the three-stage process for all regional development policy plans.

1971

The *Design for Development: A Status Report* was released by the Province.

In this year the Federal Ministry of State for Urban Affairs (MSUA) was introduced, bringing the Federal government more overtly into urban policy issues across the country.

The federal government brought out the *Local Initiatives Programme* (LIP) to address concentrations of seasonal high unemployment and regions with chronically high unemployment rates. This was a project-oriented programme (e.g. roads, bridges, wharfs, crisis centres) designed to provide immediate relief, through collaborations with local organizations (e.g. municipalities). It involved relatively small private sector participation.

At the same time the *Local Employment Assistance Programme* (LEAP), another project-oriented employment programme was introduced by the Federal government, which became fully operational in 1973. Designed to assist those who would not normally or easily get into the market labour force this programme provided for training, small business support, funding for development organizations, and other support.

1973

The *Niagara Escarpment Planning and Development Act* and the *Niagara Escarpment Commission*, were approved and instituted. The Niagara Escarpment is now classed as a

UNESCO World Biosphere Reserve. It is 725 kilometres in length, with 120,000 people in the immediate vicinity.

1974

From 1974 on Ontario, and all other provinces, signed *General Development Agreements* and then sector-specific *Subsidiary Agreements* with the Federal government with a menu of tax, financial and other incentives to attract industries and some service sector investments to particular areas, expand the provision of physical infrastructure and public services, and enrich the general climate and attractiveness of these areas for private sector investments and job creation. Under this the Province of Ontario identified its own development priority areas, replacing the former RDIA designations.

1975

The *Community Employment Strategy* (CES) was a short-lived demonstration programme from the Federal government with a strong emphasis on organizational development and capacity enhancement, the coordination of federal services, addressing chronic pockets of unemployment, and a focus on community initiative and leadership. It was not implemented in Ontario.

1979

In this year the federal government set up the Ministry of State for Economic Development (MSED) to focus on particular sectoral priorities, the resource sector, and a growing interest in so-called mega-projects (e.g. the Alberta tar sands development).

1980

With a major shift in the federal government's approach to regional development policy and programming, the *Western Development Fund* was set up for the four Western provinces with an initial \$4 billion budget to support business development and related ventures.

In the same year the *Local Employment Development Assistance* (LEDA) programme, from the federal government, represented a growing tendency of this level of government to base programmes at the community level. Using a local development corporation, a community non-profit agency, this programme provided a diverse array of development services and supports ranging from planning, organizational development, small business funding, enterprise facilitation, marketing and promotion, labour force training, equity participation (through the local CDC), and other supports for designated slow growth areas.

1982

In this year the federal government's DREE was disbanded and replaced by the Ministry of State for Economic and Regional Development (MSERD), with Economic and Regional Development Agreements (ERDA) replacing the GDAs as the primary vehicles for Federal-Provincial collaboration in regional economic development. It too was disbanded in 1984.

A new Federal Department of Regional Industrial Expansion (DRIE) was instituted, inheriting the RDIA process and budgetary allocations.

1983

The federal government's *Industrial and Regional Development Programme* (IRDP) was initiated with a diverse array of incentives and supports for a four-tier arrangement of needs for different parts of the country. Support included business advisory services, forgivable loans, grants, tourism surveys, research, venture capital search, feasibility studies, organizational development, marketing, and many other areas. The breadth of the IRDP's support was severely curtailed to a smaller number of areas across the country in 1984.

The *Local Employment Assistance and Development* (LEDA) initiative was introduced by the federal government at this time. This was premised on a "community-based process of employment creation" for permanent job creation with a strengthened focus on local organizational development, longer term planning, and the integration of community and regional development priorities and initiatives. Any local organization could sponsor this initiative and facilitate the setting up of a local LEAD corporation. More development and planning research was fostered for this smaller community (i.e. less than 50,000) programme. Greater sophistication was evident in the diversity of this programme, its grounding in the community, its longer term investments, its commitments to research and planning, and its emphasis on capacity development and collaboration.

In the same year the Ontario government opened the *Northern Community Economic Development Programme* (NCEDP), providing financial assistance through municipalities for development planning, promotional programmes, and related initiatives.

1985

What is now the Ministry of Northern Development, Mines and Forestry was set up. This Ministry has a supra-regional responsibility for all Provincial government policies, programmes, projects and services for Northern Ontario. It is in some respects a multi-programme sectoral (i.e. mines, forestry) and regional development agency, and the

principal Provincial/Federal government interface in this region. The original Department of Northern Development was set up in 1926.

1986

From this year Ontario participated in the high profile *Community Futures Programme*, introduced by the Federal government and still in operation with 300 CFDC (development corporations) now across the country. Initially designed to be based on progressive community development principles, equity and inclusiveness this programme was based on defined labour market areas, usually encompassing a variety of communities and municipalities. The Federal government enters into contracts with volunteer-based local Community Futures Committees (CFC), made up of representatives of interest groups in the region. The programme was initially designed to assist the more rural and remote regions characterized by persistent above average depressed conditions of unemployment and welfare dependency, as well as out-migration and relative disadvantages in participation rates and educational levels. Business Development Centres (BDC) is central agencies for advisory services and act as lenders of last resort for local small businesses. Other facets of the original programme included a Community Initiatives Fund (CIF) to assist with local infrastructure and encourage business development, and the Self-Employment Assistance (SEA) fund to facilitate the transition from unemployment to owner-operated small businesses. The 61 Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDC) in Ontario, and those across the country became engaged to varying degrees in longer term strategic planning, as well as a great variety of local economic development projects. They formed apex organizations such as the Ontario Association of Community Futures Development Corporations (OACFDC). The Federal agency FEDNOR works with the 24 CFDCs in Northern Ontario.

1987

In this year the Ministry of Northern Development and Mines for Ontario introduced the *Municipal Economic Development Assistance* programme (MEDA), a financially rich programme for municipalities or groups of municipalities in the 4-30,000 population range to help them set up development organizations, hire development officers, do planning, design a strategy and a five-year business plan, conduct feasibility studies, retain consultants, undertake research, pursue marketing and promotional activities, outfit the organization's offices, and other initiatives.

This year also saw the setting up of the *Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency* (ACOA), similar to the WDF.

Ontario entered this suite of Federal government large-scale regional development programmes (i.e. WDF, ACOA) through *FEDNOR*, which was set up as a collaborative Federal-Provincial development programme for Northern Ontario.

1988

The Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation was instituted, providing seven programmes for infrastructure, energy, young entrepreneurs, job creation, training, internships and job coops, and others for businesses, individuals, municipalities, First Nations, and development organizations.

The CFDCs are grouped on five supra-regional bases, such as the 8 CFDCs in Southcentral Ontario, the 7 CFDCs in West Southern Ontario, or the 14 in Northeast Ontario.

1993

Under the new *Community Economic Development Act* the Province introduced its *Community Action* programme. Drawing upon the regional and community economic development experience of Saskatchewan, Manitoba, British Columbia and elsewhere this comprehensive programme set out to increase the province's role in local development, expand the array of financial mechanisms available to the community (e.g. development bonds, Community Loan Funds, Community Investment Share Corporations), and introduce very active and well resourced Community Development Corporations (CDC) at the local level. These were designed to provide leadership, act as development catalysts, prepare and implement community strategic plans, facilitate partnerships and coordinate local development investment, foster investment retention and promote the development of new enterprises. Participatory democracy and social equity were important principles underpinning this ambitious and comprehensive initiative.

1997

The Province introduces its *Business Retention and Expansion (BR+E)* programme, for rural smaller enterprises and communities, through OMAFRA.

2000

In this year the *Ontario Small Town and Rural Development Infrastructure Programme (OSTAR)* was launched. Initially the programme was designed to address barriers to economic development.

2001

2001, the *Rural Economic Development (RED)* programme from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) was introduced. In 2003 this programme was refocused to address community revitalization, rural access to health care, and skills

training and development. The programme provided for a phased series of investments to enhance rural physical infrastructure, especially water facilities and others directly related to public health, but also including bridges, dams, ferries, municipal buildings, roads, culverts, sewage treatment, and several other aspects of infrastructure. In 2009 the food-processing sector was added as a fourth dimension of this programme to provide support for this sector in rural Ontario. Community revitalization provisions include energy projects, youth retention, facilitation, partnerships, recruitment of health and other service personnel.

The *Oak Ridges Moraine Conservation Act* was passed this year to protect the hydrological and ecological integrity of this unique and extensive natural landform (190,000 hectares) and to regulate compatible land uses (e.g. in urban and rural settlement areas, public recreation, resources extraction) and enact conservation and related planning policies for this extensive tract of land traversing 160 kilometres across central Southern Ontario.

2002

The *Oak Ridges Conservation Plan* was approved to provide detailed land use and resources planning direction to all interests (e.g. provincial agencies, resident property owners, recreation interests, municipalities). Public recreation, conservation and ecosystems management were given priority, with 8% of the regional landform set aside for “settlement areas” (established urban areas) and 30% set aside for “countryside areas” (agricultural and related and smaller hamlets and similar places).

2004

In 2004, the *Eastern Ontario Development Programme* was set up by the federal government, through FedNor (Industry Canada), to promote regional economic development through rural Eastern Ontario. The cities of Ottawa and Kingston were excluded. The primary vehicles for this programme are the Community Futures Corporations in this part of Ontario, and their apex organization the Eastern Ontario CFDC Network Inc. The programme was renewed in 2006, now named the *Eastern Ontario Development Programme* (EODP). This diverse programme provides support for job retention and creation, technological development and innovation, organizational development and operations, labour force training and business and skills development, attraction and retention of youth, improved access to capital, improved competitiveness, community capacity building, specific project development, and long term sustainable development.

In the same year *Ontario’s Rural Plan- Stronger Rural Communities: Working Together for Success* was launched as a general statement of intent, with sector-specific goals (e.g. health, education, youth, jobs) and general strategies. It did not set out regional development priorities or strategies.

The Province, through OMAFRA, provided a series of programmes supportive of various rural development directions. These include immigration attraction, community economic analysis, biomass projects, agricultural value-added processing, 'Main Street' revitalization facilitation and support, inter-community 'first impressions' assessments (FICE), the Canada-Ontario Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (COMRIF), and several others, many under the overall Rural Economic Development (RED) programme.

2005

This year saw a major policy initiative relating to regional development policies in Ontario. The *Places to Grow Act* provided the Province with the authority to designate a region within Ontario as a 'Growth Plan Area', one requiring special policies and regulations to manage the growth or to stimulate desirable growth patterns, both physical and functional. The expanding Toronto region, the Extended Greater Golden Horseshoe is planned as an intensive lakeshore urban corridor, with a large Greenbelt, and an arc of expanded regional urban centres (e.g. Kitchener-Waterloo) as major centres for deflected decentralized growth, with attendant long term expansions in regional infrastructure investments (e.g. inter-urban high speed transit). Population and employment growth and allocation targets and regional infrastructure designs were specified for the Greater Golden Horseshoe area and the Northern Ontario Growth Plan Area. All municipal planning and all provincial ministerial planning must conform with the intent and priorities set out in this policy plan.

In the same year (2005) the *Greenbelt Act* was passed, embracing a 1.8 million acre zone around the Toronto-based lakeshore urban corridor for non-urban land uses.

The federal government introduced the *Community Transition Programme* to assist economic diversification through a variety of cost-shared projects in the hard hit tobacco counties of Elgin, Norfolk, Brant and Oxford. Funding in the amount of \$15 million was made available for community capacity and human capacity initiatives, as well as new and expanded enterprises. The programme closed in 2009.

2006

The Province's Communities in Transition (CiT) programme was designed to provide timely, rapid-uptake assistance to non-profit organizations such as Ontario municipal governments, local economic development organizations and industry sectors facing economic development challenges including plant closures, significant job losses and industry-wide restructuring. The programme was introduced to deliver flexible, tailored assistance to support innovative economic solutions not covered under existing Provincial programs.

In this year the Province published its policies and designs for the *Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe* to manage, allocate and otherwise structure 30 years of anticipated growth in the extended metropolitan region.

The year 2006 saw the Province release its *Update for the Rural Plan* through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).

2008

The Province of Ontario brought out the *Eastern Ontario Development Fund (EODF)* to attract investment and support job creation in Eastern Ontario. Under this initiative businesses can receive a grant of up to 15% of eligible project investments to help them introduce new technologies, manufacture new products, pursue new markets and improve their competitive position, thus creating jobs in Eastern Ontario.

The EODF grant program also supports not-for-profit organizations through a grant of up to 50% (e.g. NGOs, business organizations, municipalities) through its *Regional Sector Development Stream* to implement regional economic development initiatives that promote business development and lead to job creation.

Eastern Ontario, as defined, includes 13 counties extending east from Northumberland and Kawartha Lakes and includes rural Ottawa.

2009

In this year the Province released a proposed *Places to Grow: Growth Plan for Northern Ontario*. This proposal provided for a 25 year plan for education, First Nations communities, infrastructure, technological development, job creation, economic diversification, youth retention, tourism development, health, energy, land use planning, climate change, and other issues.

In the same year FedDev (Federal Economic Agency for Southern Ontario) was launched to work with the 15 Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDC) in Eastern Ontario, through the Eastern Ontario Development Programme, and 22 others in other parts of what was called "Southern Ontario". This initiative provided over \$1 billion over five years for a new Southern Ontario development agency. The agency's programs were designed to support economic and community development, investment in business start-ups and expansions, innovation, and economic diversification, adjustment for communities in stress (e.g. due to resource depletion, market turndowns, technological shifts), small urban and rural infrastructure re-investments (through the COMRIF programme), fostering of exports, educational outreach for youth (STEM programme), and several other initiatives, with contributions to communities, businesses and non-profit organizations. The intent of the expansion of this programme was to assist workers, communities and businesses in Southern Ontario position

themselves in post-recession times to take advantage of opportunities, as economic growth recovers in Canada and around the world.

2011

The *Growth Plan for Northern Ontario 2011* was legislated, covering an area of over 800,000 square kilometers, and almost the same population, including some 40% of Ontario's Aboriginal population and nearly a quarter of the province's francophone population. Prepared under the *Places to Grow Act (2005)* it provides a strategic vision for collaborative development over the next 25 years. The plan draws upon the *Northern Ontario Heritage Fund* and other sources for economic diversification (e.g. arts, culture and creative industries, health sciences) and growth, further expansion into the digital economy, an expanded mining and a revitalized forestry sector, labour force skills development, integration with the global economy, innovation and infrastructure investment, including in health, energy, communications, community services, and other initiatives. The plan stresses the interrelationships between rural and urban communities and encourages "collaboration among these communities to develop a regional approach to economic development" and a collaborative approach to regional economic planning (Ontario, 2011a; p.25). In addition a "clean, green economy" is advocated (Ontario, 2011b, p.5). The Plan targets to retain or marginally increase the population of Northern Ontario.

As part of the implementation process the Province commits to identifying "regional economic planning areas as an inclusive, collaborative mechanism for long-term economic development, labour market, and infrastructure planning that crosses municipal boundaries." (Ontario, 2011a, p.29). Northern Ontario is divided into two extensive sub-regions, one focused on Greater Sudbury and the other on Thunder Bay.

2012

The federal government announced a number of adjustments to the FedDev programme for Southern Ontario. These amounted to a significant decline in base funding support for the 37 CFDCs in Southern Ontario, a further focusing on investments for small business start-up and expansion, less on local economic development and related community initiatives, and increased emphasis on financial performance and self-financing operations. The rural economic development programmes through FedNor for Northern Ontario and its CFDCs remained in place, with increased emphasis on ICT, tourism, youth retention, First Nations and selected other areas.

An Addendum – Other Players

While the story continues, and the interpretation if not the record itself will always be contested, it is worth noting that in addition to the conventional vehicles of the provincial and the federal governments, there have always been a great variety of other

regional development players in the plot. As is evident from the record a great variety of non-governmental organizations (NGO) and hybrid organizations have played a variety of roles in regional development policy and planning. Government as a participant in these governance-type arrangements has varied in terms of personnel and financial investments, as well as the degree and the nature of delegated authority. There is little evidence of credible devolution of authority and responsibility, with the concomitant allocation of resources.

A number of the more recent arrangements here will be of interest.

A variety of regional tourism organizations are active as independent industry-led, not-for-profit organizations responsible for working with tourism partners to enhance and grow the region's tourism products and marketing activities. See - http://www.mtc.gov.on.ca/en/regions/regions_q_a.shtml#roles There is the Ontario Network of Excellence (ONE) which functions on a regional and provincial basis as a sector-focused not-for-profit organization connecting technology-based businesses, entrepreneurs or researchers with programmes and services to help them innovate and gain a competitive advantage. See <http://www.oneinnovation.ca/en/Home.aspx>

The Local Health Integration Networks (LHINS) is a relatively new, and at times controversial initiative. These not-for-profit corporations work with local health providers and community members to determine the health service priorities of their regions. LHINS are funded directly by the Province and are responsible for planning, funding and managing health services in their regions. See - http://www.health.gov.on.ca/transformation/lhin_history.html

In 2009 the Interministry Community Economic Development Initiative (ICDI) was set up as a "one table" forum for coordinating approaches across the provincial government's ministries to provide communities and industry with timely access to Provincial economic policies, programmes and services. This has led to the formation of five regional Interministry Provincial Economic Transformation Teams (PETTS) to coordinate provincial activities in support of regional economic development. There have also been initiatives to develop tools and resources to assist communities with their economic readiness. Ministries collaborating in this include Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Economic Development and Trade, Northern Development, Mines and Forestry, and Tourism and Culture.

There are a number of stakeholder-based regional collaborations. Among these are:

- South Central Ontario Region (SCOR) made up of CFDCs. See – <http://www.scorregion.com/>
- South West Economic Alliance (SWEA). See - <http://www.swea.ca/>
- Eastern Ontario Wardens Caucus (EOWC). See - <http://www.eowc.org/en/>

- Greater Toronto Countryside Mayors Alliance (GTCMA). See - <http://gtcmaontario.blogspot.com/>

These are no more than a sample of the regionally organized stakeholder organizations that now populate the regional development planning field in Ontario.

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