

# INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIP yields ground breaking secondary plan

SOUTH BASIN OF LAKE MANITOBA TO BENEFIT

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A unique partnership involving the Portage la Prairie Planning District Board, Portage la Prairie RM Council, Department of Intergovernmental Affairs and University of Manitoba City Planning students has resulted in a ground breaking secondary plan in the province. This is the first time any of these groups had entered into such a partnership and the plan is one of the first rural secondary plans under the new Planning Act.

On April 18, 2008 in Portage la Prairie, students presented the first draft of the *South Basin Lake Manitoba Planning Area Secondary Plan* to a joint gathering of the Portage la Prairie Planning District Board and the RM of Portage la Prairie Council. The plan was the result of a four-month studio project<sup>1</sup> that engaged students to create a plan designed to accommodate growth while enhancing environmental conservation. Innovative policy directions include the accommodation of wind farm development, the allowance of secondary on-site industry on agricultural land and high environmental standards for cottage development.

The South Basin is a fragile, complex mix of natural phenomena and human interest. Along with the marsh the area has fertile agricultural land, an interregional community pasture, rural residential properties, a Hutterite colony, and burgeoning cottage areas. It is also attracting interest from wind farm developers. In response to many potential land use conflicts, the recently



Students engaging with stakeholders in Portage la Prairie, February 2008.

adopted Portage la Prairie Planning District Development Plan called for the undertaking of a secondary plan<sup>2</sup>. With “bright green” environmentalism as the underlying principle, plan making began with key informants providing presentations about the area. Following these inputs students conducted additional background research. An innovative stakeholder consultation was designed and carried out in partnership with **Dr. Daniel Buckles**<sup>3</sup> from Carlton University, Ottawa. This first of two community engagements had stakeholders discuss their concerns, which provided an avenue for capacity building. The second engagement, designed by students, allowed the public to show their level of support for draft policies generated from previous work.

The residents, stakeholders and the RM council proved to be a progressive group. They were willing to discuss conflicting interests and explore other perspectives. The draft plan has been reviewed by the council and was well received, with most policies standing fast. The project is continuing through a student internship with the planning district. After some minor revisions the plan will be ready for first reading and well on the way to adoption. Additional planning priorities arising from this study

are also being explored through the internship. The project will be presented as a case study at the July Canadian Institute of Planners’ Conference in Winnipeg and at a SAS Conference in Ottawa in November.

The experience of this study helps establish rural secondary plans as an integral component to regional planning. It demonstrates that an RM, public sector planners, academics and students could successfully collaborate in this type of process. This project could be the impetus for future joint ventures. The U of M Department of City Planning<sup>4</sup> encourages live planning projects within the province and is open to playing various roles in these processes.

Questions regarding the project may be sent to [umbake45@cc.umanitoba.ca](mailto:umbake45@cc.umanitoba.ca).

## NOTES:

1. Studio Project website: [www.regionalplanning.ca](http://www.regionalplanning.ca).
2. Secondary plans are intended to supplement larger scale development plans and/or municipal plans. They address areas or neighbourhoods that require specific attention due to a complex mix of elements that are unique within a city or region.
3. Dr. Daniel Buckles is the co-creator of Social Analysis Systems (SAS), an innovative public engagement technique – [www.sas2.net](http://www.sas2.net).
4. U of M, Department of City Planning: [www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/architecture/cp](http://www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/architecture/cp).



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