

Good morning, and welcome to the 2008 Dan Leckie Forum.

I'm pleased to welcome you this morning, and I'm very excited to participate in today's discussions. Toronto's high rise residential buildings are a source of enormous potential, and I'm quite proud of the work we've done so far, and what is to come in the near future.

In June 2007, Toronto City Council unanimously endorsed an ambitious climate change plan — *Change is in the Air*. The plan is designed to engage Torontonians as they make important lifestyle changes to reduce greenhouse gases and clean our air. Included among the recommendations are ambitious targets for emissions reductions.

To reach our targets, we have a lot of work to do. This morning, I want to preview an initiative you'll be hearing about today, the Tower Renewal Project.

There are over 2,000 high rise residential buildings in Toronto, the second highest concentration in North America. Built in the '50s, '60s and '70s, about half of those buildings are concrete apartment towers — suburban slabs in Scarborough, North York and Etobicoke, along with concentrations in other areas of the 905.

These clusters of high-density apartment buildings follow the “tower in a park” model of planning, with up to 90 percent of the area as open space.

Unfortunately, the buildings — and the planning vision behind them — have not aged well. Most are in need of renovation, renewal and investment. They are inefficient. Their exposed concrete slab edges leak energy through lost heat.

Michelangelo once said, “Every block of stone has a statue inside it, and it is the task of the sculptor to discover it” The opportunity is there, and I believe it is an exciting chance to meet our climate change goals and build stronger communities at the same time. Working in partnership with E.R.A. Architects, the University of Toronto and the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation, we are creating a framework for the renewal of Toronto's concrete high-rise residential buildings.

Despite their shortcomings, these concrete slab buildings are well-suited for environmental upgrade, energy retrofits, and other initiatives. We believe we can cut energy use and carbon output by over 50 percent.

But I am even more excited by the potential on the ground below. Today, vibrant cultures and diverse communities live in close proximity in these apartment towers. But in the open spaces below them, you'd never know it.

Strategic rezoning, and the reinvestment that comes along with it, will help support the renewal of the suburban slabs. Imagine the potential of urban agriculture in these spaces. Of community development and increased street-level density. Of neighbours interacting, while the building that looms overhead benefits from reduced energy costs from increased efficiency. It's an exciting possibility that will soon be a reality.

In recent years, we won the battle between the environment and the economy — today, energy retrofits come with net savings, and corporate cultures are adapting to a new definition of the bottom line.

Our new challenge is to marry the fight against climate change with community revitalization. Adapting to climate change can help us live better, fuller, more community-oriented lifestyles. Tower Renewal is at the heart of this idea with local food, local job creation, greener, safer public spaces, and community development.

That's just one example of the innovation and ingenuity that we have in our region — I look forward to sharing what we learn today with my colleagues at City Hall, and our partners in the community.

## **Sponsors**

TAF would like to thank the Greater Toronto Apartment Association for co-sponsoring today's event, both by helping to introduce us to some key participants, and by providing a financial contribution.

In particular we would like to thank the Greater Toronto Apartment Authority CEO Brad Butt who, who, despite his own hectic schedule in developing another recent conference on greening highrise buildings called "Go Green or Go Home," took the time to help bring both resources and participants to this meeting.

In addition, we would like to thank Morguard for providing this great apartment venue for the conference – I understand we are all going to get a penthouse view during the breakout sessions later. In particular, we would like to thank that building manager Roger Palmer and assistant building manager Dominic Moscaxy.

Finally, thank you to all of you who are attending and taking time to help us develop a strategy to embrace the substantial energy efficiency opportunities in our city's high rise buildings.

Like so many of his contemporaries in the environmental movement, Dan Leckie was ahead of his time. But we can't afford to wait to realize the potential of our ideas. Let's honour his memory in the way he would have valued the most — by committing ourselves to action today.

Thank you.